COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
COMMITTEE REPORT

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

TO: All Councilmembers

FROM: Councilmember David Grosso
Committee on Education

DATE: September 24, 2018

SUBJECT: Report on B22-0776, "DC Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018"

The Committee on Education, to which B22-0776, "DC Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018" was referred, reports favorably thereon, and recommends approval by the Committee of the Whole.

CONTENT

I. BACKGROUND AND NEED

B22-0776, the "DC Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018" was introduced on April 10, 2018 by Councilmembers Mary Cheh, Robert White Jr., Brianne K. Nadeau, Elissa Silverman, Charles Allen, Vincent Gray, and Chairman Phil Mendelson. As introduced, the bill establishes the District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board (Board) and the District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative (Collaborative). Among other things, it requires the Collaborative to audit District of Columbia school data and data collection policies and to conduct long-term education research. The Board's responsibilities are to provide guidance to the Collaborative, to report to the Council on District of

Columbia data management and collection policies, and to assist in soliciting funding grants from individuals, foundations, granting institutions, and other entities to finance the work of the Collaborative.

Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007

In 2007, the Council passed the Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007 ("PERAA") to allow the District of Columbia's leaders flexibility to make bold changes in governance and policy to improve the school system and student academic outcomes, which had underperformed for decades. PERAA transferred authority and control over D.C. Public Schools ("DCPS") from the elected Board of Education to the Mayor. In addition to giving control of the public schools to the Mayor, the law called for the creation of new entities to govern and administer the public schools, change lines of authority, and improve coordination among city officials. The legislation also required the Mayor to submit an annual independent evaluation of the city's public schools under PERAA each year beginning in 2008. That evaluation included an assessment of business and human resources practices, academic plans, and annual achievements. After five years, PERAA required a summative evaluation of the public-school system. For this summative evaluation, the District contracted with the National Research Council ("NRC"). The NRC report was formally released on June 3, 2015 titled *An Evaluation of Public Schools of the District of Columbia: Reform in a Changing Landscape*, and covered 2009-2013. Of the three recommendations outlined in the PERAA Five-Year report, the recommendation most relevant to Bill 22-0776 centered on the establishment of arrangements that would support an ongoing independent evaluation of the city's public education system.

D.C. Public Schools Graduation Scandal

In May of 2017, NPR and WAMU reported that, for the first time in school history, 100 percent of Ballou High School's graduated seniors had applied to and were accepted to college.[1] Six months later, NPR and WAMU released a follow up investigation using attendance documents, class rosters, and emails. They found that many students graduated despite severe chronic absenteeism.[2] The report sparked outrage across the city and raised questions around the validity of all data coming from education agencies in the city.

As a result of news coverage, the Office of the State Superintendent ("OSSE") engaged Alvarez & Marsal to conduct an audit and investigation to examine policy adherence and to review supporting grade and graduation data in DCPS high schools with a specific focus on Ballou High School. Alvarez & Marsal reviewed the records for the entire class of 2017 at Ballou High School as well as representative samples of students from the other 18 DCPS high schools.[3] The report found multiple instances of policy violations and that 34 percent of DCPS' class of 2017 seniors

[1] https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/06/29/524357071/every-senior-at-this-struggling-high-school-was-accepted-to-college

[2] https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/11/28/564054556/what-really-happened-at-the-school-where-every-senior-got-into-college

[3] https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/release_content/attachments/Report%20on%20DCPS%20Graduation%20and%20Attendance%20Outcomes%20-%20Alvarez%26Marsal.pdf

graduated with a diploma despite DCPS policy. Following the release of the report, DCPS removed the Chief of Secondary Schools.

In February 2018, one month after the release of the Alvarez & Marsal report, the Chancellor of DCPS and the Deputy Mayor of Education were removed due to the Chancellor's violation of the city's lottery system by enrolling his daughter in a school outside her attendance zone.[4] Having only served one year and 19 days, and coming off of the heels of a major scandal involving data, the removal of two of the three education sector leaders lowered the public trust in DCPS to a level not seen since PERAA.

National Models for Research Practice Partnerships

The idea of an education research partnership is not unique to D.C.—witnesses referenced similar entities in New Orleans, Louisiana and Chicago, Illinois during the hearing on Bill 22-0776. The New Orleans's Education Research Alliance ("ERA") is housed in the School of Liberal Arts at Tulane University and funded both through foundation and private dollars. It was created to understand the post hurricane Katrina school reforms in New Orleans.[5] It is not affiliated with any government entity. The UChicago Consortium was created after the passage of the Chicago School Reform Act. It is housed at the University of Chicago and is comprised of researchers from the University along with researchers from the school district and other organizations. It is also not housed or affiliated with any government entity.[6]

Committee Print

The committee print of Bill 22-0776 contains several changes from the introduced bill. Testimony demonstrated general consensus on two accounts – the need for research and an audit of data collection practices. While some who testified confused the two, the Committee was swayed by those with education research experience on the need to keep the two functions separate. Representatives for each research entity, many of whom would apply for the opportunity to be the primary grantee in the bill, agreed that auditing and research must be separate functions. A description of the committee print, with explanations for substantive changes, follows.

Education Research Collaborative and Steering Committee

The original bill made the Research Collaborative a division of the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor. While those testifying for the Auditor to perform this function felt it perfectly fine, the Committee had reservations and concerns about the ability of the Auditor to be a fair and collaborative partner in conducting research meant to improve practice. With that, the committee print explicitly calls for a request for a proposal process from a nongovernment research entity. That entity shall be known as the District of Columbia Research Collaborative.

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[4] https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/dc-politics/dc-public-schools-leader-to-resign-after-skirting-school-assignment-rules/2018/02/20/9b372230-1662-11e8-92c9-376b4fe57ff7_story.html?utm_term=.a4d5b1d61ddf
[5] https://educationresearchalliancenola.org/about
[6] https://consortium.uchicago.edu/about

The committee print also makes changes to the make-up of the committee responsible for setting the research agenda for the Collaborative. Whereas the original bill calls this an "Advisory Board" comprised of 16 voting members, the committee print creates a "Steering Committee" of 11 members, 7 voting and 4 nonvoting. In the committee print, it is the Steering Committee that makes nearly all of the decisions as it relates to the work and focus of the Collaborative. The Steering Committee is also charged with selecting the research entity that would be the primary grantee known as the Collaborative and set rules for the Collaborative's solicitation for private funds.

Additionally, the committee print ensures that all meetings held by the Steering Committee shall be subject to open meeting laws, in response to concerns around transparency and public feedback raised at the hearing.

Role of the District of Columbia Auditor

The original version of the bill was written as an amendment to the District of Columbia Auditor Subpoena and Oath Authority Act of 2004. It established the Research Collaborative as a subordinate division within the office of the Auditor, guided by the Auditor, to conduct an audit of data management and collection practices of all Local Education Agencies (LEAs), DCPS, Public Charter School Board ("PCSB"), the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education ("DME"), and OSSE. It would have also called on the Auditor to collect a broad range of District of Columbia public school data from 1998 to present, including data not germane to educational outcomes.

Rather than amend the District of Columbia Auditor Subpoena and Oath Authority Act of 2004, the committee print creates a stand-alone law which includes a requirement that the Auditor perform an audit of District of Columbia public school data policies. Testimony during the hearing spoke to a need to understand gaps in data collection policies across the different education agencies, which the Committee felt could be accomplished by that provision. There were concerns about limiting the focus of the Auditor to education data only, as well as concerns about the practicality and need of an audit of data going back to 30 years.

For the reasons explained above, the Committee supports this bill as amended.

II. LEGISLATIVE CHRONOLOGY

April 10, 2018	Bill 22-0776 Introduced by Councilmembers Cheh, Robert White Jr., Brianne K. Nadeau, Ellisa Silverman, Charles Allen, Vincent Gray, and Chairman Mendelson
April 10, 2018	Bill 22-0776 is referred to the Committee on Education and Committee of the Whole.
April 20, 2018	Notice of Intent to act on Bill 22-0776 is published in the *District of Columbia Register.*

June 15, 2018	Notice of Public Hearing is published in the *District of Columbia Register.*
July 13, 2018	The Committee of the Whole and Committee on Education held a joint public hearing on Bill 22-0776.
September 14, 2018	The Committee of the Whole and Committee on Education filed notice of a joint roundtable on Bill 22-0776.
September 18, 2018	The Committee of the Whole and Committee on Education held a joint roundtable on Bill 22-0776.
September 24, 2018	The Committee on Education considers and marks up Bill 22-0776.

III. POSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE

The following witnesses testified on behalf of the Executive.

Rick Cruz, Chairperson of the DC Public Charter School Board, presented testimony supporting B22-0776, but stated some concerns. Cruz pointed out the success of the University of Chicago-led collaborative. Cruz praised their analysis on many of the same issues faced in D.C. Although in support of the bill, Cruz stated that the research and auditing functions are intertwined. Cruz explained that, although he is not opposed to either the research or the audit function operating independently, he is concerned about the two working together. Cruz stated that the Chicago collaborative was independent and housed in the University, where he said their success stems from. To have the same success as in Chicago, Cruz testified that the research entity should be housed in a non-profit or a university. Cruz also pointed out the success of the Los Angeles and Baltimore research collaboratives, stating that they were also successful due to their independence. Cruz testified that schools may be hesitant to work as cooperatively with the Auditor's office if it is housed there. Cruz also urged the Council to consider the impacts the research collaborative will have on the Office of the State Superintendent of Education because PCSB depends on them to deliver timely data. Lastly, Cruz said that receiving the data late will affect their ability to fulfill their commitment to families.

Hanseul Kang, State Superintendent of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, testified that the bill would combine the research and audit functions in a way that will hinder the quality of the research. Superintendent Kang explained that, although the Auditor's office serves an important role for good governance, OSSE does not feel that the Auditor's office should house the research collaborative. She recognized previous testimony which described the

success of other city's research collaboratives being independent. Superintendent Kang stated that the Council should consider those models for the D.C. Education Research Collaborative. Superintendent Kang pointed out that section 203 of the bill, which requires the collaborative to audit data since 1998, is beyond OSEE's existence. Superintendent Kang also stated that the list of data requested is too broad and would cause the collaborative to go on a scavenger hunt through OSSE's data, which would require significant capacity from OSSE to improve data quality.

