

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COUNCIL  
ROUNDTABLE ON PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
Mary M. Levy July 13, 2012**

Good afternoon. As an education finance lawyer, a participant in years of DCPS “reform” initiatives, and a DCPS parent, I have studied DCPS data and policies for over 30 years. I commend the Council for holding this roundtable, because we have urgent issues too long ignored. I am hoping that finally the Council – and the rest of the city – will face up to them.

1. **Are we going to have a system of neighborhood public schools at all – or only charter schools largely serving city-wide enrollment? The latter is where we are headed as charter school enrollment rises and neighborhood schools are closed.** If so, how will children get to schools beyond walking distance? And who will run them? Corporate bureaucracies headquartered in other cities? How will elected officials ensure that they are accountable and responsive to parents and community? We need an immediate city-wide discussion to develop a plan for how our two public education systems relate to each other.
2. **Where is the evaluation of the DCPS system as run under mayoral control? Why have our elected officials failed to notice, let alone insist that the law requiring annual evaluations be followed? Five years is long enough.** With the unprecedented amount of power and money given to the Mayor and DCPS officials, what have we accomplished? My own evaluation – based on data -- is that we have largely wasted five years and many millions of dollars to make the system no better than before. Schools west of Rock Creek Park and in close-in Capitol Hill seem to be thriving, but low-income students in DCPS schools seem to be worse off than ever. For example, the achievement gap between low-income and other students, as measured by the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) has swollen enormously since 2007 – by 29% to 72% depending on the grade and test. But to get back to the first point, do we really have to turn them over to operators from other cities – or can we rejuvenate DCPS to serve all students well?
3. **DCPS budget information, accountability and oversight has been sorely lacking. Neither DCPS nor the CFO can – or at least will – give us the answers to the most basic budget questions routinely asked by the public.** How much money is spent on services to students vs. the central offices? How much money is spent by individual offices? How much is spent on consultants for work that should be done in-house? How much is spent on special education? Although answers are given on this subject, they are multiple and inconsistent. What is DCPS’ per pupil spending? What is the per pupil spending of the District as a whole? I can answer many of those questions but this should

not be left to interested citizens sitting at their home computers. It is an *institutional* function of the Council and the Executive.

These three issues seem quite enough to occupy the Council for the remainder of this session, but for completeness' sake here are three more:

4. **How can we get more resources into the DCPS classroom?** For two years in a row, local schools have lost teachers, librarians, special education personnel, after-school programs, and supplies, further disadvantaging schools in low-income neighborhoods and making them more vulnerable to closure. Meanwhile, even as enrollment has diminished, the central office bureaucracy has swollen. Last year 775 central office employees on the payroll performed the same functions as 516 in 1981, when enrollment was more than twice as great. I urge a thorough scrubbing of the FY 2013 budget, and restoration of as much funding as possible to the classroom – right now.
5. **What can we do to reduce the level of instability in DCPS?** We lose half our newly hired teachers within two years. Twenty-five percent of the teachers in Wards 1, 5 and 8 are beginners, compared to 10% a few years ago. These are the children whose test scores are stagnating. Principals come and go constantly. New initiatives are abandoned before they can even be assessed. We need some change, but not any change that pops into anyone's mind, and not constant change. In my view, the lack of measurable progress for most students and schools in the last few years is probably largely due to the continuing churn in a system already racked with change.
6. **Multiple issues exist as to educational quality and services to address student discipline, truancy, and drop-out.** I think it is harder for a body like the Council to deal with these effectively than with questions of governance, budget, and business practice but I would encourage you to continue with the inquiries already underway, such as truancy, the lack of vocational education, and the quality of middle schools. Sunshine and public attention can do what legislation is unlikely to accomplish.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