Superintendent Kang stated that there are several technical issues with the bill. First, lines 185-187 of the bill may curtail the Collaborative's ability to conduct high-quality and rigorous research and make merging data sets difficult. Second, OSSE is required to manage the sharing and use of the data they collect for reasons permitted under FERPA, therefore it is unclear if the Collaborative is seeking to collect and manage the data in place of education agencies. Kang stated that further examination and discussion of the role of the Collaborative and the District's education agencies is needed to ensure the protection of student privacy. Finally, Superintendent Kang testified that before releasing student level data, the researcher should demonstrate the ability to safeguard the data.

Ahnna Smith, Interim Deputy Mayor for Education, presented testimony that the bill would politicize the research agenda and reduce the likelihood of creating a true partnership between the research organization and the District of Columbia's schools and education agencies. Interim Deputy Mayor Smith stated that the collaborative needs to ensure data collection and reporting is accurate because the DME relies on that data to inform educational practice and policy throughout the D.C. education system. She stated that the bill has a political structure whereby four members of the Advisory Board are selected by the Mayor and ten are selected by the Council, and it would be housed in the Office of the D.C. Auditor which is a branch of the Council. Interim Deputy Mayor Smith stated that successful research-practice partnerships should not be driven by political concerns. She testified that the position and structure of the Collaborative in the Auditor's office conflates the audit and research functions; auditors do not have a say in how processes need to be implemented and the research does not tell how to manage or deliver a particular type of professional development. Interim Deputy Mayor also stated that the data requirements proposed in the bill are broad and redundant, and requesting data will not help with moving forward. Lastly, she stressed the importance of keeping the Collaborative independent of government and pointed to various successful models in other places like New York, North Carolina, and especially the Chicago Consortium which sits at the University of Chicago.

IV. COMMENTS OF ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONS

The Committee received no testimony or comments from Advisory Neighborhood Commissions.

V. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

The Committee of the Whole and the Committee on Education held a public hearing on Bill 22-0776 on July 13, 2018. The testimony summarized below is from that hearing as well as from individuals who submitted written testimony for the record. A copy of all written testimony received is attached to this report and the video recording of the hearing is available online at http://dc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4629. The Hearing Record is on file with the Office of the Secretary of the Council.

The Committee of the Whole and the Committee on Education also held a joint roundtable on Bill 22-0776 on September 18, 2018. The focus of this roundtable was to receive an update on The Executive's plan to partner with Urban Institute for a research collaborative. Bill 22-0776 was not discussed in detail. The video recording of the roundtable is available online at http://dc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=4&clip_id=4644.

The following witnesses testified at the hearing or submitted statements outside of the hearing:

Erin Roth, Senior Policy Analyst of Education Policy at the Center for American Progress, testified in support of B22-0776. Roth stated that research collaboratives provide a place to create real pathways to school improvement in the city. Roth testified that collaboratives will only work if guided by best practices in the field. Roth supports the establishment of the research collaborative in the D.C. Auditor's office because it would make the work and structure of the collaborative unique to D.C.. Roth stated that a successful collaborative intentionally sets out to build capacity by interacting, using, and questioning evidence to better apply it to their context. Roth also testified that a successful research collaborative should be involved in the demanding work of real improvement by creating evidence feedback loops that respond to instructional changes. Roth stated that the answers to the questions we do not often ask that have the most potential to motivate change. She stated that a true collaborative should involve and recognize all voices, especially those who are often left out. Roth recognized that no partnership starts with complete trust and respect; it is something that needs to be built overtime. Roth testified that although D.C.'s reform efforts have improved confidence in public schools, there are still vast inequalities in funding, resources, and teachers, among many other things. Roth said that the priority should be to tackle these inequalities.

Michael J. Feuer, Dean of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at George Washington University, presented testimony in support of B22-0776. Feuer testified on his past experience leading research collaboratives, all of which were related to education. Specifically, Feuer was charged with leading studies on topics related to education policy, and he also led the effort to design the mandated evaluation of the Public Education Reform Amendment Act. Feuer stated that debates of schooling are fraught with politics and ideology. Feuer stated that education research is not taken seriously, although there is evidence of its contribution to improvements in schooling, such as in Chicago, Long Beach, Baltimore, and New York. Feuer said that research should be shielded from partisan or ideological influences in order to be useful in policy. Feuer testified that the research should be transparent because it helps determine the quality of the research and credibility of policy decisions. Feuer also said that for research to be useful, it needs to be timely, relevant, and cost-conscious. Feuer said that researchers need to remember that they are asked for input, not to make decisions. Feuer testified that researchers should engage with policy makers, stakeholders, and educators early, often, and systematically. Feuer stressed the important of the collaborative not being a "watchdog" agency, one that would add another layer of accountability in a system plagued with criticism. The ideal partnership would validate existing data, make recommendations, and facilitate respectful discussions of strengths and weaknesses of potential policy actions. Feuer suggested that the collaborative be based in a university because they have the capacity to focus on the national and local contexts.

Rebecca Wolf, a Parent Representative from Amidon-Bowen PTA and LSAT, testified supporting B22-0776. Wolf testified that one concern is who will lead the research agenda. Wolf stated that the agenda must have input from those on the front line, like teacher and principals, delivering education every day. Wolf said that the research collaborative needs to either be housed in the Auditor's office to protect integrity, or the structure of who controls public education needs to be changed.

Marla Dean, Executive Director and CEO of Bright Beginnings, testified in support of the bill. Dean stated that the board should be comprised primarily of practitioners, those who do the work every day and represent a large section of the city. Dean wants to see the legislation focus on improving outcomes for underserved students, creating feedback loops, investing in trust through diverse stakeholder engagement, commit to high quality and transparent research, use knowledge learned to improve practice, and understand that a research collaborative is hard work and takes time.

Matthew Chingos, Senior Fellow and Director of the Education Policy Program at the Urban Institute presented testimony supporting B22-0776, with recommendations. Chingos stated that, based on experience as a researcher, independance can be achieved by housing the research practice partnership ("RPP") outside of city government. Chingos stated that the collaborative should be staffed with quantitative and qualitative researchers and a data science and research technology team. Independence is also achieved by providing a mechanism by which other

independent researchers can access the data, establish a transparent mechanism to gather input on the research agenda, and purse funding from diverse sources to enable sustainability. Chingos testified that there needs to be a strong working relationship between education agencies and researchers to prevent an RPP from failing.

Cathy Reilly, Executive Director of S.H.A.P.P.E., testified in support of B22-0776 However, she stated that she does not fully support the idea to have the research collaborative privately financed, but instead financed by the government.

Phyllis Jordan, Editorial Director of FutureED, gave testimony on behalf of Tomas Toch, Director of FutureED at Georgetown University, in support of B22-0776. However, Toch's testimony suggested that the research collaborative be housed at one of the city's major research universities, specifically in Georgetown's McCourt School of Public Policy's Beeck Center, rather than in the D.C. Auditor's office. Toch wrote that the research should be broadened to include intersections of education. The research collaborative should also study student health, public housing, food security, and other factors that impact student performance.

Mark Simon, Education Policy Associate at the Economic Policy Institute, testified in support of the bill, stating that the research collaborative should be housed in the Auditor's office. Simon testified that recent data scandals on graduation and suspension rates, and the 2015 National Academy Evaluation requires a short-term audit of D.C. education data. Simon said that the establishment of a research collaborative will require a process, which he suggested to first create a Government Accountability Office style department, make OSSE independent, and structure an RPP that involves one or multiple external research organizations.

Emily Langhorne, Education Policy Analyst at the Progressive Policy Institute, presented testimony on the background of the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research and how they have built their reputation as the nation's best education research center. Langhorne said that the Chicago Consortium came out of the 1988 Chicago School Reform Act.

Josh Boots, Executive Director of EmpowerK12, testified that B22-0776 contains a research collaborative that lacks structured governance that ensures trust between educators and scientists, has no independence from political interests, and is disconnected from the everyday application level at schools. Boots recommended amending the bill to use the D.C. Auditor's ability to ensure data quality within D.C. education agencies but separate out the research function.

Marcia Rucker presented testimony in support of B22-0776, but stated that the bill does not leave room for the point of view of the appropriate school-based professionals.

Steve Glazerman, Senior Fellow at Mathematica Policy Research, testified in support of the bill, with some recommendations. Glazerman suggested removing the term "research collaborative" and said that the Council should focus on the audit function. Glazerman testified that the legislation tries to accomplish too much at once. Glazerman stated that if the Council wants

to support a true research collaborative, it will require multiple funding sources for independence and sustainability. Glazerman said the most appropriate role for the Council is to provide infrastructure by creating a DC Education Data Center which will provide various education agencies like OSEE and DCPS with better ways to archive, store, and use their own data.

Fritz Mulhauser testified on six suggestions he had for the bill. Mulhauser stated that people in organizations decide what to make of new research. So, they will need to look at features of the D.C. school's work environment that will influence the collaborative's efforts on practice to include leadership, commitments to teaching materials and prior reforms, and internal communication so that the research is received, understood and used. Mulhauser said that the collaborative will need access to all existing data and authority to collect more if needed. Mulhauser said that there should be in depth communication in school around teaching and learning, and that if teachers already work together to discuss lessons, children's progress and ways to improve it, little effort to strengthen the workplace will be needed to accompany the research effort. Mulhauser testified that educators hope to get new tools from experts but the researchers are not tool designers. If the collaborative wants to meet the needs of the client, then their plan should include the kinds of projects to be completed and results delivered. Mulhauser also testified on independence; the research collaborative needs to establish itself as objective and trustworthy, which can be powerfully affected depending on where the collaborative is house, who leads it, and who funds it. Mulhauser said that the benefit of a collaborative will be pointless if the full participation of the charter schools is not there since half of the District's children are educated by them.

Mary Levy presented testimony in full support of B22-0776. Levy supports housing the research collaborative in the D.C. Auditor's Office, a data audit, and the Advisory board. However, Levy testified that the collaborative must be independent of the education chain of command in the executive and must include advocates from within or outside of the government. Levy also stated that those who make up the collaborative need to be local and continuously involved and familiar with D.C. public education.

Chelsea Coffin, Director of Education Policy Initiative at the D.C. Policy Center, testified that the research will fail if -- although both are critical to guide education policy and practice -- audit and research functions are combined. Coffin testified that the research aspect should be independent and separated from the government, not housed in the Auditor's office. Coffin gave examples of successful collaboratives, like the Chicago model, where the collaborative was housed in an institution or university and stated that D.C. should follow those models. Coffin included in her testimony a table of characteristics of other research practice partnerships.

Danica Petroshius testified that B22-0776 should focus on six principles: improving outcomes for underserved students, creating feedback loops between the research and practice, investing in trust through diverse stakeholder engagement, committing to high quality and

transparent research, using knowledge learned to improve practice, and understanding that a high-quality research collaborative is hard work and takes time.

Monica Herk, Vice President of Education Research at the Committee for Economic Development, presented testimony in support of B22-0776. Herk stated that she wants the collaborative to work together with all traditional public schools and public charter schools to use data to improve student outcomes. Herk testified that, in order to accomplish that, the collaborative needs to work alongside public-school administrators and educators, not as an evaluator of DCPS performance. Herk also pointed to the Chicago Consortium's success and stated that their model should be one that the District should follow.

Suzanne Wells testified in support of the legislation, stating that it makes sense to house the Research Collaborative in the DC Auditor's office. Wells pointed out that section 203 of the bill requires data management and collection practices audit. Wells said that a large amount of data is already collected, but not easily accessible. To do this right, a lot of time and money needs will be spent, but it will be worth it.

Ed Lazere, Executive Director of the DC Fiscal Policy Institute, testified supporting the bill but had a few recommendations. Regarding the Advisory Board, Lazere recommended that slots on the Advisory Board include those with K-12 education research experience and people with experience developing and managing large databases. Lazere suggested that the rules of the Advisory Board ensure that the community representation reflects the entire city, meaning it should include DCPS and Charter school parents as well. Finally, Lazere wants to see an application process to ensure the board receives members with relevant experience. On data collection and data privacy, Lazere said that it is not clear if the collaborative would be a better fit to conduct research rather than just having OSEE do it since they already serve as the main source of education data. Lazere suggested adding provisions to strengthen OSSE's data collection and provisions for data sharing with the collaborative, with a data sharing agreement. Lazere also had recommendations on the structure of the collaborative, stating that the District should work to move the collaborative to a permanent location such as in an independent D.C. government entity rather than having it stay in the Auditor's office. Lazere said that the Collaborative could be a stand-alone independent DC government agency with an executive director hired by the board or make OSSE an independent agency and house it there.

Karen Williams, President of the DC State Board of Education, testified that the reports required of DCPS, PCSB, OSSE, and the DME go unread or are submitted without many knowing they exist. Williams supports independent research, but the collaborative will be more effective without the need to rely on FOIA request to gain access to needed data. Williams said that the bill does not solve the problem of data being withheld. Williams testified that without strict deadlines and consequences for failure, agencies will continue to ignore requests for data. Instead of creating

another layer of bureaucracy, William said the District should use an existing entity like the State Board.

Faith Gibson Hubbard, Chief Student Advocate at the Office of the Student Advocate, presented testimony that the proposed Education Research Advisory Board and Education Research Collaborative could address gaps in data collection and management. However, B22-0776 does not address other challenges of OSA's current structure coupled with their need to access data and its independent collection analysis. Hubbard said that the roles and responsibilities of education agencies need to be clearly defined to avoid duplication of efforts. Hubbard testified that before a research entity of this kind is created, we need to know how the creation of this entity will directly impact and benefit schools, LEAs, students, and families. Hubbard also stated that we need to address questions like if there is a plan for how district-wide and LEAs should use the data, how will schools be supported in collecting data that they are not already colleting, will it improve families' access to data and aide their decision-making, and is the Auditor's office the right place to house the collaborative.

VI. IMPACT ON EXISTING LAW

Bill 22-0776 establishes an Education Research Collaborative and Steering Committee to examine, research, and provide recommendations on education policies and practices. Additionally, it directs the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor to conduct an audit of education data management and collection practices audit issue a report by October 1, 2019, on the data management and data collection practices of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, and the Public Charter School Board

VII. FISCAL IMPACT

The approval of Bill 22-0776 will have a fiscal impact. The fiscal impact statement issued by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer is attached.

VIII. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

<u>Section 1</u> States the short title of the bill as the ""District of Columbia Education Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018."

<u>Section 2</u> Establishes the District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative which will be comprised of a prime grantee and any sub grantees, sets reporting standards for the Collaborative, and standards for contracts and

grants that shall be rewarded to the Collaborative. Section 2 also creates a Steering Committee composed of 11 members, 7 voting and 4 non-voting.

Section 3 — Calls for the District of Columbia Auditor to conduct an audit of education data management and collection practices audit issue a report by October 1, 2019, on the data management and data collection practices of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, and the Public Charter School Board.

Section 4 — Provides the fiscal impact statement and effective data.

IX. COMMITTEE ACTION

On September 24, 2018, the Committee met to consider Bill 22-0776, the "District of Columbia Education Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018". The meeting was called to order at 10:10am, and Bill 22-0776 was the second item on the agenda. After ascertaining a quorum (Chairperson Grosso and Councilmembers Allen, R. White, and T. White present), Chairperson Grosso described the process for developing the legislation and the major changes to the committee print.

Councilmember Allen thanked the Chairperson for his work and offered his support of the bill out of the Committee. He noted the timeline and Steering Committee composition as two areas he would like to continue working on when the bill goes to the Committee of the Whole.

Councilmember R. White thanked the Chairperson for his work and offered his support for the bill out of the Committee. He noted that the Steering Committee has many District agencies and would like to see balance to ensure parents, students, and teachers have more input. He also mentioned the number of outreach meetings of the Steering Committee being too few.

Councilmember T. White offered his support for the bill and would like to ensure Bill 22-0776 works well with other education bills working through the Committee.

After every member had an opportunity to speak, Chairperson Grosso moved the committee print and committee report *en bloc*, with leave for staff to make technical and conforming changes. The vote on the print was unanimous with Chairperson Grosso and Councilmembers Allen, R. White, and T. White voting in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:20am.

X. ATTACHMENTS

1. Bill 22-0776 As Introduced
2. Secretary's Referral Memo
3. Written Testimony and Comments
4. Legal Sufficiency Determination

5. Fiscal Impact Statement
6. Committee Print for B22-0776

Chairman Phil Mendelson

Councilmember Mary M. Cheh

Councilmember Charles Allen

Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.

Councilmember Vincent C. Gray

Councilmember Brianne Nadeau

Councilmember Elissa Silverman

A BILL

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To amend the District of Columbia Auditor Subpoena and Oath Authority Act of 2004 to establish the District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and the District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative, and to require the Collaborative to undertake an audit of District school data and data collection policies.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the "District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018".

Sec. 2. The District of Columbia Auditor Subpoena and Oath Authority Act of 2004, effective April 22, 2004 (D.C. Law 15-146; D.C. Official Code § 1–301.171 et seq.), is amended as follows:

(a) The short title is amended to strike "Subpoena and Oath Authority".

(b) The existing text is designated as Title I.

40 (c) A new Title II is added to read as follows:

41 "Sec. 201. District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board.

42 "(a) There is established the District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board

43 ("Advisory Board"). The Advisory Board shall:

44 "(1) Provide guidance to the District of Columbia Education Research

45 Collaborative ("Collaborative");

46 "(2) Report to the Council on District data management and collection policies,

47 the Advisory Board's guidance of the Collaborative, and other matters; and

48 "(3) Assist in soliciting funding grants from individuals, foundations, granting

49 institutions, and other entities to finance the work of the Collaborative.

50 "(b) The Advisory Board shall be composed of 16 voting members, who shall be

51 residents of the District of Columbia, and be appointed for terms of 3 years. The Advisory

52 Board's membership shall include:

53 "(1) 4 members, appointed by the Mayor, as follows:

54 "(A) 1 representative from the District of Columbia Public Schools

55 ("DCPS") Central Office;

56 "(B) 1 representative from the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education

57 ("DME");

58 "(C) 1 representative from the Office of the State Superintendent of

59 Education's ("OSSE") Division of Data Assessment & Research; and

60 "(D) 1 representative from the District of Columbia Public Charter School

61 Board;

62 "(2) 2 members who are representatives from the State Board of Education
63 ("SBOE"); and
64 "(3) 10 members, appointed by the Council, as follows:
65 "(A) 3 representatives from District-based non-profits with a focus on
66 public education;
67 "(B) 3 members of DCPS or public charter school parent organizations;
68 "(C) 2 community representatives who reside in the District;
69 "(D) 1 representative from the Council of School Officers; and
70 "(E) 1 representative from the Washington Teachers Union.
71 "(c)(1) Within 180 days after the effective date of this act, the Mayor shall appoint the
72 Mayor's appointees for the Advisory Board.
73 "(2) Within 180 days after the effective date of this act, the SBOE shall adopt a
74 resolution designating the members of the SBOE members who will serve on the Advisory
75 Board.
76 "(3) Within 180 days after the effective date of this act, the Council shall adopt a
77 resolution with the names of the Council's appointees.
78 "(d) Within 90 days after completion of the activities described in paragraphs (c)(1),
79 (c)(2), or (c)(3) of this subsection, whichever is last, the Advisory Board shall hold its first
80 meeting.
81 "(e) Within 180 days after the Advisory Board's first meeting, the Advisory Board shall:
82 "(1) develop its own rules of procedure, except that the rules of procedure shall
83 provide that:

84 "(A) The Advisory Board shall meet at least in March and September of

85 each year;

86 "(B) All meetings shall be open to the public; and

87 "(C) A quorum shall consist of a majority plus 1 of the voting members.

88 "(2) Set requirements for the Collaborative to report to the Advisory Board; and

89 "(3) Develop initial research and data collection priorities for the Collaborative.

90 "Sec. 202. District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative.

91 "(a) There is established, as a subordinate division within the Office of the District of

92 Columbia Auditor ("Auditor"), the District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative

93 ("Collaborative").

94 "(b) The Collaborative shall:

95 "(1) Manage the school education data collected under subsection 4(a) of this act;

96 "(2) Collect and manage updates to the data described under section 4(a) of this

97 act, and additional, relevant data, on at least an annual basis;

98 "(3) Conduct long-term education research:

99 "(A) With the guidance of the Auditor, the Advisory Board, and the

100 Collaborative's Executive Director; or

101 "(B) At the request of the Council or State Board of Education ("SBOE"),

102 upon the passage of a resolution by the Council or the SBOE describing the scope of the

103 research.