DC PUBLIC EDUCATION DATA SY 2006-SY 2011	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008 Transition yr	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	Change 2007-2011	
<b>Audited enrollment as of October 5</b>								
DCPS total enrollment	54,748	52,191	49,001	44,681	44,467	45,630	(6,561.00)	-13%
DCPS special education enrollment	7,823	7,019	6,504	5,761	5,717	6,048	(971.00)	-14%
DCPS special education percentage	14%	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%		-14%
DCPS English Language Learner enrollment	3,920	3,956	4,110	4,273	4,341	4,316	360	9%
DCPS English Language Learner percentage	7%	8%	8%	10%	10%	9%		9%
DCPS low-income (free/reduced lunch eligibility) <u>not</u> audited					31,342	31,597	31,597	
DCPS low-income enrollment percentage					70%	69%		
Charter school total enrollment	17,473	19,733	21,947	25,729	27,660	29,366	9,633	49%
Special education tuition students ( <u>not</u> included in DCPS total)	2,272	2,166	2,212	2,403	2,265	2,220	54	2%
Total DC public education enrollment	74,493	74,090	73,160	72,813	74,392	77,216	3,126	4%
DCPS as percentage of all public enrollment	73%	70%	67%	61%	60%	59%	-11 pp	
Charter schools as percentage of all public enrollment	23%	27%	30%	35%	37%	38%	11 pp	
Tuition students as percentage of all public enrollment	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	0	
<b>DCPS Staff</b>								
Number of teachers	4,775	4,356	4,338	4,078	4,304	4,206	(150)	-3%
Percentage of 1st & 2nd year teachers	12%	11%	11%	14%	18%	17%	6 pp	
Percent of teachers leaving DCPS within 2 years of hire	46%	55%	44%	57%	51%	43%		
Percent of all teachers leaving DCPS at year's end	19%	14%	22%	20%	15%			
Percent of all teachers leaving DCPS within 5 years of hire	48%	50%	50%	53%	55%	56%	6 pp	
DCPS teacher salary scale-beginning	\$39,971	\$42,369	\$43,640	\$44,949	\$47,197	\$49,085	\$6,716	16%
DCPS teacher salary scale-highest	\$78,381	\$87,584	\$90,212	\$92,918	\$97,564	\$101,466	\$13,882	16%
Percent of principals leaving DCPS		15%	37%	28%	25%	20%		
Percent of schools with new principals	27%	21%	14%	37%	24%	27%		
Number of central office employees		626.17				775.25	149	24%
Number with salaries \$100,000 or more (inflation adjusted)		35.00				99.00	64	183%
<b>DCPS Financial</b>								
Total per pupil expenditures DCPS LEA	\$12,724	\$13,830	\$15,676	\$16,492	\$17,711	\$17,574	\$3,744	27%
Increase in total per pupil expenditures		9%	13.3%	5.2%	7%	-1%		27%
Washington-Baltimore CPI inflation		4%	4.5%	0.2%	2%	3%		10%
<b>Test data: Scale scores National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2007</b>		<b>2009</b>		<b>2011</b>		
NAEP 4th grade reading	190	198		203		201	+3 points	2%
NAEP 8th grade reading	237	237		240		237	no change	0%
NAEP 4th grade math	210	214		220		222	+8 points	4%
NAEP 8th grade math	244	244		251		255	+11 points	5%
Achievement gap low income-non low income 4th grade reading	33	32		37		46	+14 points	44%
Achievement gap low income-non low income 8th grade reading	18	24		31		31	+7 points	29%
Achievement gap low income-non low income 4th grade math	25	23		35		40	+17 points	72%
Achievement gap low income-non low income 8th grade math	22	22		33		32	+10 points	45%
Achievement gap black-white 4th grade reading	66	67		62		64	-3 points	-4%
Achievement gap black-white 8th grade reading	70	N/A		N/A		59		

DC PUBLIC EDUCATION DATA SY 2006-SY 2011	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008 Transition yr	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	Change 2007-2011	
Achievement gap black-white 4th grade math	60	55		58		60	5 points	9%
Achievement gap black-white 8th grade math	79	N/A		N/A		73		
<b>Test data: SAT</b>								
SAT-verbal	416	414	409	405	416	415	+1 point	0%
SAT-math	404	399	393	392	407	404	+5 points	1%
<b>Test data: Percent proficient DC CAS</b>								
	1st year of test							
DC CAS-Elementary reading percent proficient	36%	37%	45%	48%	44%	43%	6 pp	
DC CAS-Secondary reading percent proficient	29%	29%	39%	39%	42%	43%	15 pp	
DC CAS-Elementary math percent proficient	26%	29%	40%	47%	43%	42%	13 pp	
DC CAS-Secondary math percent proficient	23%	26%	36%	39%	43%	45%	19 pp	
<b>Facilities</b>								
Number of DCPS facilities housing students	146	141	141	122	121	120	(21)	-15%
Average number of students per DCPS facility	375	370	348	366	367	380	10	3%
Number of charter facilities housing students	64	70	78	96	98	93	23	33%
Average number of students per charter facility	273	282	281	268	282	316	34	12%
Total school facilities in DC	210	211	219	218	219	213	2	1%
<b>Charter Schools</b>								
Number of charter schools	52	55	56	60	58	52	(3)	-5%
Number of charter school campuses	64	70	78	96	98	93	23	33%
Charter school total enrollment	17,473	19,733	21,947	25,729	27,660	29,366	9,633	49%