104 "(4) Produce reports to the Mayor, the Auditor, the Advisory Board, SBOE, and

105 the Council on research projects, including:

106 "(A) For all research projects, final reports that include utilized data,
107 explanations of gaps in data, explanations of gaps in the District's capacity to collect data,
108 findings, and recommendations, including recommendations for further research;
109 "(B) For research projects lasting 2 years or longer, annual updates to the
110 Auditor, the Advisory Board, SBOE, and the Council;
111 "(5) Produce a report to the Mayor, the Auditor, the Advisory Board, SBOE, and
112 the Council each July on the state of public education in the District;
113 "(6) Produce an annual report to the Auditor, the Advisory Board, SBOE, and the
114 Council, on the Collaborative's finances, including information on grants received, active
115 contracts, and project expenditures; and
116 "(7) Where appropriate, award contracts on a competitive basis to private
117 organizations with an expertise in education policy or data management to undertake research
118 projects on behalf of the Collaborative.
119 "(c)(1) The Collaborative shall be headed by an Executive Director, appointed by the
120 Auditor, who shall organize, administer, and manage the functions and authorities assigned to the
121 Collaborative.
122 "(2) The Executive Director may employ and retain staff for the Collaborative,
123 and may retain as independent contractors professionals or consultants necessary to carry out the
124 planning, development, and operations of the Collaborative.
125 "(3) Within 180 days after the effective date of this act, the Auditor shall appoint
126 the first Executive Director for the Collaborative.
127 "(d) The Collaborative shall have access to papers, things, or property in accordance with
128 § 1-204.55(c).

129 "(e) The Collaborative shall conduct public meetings at least once per year to solicit
130 information and feedback on the District's school system, including practices, policies,
131 procedures, and data for District of Columbia Public Schools ("DCPS"), the District of Columbia
132 Office of the State Superintendent ("OSSE"), the District of Columbia Public Chart School
133 Board ("PCSB"), and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education ("DME"). The
134 Collaborative shall provide notice to the public of these meetings at least 30 days in advance in
135 the District of Columbia Register.
136 "(f) Within 90 days after January 1, 2021, the Collaborative shall issue a report to the
137 Auditor, the Advisory Board, the Council, and SBOE that provides assessments of:
138 "(1) The current structure, administration, and guidance of the Collaborative,
139 including recommendations with respect thereto that the Collaborative may deem advisable; and
140 "(2) Funding for the Collaborative, including analysis of best practices of other
141 school research consortia and an assessment of the Collaborative's grant seeking efforts.
142 "Sec. 203. Data Management and Collection Practices Audit.
143 "(a) The Collaborative shall conduct an audit of data and data management and collection
144 practices of the District of Columbia Public Schools ("DCPS"), the District of Columbia Office
145 of the State Superintendent ("OSSE"), the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education ("DME"),
146 the Public Charter School Board ("PCSB"), and individual Local Education Agencies ("LEA").
147 In undertaking this audit, the Collaborative shall:
148 "(1) Collect District public school data from 1998 to present, including:
149 "(A) Enrollment data, including:
150 "(i) School lottery applications and results;
151 "(ii) School enrollment numbers, including data on attrition;

152 "(iii) Enrollment projections;

153 "(iv) Early childhood education enrollment numbers; and

154 "(v) Adult education program enrollment numbers; and

155 "(B) Student data, including:

156 "(i) Standardized test scores;

157 "(ii) Student course transcripts;

158 "(iii) Attendance and truancy data;

159 "(iv) Data on suspensions, expulsions, and other disciplinary

160 actions;

161 "(v) Graduation and dropout data; and

162 "(vi) GED completion data; and

163 "(C) School and facilities data, including:

164 "(i) Food service and student nutrition data;

165 "(ii) Course catalogs, course postings, and other materials related

166 to course offerings;

167 "(iii) Curriculum standards, policies, and materials on specific

168 instructional requirements;

169 "(iv) Data on school staffing, including retention and attrition data;

170 "(v) Salary data;

171 "(vi) School and classroom capacity data; and

172 "(vii) Facilities data, including building size, fields and

173 recreational space records; and

174 "(D) Budget data; and

175 "(E) Results of surveys administered to DCPS students, staff,

176 administrators.

177 "(2) Collect current DCPS and District public charter school data management

178 and collection standards and protocols;

179 "(3) Collect federal, state, District, and LEA data collection requirements and

180 mandates to which DCPS, OSSE, or DME are subject;

181 "(4) Conduct a review of comparable school jurisdictions to identify best

182 practices for data management and collection standards and protocols; and

183 "(5) Conduct a review of education research consortiums in large, urban cities in

184 the United States.

185 "(b) Where any item described in subsection (a) of this section is found to include

186 information sufficient to identify a particular student, that identifying information shall be

187 removed prior to the item's release to the Collaborative.

188 "(c) Within 180 days after the establishment of the Collaborative, DCPS, OSSE, DME,

189 PCSB shall furnish to the Collaborative the data listed at subsection (a) of this section. Where,

190 after exhaustive search, the items listed at subsection (a) of this section are not found or are

191 available only in part, DCPS, OSSE, DME, and PCSB shall provide the Collaborative with a

192 written account of the missing data and a description of the search to locate the data.

193 "(d) Within 1 year after the Collaborative is furnished with the data listed at subsection

194 (a) of this section, the Collaborative shall issue a report of its findings to the Mayor, the Auditor,

195 the Advisory Board, the State Board of Education ("SBOE"), and the Council. This report shall:

196 "(1) Include, in appendices or through a link to a digital repository, all data and

197 materials collected under subsection (a) of this section;

198 "(2) List all items DCPS, OSSE, DME, PCSB identified under subsection (c) of
199 this section as missing or incomplete;
200 "(3) Identify gaps in the District's collection or retention of public school data;
201 "(4) Identify gaps in the District's school data management and collection
202 standards and protocols;
203 "(5) Identify existing barriers to LEA's ability to collect data; and
204 "(6) Provide recommendations to the Mayor, the Auditor, the Advisory Board,
205 SBOE, the Council, LEAs, and the Collaborative for enhancing the District's public school data
206 management and collection standards and protocols, and for best practices for establishing the
207 Collaborative."
208 Sec. 3. Section 2(f) of the Confirmation Act of 1978, effective March 3, 1979 (D.C. Law
209 2-142; D.C. Official Code § 1-523.01(f)), is amended to read as follows:
210 (1) Paragraph (54) is amended by striking the phrase "; and" and inserting a
211 semicolon in its place;
212 (2) Paragraph (55) is amended by striking the phrase "38." and inserting "38;" in
213 its place;
214 (3) Paragraph (56) is amended by striking the phrase "Title 2." and inserting
215 "Title 2; and" in its place; and
216 (4) A new Paragraph (57) is inserted that reads as follows:
217 "(57) The District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board.".
218 Sec. 4. Fiscal impact statement.

219 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal
220 impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975,
221 approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).
222 Sec. 5. Effective date.
223 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
224 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as
225 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December
226 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of
227 Columbia Register.

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20004

Memorandum

To : Members of the Council

From : Nyasha Smith, Secretary to the Council

Date : April 11, 2018

Subject : Referral of Proposed Legislation

Notice is given that the attached proposed legislation was introduced in the Legislative Meeting on Tuesday, April 10, 2018. Copies are available in Room 10, the Legislative Services Division.

TITLE: "District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018", B22-0776

INTRODUCED BY: Councilmembers Cheh, R. White, Nadeau, Silverman, Allen, Gray, and Chairman Mendelson

CO-SPONSORED BY: Councilmembers Bonds and T. White

The Chairman is referring this legislation sequentially to the Committee on Education until September 30, 2018 and then to the Committee of the Whole.

Attachment

cc: General Counsel
Budget Director
Legislative Services

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE & COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
NOTICE OF PUBLIC ROUNDTABLE
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

CHAIRMAN PHIL MENDELSON
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
&
COUNCILMEMBER DAVID GROSSO, CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

ANNOUNCE A PUBLIC ROUNDTABLE

on

Bill 22-776, District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018

on

Tuesday, September 18, 2018
3:00 p.m., Hearing Room 412, John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Council Chairman Phil Mendelson and Councilmember David Grosso announce a joint public roundtable before the Committee of the Whole and the Committee on Education on Bill 22-776, the "District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018." The roundtable will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 18, 2018 in Hearing Room 412 of the John A. Wilson Building. **A public hearing on this bill was previously held on July 13, 2018.**

The stated purpose of Bill 22-776 is to establish the District of Columbia Education Advisory Board and the District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative. The Collaborative would be incubated in the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor and is meant to emulate other education research collaboratives around the country, including those in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Houston, Chicago, New Orleans, New York, and Los Angeles. Specifically, the Collaborative will conduct research on best practices around the country, as well as research the practices and policies being implemented in the District, and the District would use the data collected and research done by the Collaborative to inform its education policies and practices moving forward.

This roundtable is limited to invited guests only. Copies of the legislation can be obtained through the Legislative Services Division of the Secretary of the Council's office or on http://lims.dccouncil.us. Roundtable materials, including a draft witness list, can be accessed 24 hours in advance of the roundtable at http://www.chairmanmendelson.com/circulation.

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE & COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
WITNESS LIST

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

CHAIRMAN PHIL MENDELSON
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
&
COUNCILMEMBER DAVID GROSSO, CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

ANNOUNCE A JOINT PUBLIC HEARING

on

Bill 22-776, District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018

on

Friday, July 13, 2018
10:00 a.m., Council Chambers, John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

WITNESS LIST

1.	Betsy Wolf	Parent Representative, Amidon-Bowen Elementary School
2.	Dr. Michael Feuer	Dean, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, George Washington University
3.	Chelsea Coffin	Director of Education Policy Initiative, DC Policy Center
4.	Erin Roth	Senior Policy Analyst, Center for American Progress
5.	Faith Gibson Hubbard	District of Columbia Chief Student Advocate
6.	Danica Petroshius	Vice President, Capitol Hill Public School Parents Organization
7.	Mary Levy	Public Witness
8.	Fritz Mulhauser	Public Witness
9.	Suzanne Wells	Public Witness

10.	Monica Herk	Vice President, Education Research, Committee for Economic Development
11.	Ruth Wattenberg	Ward 3 Representative, State Board of Education
12.	Jeff Noel	Public Witness
13.	Brennan Parton	Director, Policy and Advocacy, Data Quality Campaign
14.	Dr. Marla Dean	Executive Director, Bright Beginnings
15.	Matthew Chingos	Senior Fellow and Director, Education Policy Program, Urban Institute
16.	Cathy Reilly	Executive Director, S.H.A.P.P.E
17.	Phyllis Jordan	Editorial Director, FutureEd, Georgetown University
18.	Mark Simon	Education Policy Analyst, Economic Policy Institute
19.	Laura Fuchs	Executive Board Member, Washington Teachers' Union
20.	Emily Langhorne	Analyst and Project Manager, Progressive Policy Institute
21.	Ed Lazere	Executive Director, DC Fiscal Policy Institute
22.	Steve Glazerman	Director of State and Local Partnerships, Mathematica Policy Research
23.	Josh Boots	Executive Director, EmpowerK12
24.	Marcia Rucker	Public Witness
25.	Rick Cruz	Chairman, Public Charter School Board
26.	Hanseul Kang	Superintendent, Office of the State Superintendent of Education
27.	Ahnna Smith	Interim Deputy Mayor for Education

Testimony of Erin Roth
Senior Policy Analyst, Education Policy
Center for American Progress
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July 13, 2018
Council Hearing on Bill 22-776, District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony at this important hearing.

I am offering testimony today on behalf of the Center for American Progress, an independent nonpartisan policy institute dedicated to bold, progressive ideas, leadership, and action. CAP supports the goals of this legislation establishing a research collaborative to benefit the District's schools and students. I have worked in schools, research, and policy settings, including one position in a research collaborative and another position in a very similar role. Research collaboratives offer a critical bridge between practice and research and a real pathway toward the urgent school improvement that is so desperately needed across our city's schools.

While research collaboratives can be a positive force in the work of school improvement, they will only be productive and useful for all students and schools when guided by best practices in the field. Most importantly, these best practices easily show that a successful research collaborative is not motivated by being a watch dog, but rather improvement for those most impacted by educational reform. This legislation, establishing a research collaborative in the DC Auditor's office, includes the important local capacity building needed to make the work and structure of the collaborative unique to DC. It also makes the collaborative responsive to the urgency stakeholders feel around truly improving schools for our most underserved students.

In my experience and research, the following characteristics are the fundamental must-haves of any successful research collaborative.

First, a true research collaborative must intentionally set out to build capacity. Like creating strong professional development, building capacity requires being responsive to the needs of stakeholders and learning together to gain new skills and knowledge. For example, after substantive collaboration, practitioners should be able to interact with, use, and question evidence to better apply it to their own local context. Similarly, researchers should be able to understand the relevance and limitations of research not rooted in collaborative practice and improve their translation of research into clear, concise terminology.

Second, the work of capacity building is fundamentally linked to the one of the most important goals of a true research collaborative - to be integrally involved in the demanding work of real improvement. Research embedded with practice means meeting practitioners where they are and iteratively, continuously creating evidence feedback loops responsive to changes in instruction, particularly for practitioners working with our most underserved students. All the while engaging, adjusting, sharing, and re-evaluating throughout the life of every research project. It should be no shock to any of us here,

that the research supporting real school improvement does not, in sum, usually look like an impact study. It is insufficient to know the impact of one program on one or two key outcomes without knowing how to improve further and it is insufficient to not know and study what is gained and lost along the way.

In addition, it is critical to understand the power inherent in setting a research agenda to study and improve public education. In fact, it is often the questions that we don't ask whose answers hold the most potential to motivate real change for those most impacted by education reform. A true research partnership will recognize and involve all voices, particularly those usually left out of the agenda setting process. These stakeholders are a collaborative's most critical partners.

Importantly, there are no partnerships that start with inherent trust and respect for everyone at the first Board meeting. Like any relationship, that trust must be built slowly, over time and there will be bumps in the road. These expected bumps are why it is crucial that any partner be invested in long-term, hyper-local engagement with teachers, school leaders, parents, students, instructional superintendents, data analysts, and more. A true partner must be motivated by being in constant conversation with these real people. In turn, a collaborative researcher's products will be vastly improved - more useful, and more accurate.

Finally, and most importantly, all of us here also know that while DC's reform efforts over the years have led to more confidence in our public schools and some key areas of progress for students, the education system remains rife with vast inequities in funding, resources, teachers, leaders, facilities, and more. The primary goal of all work in DC education must be to tackle these inequities head on. It should be the driving fire behind improvement, every day.

To that end, we in DC, have a responsibility to own that work and support it. This legislation gives additional urgency to owning those inequities and solving them, to incubating and supporting this work, and to sustaining it by building the institutional knowledge needed to prevent these inequities from recurring or worsening. This ownership is important not simply because it involves shared accountability but because it has the power to build and institutionalize a culture of evidence and improvement. No stakeholder truly invested in our public education system wants only a "gotcha" moment – a diagnosis without a remedy. We want better schools - first and foremost for communities most in need. This collaborative is only one piece of the puzzle, to be sure, but if implemented with integrity and ownership, it has the potential to build a pathway toward real improvement for students, schools, and families.

JOINT PUBLIC HEARING
on
Bill 22-776, District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018

July 13, 2018

Testimony of Michael J. Feuer, PhD
Dean, Graduate School of Education and Human Development
The George Washington University

*

Good morning Chairman Mendelson, Mr. Grasso, and members of the Council.

My name is Michael Feuer, and I am the Dean of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at the George Washington University, a position I've held since 2010. It's a pleasure to be with you again and to share thoughts about Bill 22-776.

I support the bill, which articulates a continuing commitment to bringing independent research to bear on efforts to improve our public-school system. I say this as a 30+ year resident of DC, and as the proud parent of two DCPS alumni. Congratulations to Councilmember Cheh and co-sponsors for pressing forward with this bill, which lays the groundwork for an essential next step in the improvement of education in DC.

Throughout nearly four decades working at the sometimes dangerous intersection of science and policy, much of it related to education, I have seen – and helped advance – the role of credible, independent, and objective evidence in federal, state, and local policy-making. At the now-defunct Office of Technology Assessment of the US Congress I led a major study of educational testing in the US;

at the National Research Council of what is now the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, I was in charge of studies on many topics in education policy, and led the effort to design the mandated evaluation of the Public Education Reform Amendment Act (PERAA). In 2003 I was elected to the National Academy of Education (NAEd), and later served as its elected President for four years; the NAEd specializes in producing, synthesizing, and communicating research to improve education. At GW I brought the Center on Education Policy into our education school and led the formation of **EdCORE** (the Education Consortium for Research and Evaluation), which provided data and analysis to support the second phase of the National Academies' evaluation; key findings of the Academies' 2015 report are often cited by members of this Council and other proponents of rational policy analysis for DC education.

I would like to make four general comments based on my personal and professional experience and then tie them to Bill 22-776. I am an academic, but I'll try to get to the point.

- First, because Americans cherish education, rightly, as the most important determinant of the quality of life for themselves and their children, debates about the financing, governance, and content of schooling are fraught with politics and ideology. As long as we are a democracy, the debates will continue. The question, then, is whether and how scientific research can play a role. Why are we researchers invited to the policy table at all? What do we contribute to the public discourse? *The short answer is that in education, as in many other areas, Americans know that better decisions often can and should be informed by objective inquiry.* And although in some quarters education research is not taken seriously, there is mounting evidence of its contributions to the improvement of schools and schooling – examples from places

such as Chicago, Long Beach, Baltimore, and New York are well known. Even if today the appetite for factual evidence seems to be at a low point in the top reaches of the federal government, it is heartening to see robust affirmation of the idea here in our great city.

- Second, for research to be useful in policy it must be shielded to the extent possible from partisan or ideological influence. I do not mean to suggest naively that researchers are ever completely free of their own beliefs or biases. We aren't: researchers are only human, and most of us harbor wishes that our findings will validate our values and dreams. But we are trained to look for evidence that challenges our prior viewpoints, and we know that for research-based evidence to matter, especially regarding the most politicized issues, we must *aspire* to keep evidence ahead of advocacy. For research to be used, its users must be confident that the data – and interpretations of that data – on which they are relying represent honest efforts to examine the information neutrally and reach scientifically defensible conclusions. If scientific inquiry becomes just another voice in the cacophony of opinion, we jeopardize the invitation to participate and lose the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to complex and urgent decisions.

- Third, and related, *trust* is an important determinant of the utility of research. Researchers need to be transparent about how their work is conducted and paid for, where the data are maintained, who reviews the results, and how clearly those results are communicated. Transparency helps users determine the quality of research and its credibility for policy decisions. As DC contemplates new or improved arrangements to have research play an active

role in the future of our public schools, trust in data and its meanings should be a high priority.

- My fourth point concerns what we refer to in my business as "evidentiary standards." Here is the challenge: on the one hand, good researchers apply methods appropriate to the questions they are addressing and aspire to the highest standards of empirical inquiry. On the other hand, for research to be useful to policy makers it needs to be timely, relevant, and cost-conscious. This means that holding out for pristine methodologies that might produce definitive evidence – letting ideal be an enemy of good, to paraphrase Voltaire – is not always rational. Good policy requires appropriate rather than exhaustive deliberation, based on a blend of foundational knowledge, experience, the will to experiment cautiously, a tolerance of risk and imperfections, and most importantly the pledge to refine and adjust programs based on rigorous and continuous evaluation.

How do these concepts translate to my position on Bill 22-776?

1) Whatever entity is established, whether as an offshoot of EdCORE or a variation on that model of a consortium, the researchers involved must remember that they are asked for input – but are not typically called upon to make decisions. That privilege is saved for our elected officials. Of course this does not mean researchers should be shy about expressing their views, only that they should acknowledge their role in the ecology of politics and policy.

2) For researchers to be respected and for their work to be relevant, they need to engage early, often, and systematically with policy makers, educators, and stakeholders. We need to hear their concerns and incorporate their questions and realities into our work. At the other end of the process, results need to be framed in clear language and accompanied by relevant statistics.

3) There is a difference between the kind of partnership that I believe Bill 22-776 seeks to establish and a so-called "watchdog" agency. The former enables and supports a cooperative approach to the analysis of complex problems and to the collective search for sensible solutions. A watchdog agency, on the other hand, would add another layer of institutional accountability in a system already awash in public criticism. We may agree that the city needs or wants more muscular oversight, but I would respectfully suggest that our current system also – and more urgently – needs to rebuild trust in data and the value of evidence-informed interventions. The word *partnership* connotes a culture of trust and communication: priorities of the new entity should be to validate existing data, make recommendations on what additional information would be useful, and, most importantly, facilitate mutually respectful discussions of the strengths and weaknesses of potential policy actions.

4) The credibility of the research and evaluations conducted through the new entity will hinge on the extent to which they are shielded from partisan ideological influence. Therefore, the word *independent* is central in debates about how and where this new enterprise will be governed. Although critics have already pointed to risks of placing the consortium in the Office of the DC Auditor (ODCA), I believe that is a good place to start – even if, within some

reasonable period of time, other options emerge that appear to be advantageous. Given the complexities of DC governance, placing the research entity *anywhere* would provoke legitimate questions and politically-inspired pushback. For its part, ODCA needs to be willing to view its role as perhaps temporary, pending evidence of how things work.

5) Meanwhile, I suggest that we continue to consider the advantages of a consortium based in a university in collaboration with local and national researchers. That may sound self-serving, but in fact, successful partnerships all around the country have universities as their hub. Part of the mission of universities (like mine) is to serve our community, and we have a good reputation for carrying out that mission as well as the capacity to focus on both the national and local contexts. University-based schools of education, such as the one I lead, have developed strong ties with local schools, educational agencies, and research organizations; and with our colleagues across campus we prepare students to become "citizen leaders" devoted to the improvement of education. In any case, today the residents of DC want responsive action, so let's test the basic idea and prove that DC is ready for a sustainable partnership. Starting with ODCA makes good sense, even as we remain open to other options down the road.

6) Will ODCA oversee a process that assures independence? I believe that is the intent, and it therefore should be stated explicitly. A first step for the new collaborative and its advisory board should be to lead an informed discussion of mechanisms to ensure open communication and independent inquiry – at the same time. This discussion should include the perspectives of experts who have

studied and worked in policy-research settings; it should lead to protocols for report review, funding, dissemination, and other subtleties of academic inquiry; and it should provide guidelines for relations between the new entity and the many political and private interests in the city. Such discussion should not be delayed, nor should it become hostage to standards of perfection that rule out timely progress.

7) A determinant of the success of this venture will be the willingness of all the players – researchers, policy makers, community organizers, teachers, families, and the media – to eschew "silver bullet" solutions to our city's education problems and aim for sensible options rather than seductive, but ultimately disappointing, "optimal" fixes. We have suffered enough in this town from wild pendulum swings between irrational exuberance about educational progress and despair about stagnation. Now we need to nurture a spirit of inquiry that promotes informed strategies coupled with continuous evaluation. We need to acknowledge flaws in the management and leadership of our schools and be willing to address them, to consider adapting evidence-informed programs that have been tried elsewhere, and to reject reforms that have proved to be disappointing or harmful. Moving ahead with Bill 22-776, we need to pledge to maintain an open, transparent, and trusting relationship between the research community and the general public.

Wolf Testimony for the Research Collaborative
July 2018

My name is Betsy Wolf. I am here today because I am a researcher who conducts independent evaluations in education. But I'm mostly here today because I have a first-row seat of one of the lowest performing elementary schools in the city, where my son has attended for the past three years. I see a school that is left behind by choice, with parents opting out of our neighborhood school for a "better" one. I see a school that has been identified as a "priority" school by DCPS, yet not prioritized.

I am here today to testify in support of the research collaborative because I understand how the research world works. Districts hire research firms to address a specific research agenda. Moreover, when a district doesn't like the outcomes of the study, the district may ask that the findings not be shared. Although researchers have the right to publish the findings, they are put in a position of choosing between burying the work and pleasing the district OR publishing the work and burning the bridge with the district that may provide them with future work. It's not a coincidence that the research firms previously hired by DCPS to study IMPACT (the teacher evaluation system) published fairly glowing reports, despite very low teacher morale.

That is why I support the research collaborative that would be bigger and broader than a contract with any single research firm. What concerns me is WHO drives the research agenda. In DC, public education is governed by political leaders who do not want bad news. Thus, education leaders do not the freedom to engage in hard conversations about the challenges we face because doing so may produce a political stain, or bad news.

But asking safe questions won't help us solve the problems we face. Sometimes, the most important questions are the ones that are not asked. Questions that we should be asking include, are we funding schools adequately and equitably? No. Do all students have equal access to effective teachers? Again, no. How do systems of school choice erode integration and worsen outcomes for at-risk kids?

Most importantly, we need to talk to practitioners about the most pressing problems they face, and then try out research-proven solutions. Solutions may not work as intended, so we may have to adjust and tweak. We need continuous improvement and feedback. A research agenda must have input from teachers and principals, who are on the front lines delivering education every day.

One group that opposes this legislation made a graphic to point out that research-practitioner partnerships in other cities are not housed in the auditor's office. The graphic inadvertently however also pointed out that elected officials do not drive the research agenda in any other place where a successful partnership exists. So we either need the research collaborative housed in the auditor's office to protect the integrity of the research agenda, or we need to change the structure of who controls public education in the city. I'm up for either option, but we have to do something.

Because the status quo is failing thousands of kids each year. Last school year, only 16% of at-risk kids across the city were on grade level in math, and in Ward 8, only 10%.

Wolf Testimony for the Research Collaborative
July 2018

From my front-row seat at Amidon-Bowen elementary school, I can see that so much more could be done, if we only had the resources and political will to get our hands dirty in messy education reform. The first step though is being honest that major improvements in education are needed. We need to start dealing with our issues, and we need to include practitioners in the conversations. This research collaborative is a start. But ultimately, we'll have to move the research agenda out from under politicians so that a robust research-practitioner partnership can thrive.

Betsy Wolf

Parent Representative from Amidon-Bowen PTA and LSAT

Testimony of Dr. Marla M. Dean
Executive Director/ CEO of Bright Beginnings
Ward 7 Education Council, Legislative Chair

July 13, 2018

First, I want to thank each of you for your series of votes in support of early childhood education in recent months. My name is Dr. Marla M. Dean. I am the executive director/CEO of Bright Beginnings, Inc a community based non-profit that operates early childhood and family learning centers in the District for children and families experiencing homelessness. I am also the Ward 7 Education Council Legislative Chair and the previous education chair for PennBranch CCA. Finally, I am a 27-year educator, serving as a high school English and social studies teacher for over 10 years in the Detroit Public Schools, an assistant principal, turnaround principal, middle school principal, high school principal, and supervisor of principals all in the K12 sector, mostly in the traditional public school sector but I supervised principals in the charter sector here in DC. I am here to testify in favor of the pending legislation in support of a research collaborative.

Now is the time to do something different in DC and truly study the state of education in the District birth to college, especially since we have operated for over ten (10) years since 2007 under the education reform legislation. There has been improvement in education but simply not enough. Today, as a Ward 7 resident, I have not seen the progress the reform promised. Still there are huge achievement and opportunity gaps between those east and west of the river. Still far too many parents and children do not see a wide array of quality options in education east of the river, regardless to sector and far too many children in Ward 7 are punished by the inequity of having to travel across the city to receive what they perceive as a quality education. In short, zip code in this city is still a predeterminate to educational and economic outcomes of the citizens of the District. No one should feel our current structure and system of schooling is producing equity, options and opportunity for all students and families.

I understand that there may be testimony today about a potential partnership between the Urban Institute and the agencies under control of the Mayor: DCPS, DME, PCSB, and OSSE. Organization like the Urban Institute do great work, but this is an opportunity to listen to, unpack and research the concerns of the practitioners and the work they do on behalf of children every day. When the role of the DC Council is diminished or marginalized in this process, as our only elected voice that has true oversight of education in the District, the voice of stakeholders is diminished. Therefore, the potential and promise of a research collaborative cannot be realized. When the focus should squarely on the research needed to support DC practitioners in DC schools and drive ongoing improvement in DC, not looking at comparisons to other cities.

We have a great opportunity in this legislation to provide practitioners in schools and school systems with the information and feedback necessary to improve practice and thereby improve outcomes for our students. Therefore, the composition of this advisory board should be primarily practitioners, not interested groups. In short, the group should largely be comprised of teachers, principals, and educational community groups that represent large sections of city. Not groups with a particular ideological bent but people who livelihoods or their children's lives are at stake. These are the groups who must be our north star, guided by a skilled neutral facilitator who is steeped in education research, evaluation and assessment. Make not a usual suspect, maybe someone from Howard University like Dr. Wade Boykin who is renowned for his work on education, engagement and equity.

I too want to underscore, support and emphasize the testimony of Danica Petroshius when she stated:

We need a research collaborative that is in it for the long haul to address pressing local, practitioner-focused questions in service to ongoing improvement. I want to see the legislation before us strengthened and become law. I want it to embody the following six principles for its vision (see attached for full text of the principles and related amendments):

- Focus on improving outcomes for historically underserved students
- Create feedback loops between research and practice
- Invest in trust through genuine, diverse and representative stakeholder engagement
- Commit to high-quality and transparent research
- Use the knowledge learned to improve practice
- Recognize that a high-quality Research Collaborative is hard work and takes time.

And I want it to embrace the following principles for it to work well in our unique, local DC context:

- Build the Collaborative with urgency
- Focus on DC's two public sectors and the needs of all students
- Incubate in the Auditor's office
- Support the critical role of the Advisory Board
- Ensure regular engagement and guidance of the Advisory Board

We have a grand opportunity before us to earnestly deal with issues of equity, marginalization and disenfranchisement that can truly close the achievement and opportunity gaps and strengthen both of our sectors with equity and continuous improvement at the core. I have only one more point to make, as the executive director/CEO of Bright Beginnings, I would be remiss if I did not speak to this legislation's complete negation of a third sector in the District especially at the birth to five level or the pre-K level. And that is community-based organizations like Bright Beginnings, Inc. We are the lion's share of providers for early childhood education and this legislation does not even recognize this reality and this sectors' most important role in the discussion. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

URBAN INSTITUTE · ELEVATE THE DEBATE

A RESEARCH-PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Statement of

Matthew M. Chingos*

Senior Fellow and Director, Education Policy Program

Urban Institute

before the

Committee of the Whole & Committee on Education

Council of the District of Columbia

PUBLIC HEARING ON BILL 22-776, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA EDUCATION RESEARCH ADVISORY BOARD AND COLLABORATIVE ESTABLISHMENT AMENDMENT ACT OF 2018

July 13, 2018

*The views expressed are my own and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders.

2100 M Street NW
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Chairman Mendelson, Chairman Grosso, and members of the Council, thank you for the opportunity to testify today about how independent, high-quality research can support the District's efforts to provide a high-quality education for all children.

I direct the Education Policy Program at the Urban Institute here in Washington, DC. My colleagues and I provide original data and analysis to support education policymaking from prekindergarten through postsecondary. I am also a parent of a DCPS student and a resident of Ward 6 deeply committed to helping the District offer all our students a high-quality education.

The Urban Institute is a nonprofit social and economic policy research organization with approximately 500 employees that is nearing its 50th anniversary here in the District. It is the trusted source for unbiased insights that inform consequential choices about the well-being of people and places across the United States. We have deep expertise in many of the issues that affect children, including health, housing, language and immigration, poverty, and the social safety net. These are issues that affect children's ability to gain access to and benefit from high-quality education and fulfill their potential. We believe decisions shaped by facts, rather than ideology, have the power to improve public policy and practice, strengthen communities, and transform people's lives for the better.

I am proud of the work we do at the Urban Institute, but I should emphasize that the views expressed in this testimony are my own and should not be attributed to any organization with which I am affiliated, its trustees, or its funders.

I am especially proud of the work my Urban colleagues and I have done on education in the District, including analyses that supported the drawing of new attendance zone boundaries in 2015, enrollment projections currently under way, research on early childhood absenteeism in DCPS, the first-ever study of the effects of the Opportunity Scholarship Program on college enrollment, and a study of student travel times to school.

Through this work, Urban researchers have been able to analyze multiple years of student-level data provided under data-sharing agreements with the city. But the project-by-project approach to data-sharing has a significant downside: it is inefficient for research and burdensome for our education agencies to respond piecemeal to data requests. And without established infrastructure, it is very difficult to provide insight in a timely way that can support and inform decisionmaking by policymakers at all levels.

Many cities have mitigated this problem by creating a research-practice partnership (RPP), and I am thrilled that the Council is interested in fostering such a research collaborative here in DC.[1]

The goal of my testimony is to draw on Urban's collective experience conducting research in the District and in other cities and states around the country to offer recommendations about how the Council can best foster a research collaborative focused on improving outcomes for DC students.

[1] See, for example, http://rpp.wtgrantfoundation.org/.

Independence

Independence is what differentiates an RPP from work produced for school districts and other education agencies by their contractors. Independent researchers at an RPP bring the objectivity of a third party and have credibility with the wider community because they follow the data, wherever they may lead. For example, the Consortium on Chicago School Research is respected by the school district and the community because it shares both good news and bad, leading to headlines in the *Chicago Tribune* such as "Broad race-based disparities persist in CPS discipline" and "Percentage of CPS students who go straight to college up over last decade."[2]

Empowering researchers with the independence to conduct rigorous research on important questions will be critical to a successful RPP in DC. Based on my experience as a researcher, this independence is best achieved by

- housing the RPP outside city government,
- staffing it with widely respected quantitative and qualitative researchers and a data science and research technology team that can support the data infrastructure,
- providing a mechanism by which other independent researchers can access the data for legitimate research purposes (if they meet appropriate standards including for the protection of data security and privacy),
- establishing a transparent mechanism to gather input on the research agenda so that the work pursued will address priority questions for key education policy decisionmakers and stakeholders, and
- pursuing funding from diverse sources to enable sustainability over time and ensure that the District, not funders, will set the research agenda.

Data Quality

Research findings are only as good as the data on which they are based, and data quality is an area where DC has made significant progress but still trails many states.

DC's citywide longitudinal data system has not been in place as long as systems in many other jurisdictions, and the availability and quality of DC's data vary across sectors and over time. The proposed efforts to audit data quality and make recommendations for future data collection efforts are worthwhile, but they should be implemented separately from research.

The primary reason for separating research and data-quality functions is that researchers are primarily users of data, whereas government agencies are responsible for collecting and maintaining accurate data. RPPs certainly benefit from higher-quality data, can help identify data-quality issues that arise in their work, and may be able to acquire or produce new data on specific issues that can add insight. But city agencies such as the Office of the Auditor are in a much stronger position to work with the school system to assess the quality of data and recommend improvements.

[2] http://chicagotribune.com/news/ct-chicago-school-discipline-study-met-20150922-story.html and http://chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-met-chicago-schools-study-1010-story.html.

Collaboration

Without a strong working relationship between researchers and education agencies, an RPP will fail: you can't have a research-practice partnership without committed partners. Research may be conducted, but to have impact it should be responsive to the needs of local decisionmakers.

For an RPP to have the greatest impact on student learning, it's critical to build lasting relationships with administrators and practitioners at all levels of the education agencies, both to deepen researchers' knowledge about local context and to ensure that research findings inform those who are in the strongest position to act on them.

At the same time, it is very important to ensure that education agencies collaborate on research that raises hard questions and helps to find new solutions. This can be accomplished through various mechanisms, including robust stakeholder input into setting the research agenda (e.g., through advisory committees) and transparency in the research approval process. For example, a steering committee representing a wide variety of stakeholders works with the Chicago Consortium to develop its research agenda and provide feedback on research in progress.[3]

Urban's Role

The success of RPPs in Chicago and other cities convinces me that this approach has significant potential to help improve educational opportunities in the District.

Last summer, my Urban colleagues and I began discussions with DCPS, PCSB, OSSE, and DME about the possibility of creating an RPP—several months before the Council proposed legislation with similar aims. I believe that Urban's strong bench of quantitative and qualitative researchers, coupled with our technology and data science team, could uniquely position us to launch a successful collaborative effort with our city's education agencies and other research institutions. And I want to emphasize that we are committed to ensuring that other research entities can access the information. We want to build a community of scholars and experts who will contribute to ensuring DC's students get the best possible evidence-informed education we can collectively provide.

But I should confess that my allegiances as a DCPS parent and Ward 6 resident are stronger than my ties to my employer and my role as a researcher, so I want to see a successful RPP for DC regardless of Urban's role.

That we are all at this hearing today represents significant progress for our city. I offer my support and assistance as the Council revises this legislation to give the District the best chances of finally getting an action-oriented, truly independent research collaborative off the ground.

[3] See https://consortium.uchicago.edu/about/steering-committee.

Appendix: About the Urban Institute and Its Commitment to DC-Focused Research

The Urban Institute is the trusted source for unbiased, authoritative insights that inform consequential choices about the well-being of people and places in the United States. Our experts diagnose current challenges and look ahead to identify opportunities for change. And we don't stop there. We use our research findings to help stakeholders craft relevant solutions and strategies that address today's concerns and avert tomorrow's roadblocks. And we share our insights in real time with influencers eager to make smarter decisions.

Urban's Education Policy Program undertakes policy-relevant research on a wide range of issues from prekindergarten through postsecondary education, including research on universal prekindergarten programs, school choice, student transportation, school funding, college affordability, student loan debt, and personalized learning.

The Education Policy Program works closely with Urban's Office of Technology and Data Science and Statistical Methodology Group on projects that draw on large datasets, and fosters collaboration on both quantitative and qualitative research projects across Urban's policy centers.

Selected Urban Institute Research on District of Columbia Education Issues

Urban has a long history of collaboration with local education agencies to inform policy and practice. Prior and ongoing education-focused projects include the following:

- Research on early childhood absenteeism in DCPS that identified a multifaceted and comprehensive set of strategies to address chronic absenteeism in the early grades, ranging from parent outreach to monitoring and early warning systems.
- The first-ever study of the effects of DC's private school voucher program on college enrollment; it found that private- and public-school students enrolled in college at similar rates.
- A study of student travel times to school, which provided cross-city comparative data and told the stories of how DC students get to school using three years of detailed, student-level administrative data shared by DCPS and PCSB.
- An analysis of impacts of new attendance zone boundaries to support the student assignment policy and DCPS school boundaries implemented in 2015. The analysis examined how proposed changes affected walkability, school quality, and school diversity.
- An analysis of enrollment projections in DC schools and development of processes and data-driven methods that improve transparency and accuracy. The study uses student-level data from DC to identify leading indicators of enrollment shifts.
- Evaluation partner for the DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative, recipient of a five-year U.S. Department of Education Promise Neighborhoods implementation grant. Urban designed and implemented a study to examine individual success and well-being.
- Evaluation partner for DC-based Kindred, a nonprofit that offers dialogue groups for parents to tackle issues of racial and economic segregation in DC schools. Urban examined Kindred's pilot program, which was implemented in Marie Reed Elementary School.

Selected Urban Institute Research on District of Columbia Policy Issues

The Urban Institute has built Urban–Greater DC, a multidisciplinary program of evidence and policy analysis focused on the District of Columbia and its region. This work draws from the breadth of Urban's substantive expertise, including affordable housing, child well-being, crime prevention, education reform, foreclosure mitigation, health care, performance management and nonprofit management, the social safety net, and workforce development. We provide current and reliable data at multiple geographic levels (including city, ward, and neighborhood) to inform the decisions of nonprofits and city agencies.

Examples of our broader portfolio of work on DC include the following:

- A Vision for an Equitable DC: This interactive feature visualizes what the nation's capital could look like if it closed its stark racial disparities. The data visualization, which includes breakouts of ward-level data, allows users to view two scenarios: the real DC or a DC with racial equity.
- Making Their Voices Heard: This web feature highlights the voices of DC residents who collaborated with Urban researchers to design the innovative Promoting Adolescent Sexual Health and Safety program in the Benning Terrace community.
- Our Changing City: This interactive series explores changes in demographics, schools, housing, crime, and more in the District of Columbia.
- Housing Insights: This tool puts better information in the hands of DC's affordable housing decisionmakers and advocates by making it easier to browse a list of subsidized affordable housing and connect to relevant data on public transit, property tax assessments, and neighborhood characteristics.
- Urban–Greater DC Data Explorer: This interactive map displays data related to education, jobs, basic needs, affordable housing, health, and more across the city and region.
- Measure4Change: A partnership between the World Bank Group and the Urban Institute, this pilot program builds performance measurement and evaluation capacity among local nonprofits in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area.

Hearing on Bill 22-776, District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018

July 13, 2018

Cathy Reilly

Executive Director of the Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals and Educators

My name is Cathy Reilly and I am the Executive Director of S.H.A.P.P.E.

I support the concept of this bill and appreciate the Council 's intent to create an independent entity to produce at least an annual report on public education in both sectors that can be trusted and does not get caught up in the desired narratives of different entities or individuals. As our elected representatives responsible for oversight, I appreciate your initiative to place this initially in an independent body the DC Auditor, that the public trusts and that supports and informs you and all of us. I know that their function is different. My impression was that their role here is to house the incubator. I hope that the Advisory Board appointed by the Council, State Board of Education and Executive could indeed perform this incubator function and come back to you with a recommendation on where this should be housed and what the scope of work and cost should be. There are many models out there in different states.

I am not sure that it should be privately financed. This seems to me to be something that should be government financed and that perhaps we should have a lot of the expertise in house and that the cost should be manageable. The Advisory Board could wrestle with this. It brings together a group that can navigate it. You need access to this information as do we and we all need to trust it.

FutureEd
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Testimony of Thomas Toch, Director, FutureEd, Georgetown University

Before the Council of the District of Columbia

On Bill 22-776, District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Act of 2018

July 13, 2018

Good Morning. My name is Phyllis Jordan. I am editorial director of FutureEd, an independent education think tank at Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy. I am speaking this morning on behalf of FutureEd's director, Thomas Toch.

FutureEd shares the commitment to transparency and data-driven improvement reflected in Bill 22-776. The effective use of system-wide data has contributed to substantial improvements in the District of Columbia Public Schools and D.C's charter sector in recent years. It has revealed weaknesses in both sectors. And it has the potential to drive substantial additional improvements.

Understandably, recent revelations of unreported student absenteeism, inflated graduation rates, and under-policed enrollment fraud have encouraged calls for stricter scrutiny of the city's public education systems. We believe the additional accountability contemplated in Bill 22-776 is warranted and should be conducted by the D.C. Auditor's office with city funding and the advice and counsel of the Education Research Advisory Board proposed under 22-776.

We also believe that an independent, external research collaborative modeled on those in Chicago, New Orleans and other cities would be a valuable addition to the city's education landscape. Such research-practice partnerships rely on close working relationships between researchers and education practitioners and are focused on improving education systems rather than on holding educators accountable.

As a result, we believe that an external research collaborative should not be housed within the D.C. Auditor's office, but rather at one the city's major research universities, institutions deeply

invested in Washington's future. For example, Georgetown's McCourt School of Public Policy has a new, well-funded Massive Data Institute that would be a good candidate to house a wide range of D.C. education data. The university's prestigious Beeck Center leverages data to strengthen public policy and has deep ties to local and national foundations. And McCourt has research centers that are national leaders on pre-schooling, the school-to-work pipeline, school finance, and other key improvement levers in D.C.

Nor should we think of an external research collaborative only in terms of education data. Poverty is a central cause of the educational problems that many of Washington's students face. We should be studying the intersections of education and student health, public housing, food security and other factors that impact student performance substantially.

And data is only part of the improvement equation. We also need researchers with the historical knowledge, policy skills, analytic ability, and writing fluency needed to accurately parse the educational challenges we face and to identify the comprehensive solutions they demand.

An independently managed, externally funded research partnership focused on strengthening the D.C. public education sector and the well-being of the city's students would be a valuable addition at a critical juncture. Working with DME, OSSE, DCPS, and PCSB, it would help sustain the substantial improvements in DCPS and the charter sector in recent years. And it would signal to the Washington community that the city's leaders are committed to improving the education lives of the city's students.

Thank you very much.

Testimony of Mark Simon, Education Policy Associate at the Economic Policy Institute, on Bill 22-776, District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018, before the DC Council Committee of the Whole, Friday, COW Hearing July 13th, 2018

Chairman Mendelson, and Members of the DC Council,

Thank you for this well-crafted bill that promises to go a long way to re-establish trust in DC Public Education among the public.

Your bill to establish a Research Advisory Board, conduct an initial audit of school data, and begin the process of establishing an ongoing Research and Practice Partnership (RPP) is long overdue. It finally takes important steps to create what the 2015 Report "An Evaluation of the Public Schools of the District of Columbia – Reform in a Changing Landscape" called for as one of its three summary recommendations. That 2015 report by the National Research Council of the National Academies of Sciences brought in 10 nationally renowned external researchers, under supervision by the DC Auditor, to conduct the *only* truly independent evaluation of DC Education Reforms in the past 11 years. The report raised red flags about leaving all data and research in the hands of OSSE and the other agencies under mayoral control. They defined carefully what they meant by independent research – not research contracted by DCPS, PCSB or OSSE, but sufficiently resourced, peer reviewed, and conducted by external researchers and practitioners – ongoing evaluation of how we're doing, with in-depth studies of priority topics like school climate, academic supports for learning, or supports for students with particular needs. They called for the creation of an independent research entity comparable to what exists in Chicago, Boston, New York, New Orleans, and Baltimore.

I would like to make just four comments about the bill.

First, you are right to house it with the DC Auditor. The problem with all school data residing with OSSE under mayoral control is that decisions about what data to collect and what to make available to the public or to researchers have for the past 11 years been made with politics as the guide. The Mayor's or DCPS' or the PCSB's need to declare success must not determine what data to collect and what to make available. What we need is truth and the auditor is the right place to house the effort.

Second, the recent data scandals on graduation and suspension rates, combined with the 2015 National Academy Evaluation itself, require a short-term audit of DC education data.

Third, the process of establishing a credible Research and Practice Partnership appropriate for DC will involve a process. There seem to be three choices:

1. Create a GAO style department under the DC Council
2. Make OSSE independent of mayoral control as a stand-alone data gathering, research conducting, truth telling agency, or
3. Structure an RPP that involves one or multiple external research organizations in the DC area along the lines of, but not identical to, the other successful RPPS that exist in other cities.

The process to get us to the next stage is the exact one you have designed in the legislation before you, to be kick-started by the DC Auditor. She will oversee the establishment of an Advisory Board, study how RPPs are structured elsewhere, and then bring back to the DC Council a proposal for an independent

RPP or another plan along the lines of one of the three approaches above. But the entity will not, in the long term, be housed with the DC Auditor. A well-constructed Advisory Board, as your legislation makes clear, is key. The board must have the trust of, but not be controlled by, the agencies. It must also have gravitas and public credibility with external experts and the important DC constituencies and public education advocates.

Finally, beware the organizations out there, chomping at the bit for the RPP franchise. It's good to see the enthusiasm, and that good researchers and institutions want to be involved, but none of the institutions, universities or DC based think tanks have the bench or the track record to be able to fully take this on the way the University of Chicago, Tulane, or NYU have in those cities. All the local research institutions are too used to operating as contractors to DCPS or the PCSB or OSSE, where access to the data and future contracts depend on their research leading to conclusions that please the contractor. That is not independent research. So let's take the time to construct this right, earning the trust of all players – the agencies, parent and community groups, and educators.

Thank you.

Written Testimony of Emily Langhorne

Education Policy Analyst, Progressive Policy Institute

Over the past two and a half decades, the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research has developed a reputation as one of the nation's best education research centers. Although focused only on one city, many of their studies have had broader implications outside of Chicago and in other districts.

The Consortium came about because of The 1988 Chicago School Reform Act. This act, advocated for by reformers, decentralized governance of the city's public schools by creating local schools councils.

Advocates for the decentralized reform felt it was important to study the long-term effects of this landmark restructuring of the city's schools; however, they also felt it was important to have an independent organization charged with conducting objective evaluations of the progress of the reform as well as highly technical research that can inform and assess policy as it affects practice in Chicago Public Schools.

Because of its position as an independent organization, operating both outside of the school system and the city of Chicago's government, the Consortium has been able to create a sustainable research consortium dedicated to high quality and objective research as well as transparency of results.

From the beginning, the Consortium has had "scholarly" standards because it's founding members were University of Chicago researchers with nationally recognized methodological skills who joined with researchers from the school districts and other organizations to create the Consortium under the university's umbrella.

As researchers, their goal is not to argue for specific programs or policies, but instead to conduct high quality technical research and apply the best of social science methodology to the problems facing CPS. Each year, researchers sign a general conflict of interest statement, upholding a Neutrality Policy. Academic appointments and principal investigators must disclose any financial interests related to their research.

Because of their scholarly standards, the Consortium conducts internal reviews at each stage of the study, and receives external feedback for a variety of reasons. For instance, if submitted to a scholarly journal, a study receives further peer and/or external reviews. And if a study is particularly controversial – like the study of school closures -- or contains a potential conflict of interest, the Consortium invites external methodological experts to serve on a review panel.

The Consortium also developed its own Steering Committee to provide external feedback. It brings all stakeholders to the table while insuring a multi-partisan approach to research.

The Steering Committee is made up of representatives of the school system, the teachers' union, the principals' association, the Illinois State Board of Education, school-support and advocacy organizations, charter school organizations, and faculty from several universities.

The Committee approves the Consortium's research agenda and reviews preliminary findings and late stage drafts of each study.

The Consortium has had a Data Sharing Agreement with CPS for nearly three decades. CPS lets the Consortium conduct research and provides annual them with annual data, and CPS representatives sit on the Steering Committee. However, no

committee member has editorial authority over study findings. Final authority rests with the authors. The Consortium also does not conduct research funded by CPS.

Through this ongoing data sharing agreement, the Consortium has constructed the most encompassing longitudinal data archive on a city's public education system in the country.[i]

The Consortium has a "no surprises" policy so before a study's results are released, findings are shared with CPS leaders and other stakeholders; however, to promote transparency, all studies are made public and no partner receives access to findings that aren't also released publicly. As a result, partners and stakeholders cannot selectively release findings.

In my opinion, this district-independent organization partnership model has influenced the success of the Consortium.

It benefits from having all of the resources of working with CPS, but it attracts top quality researchers who are often drawn to the university/ institution atmosphere, many of whom may not accept positions working in the bureaucracy of government or in school districts.

Because of the multi-partisan Steering Committee, the areas of research have the input of a diverse community, but the research itself is conducted objectively and held to scholarly standards, without special interests shaping the research direction or corrupting the findings.

Because of the Steering Committee, the Consortium has also been able to devote itself to its mission of transparency and outreach. The Committee disseminates

information to their parties. Likewise, Consortium researchers bring together groups of district administrators and practitioners for in-depth conversations about the research what it means in terms of practice at both the school and district level. The Consortium holds conferences with policy makers, practitioners, and the media about their findings. These groups do not always agree with one another, but they respect the research of Consortium. Because the Consortium is a third party providing constructive and objective feedback, rather than argue an ideological point of view, members of different education communities are willing to engage with the findings to make decisions that improve policy and practice for children.

Perhaps the best part about the Consortium as an independent organization is its sustainability. It has lasted through over 12 changes in Chicago City Public School's superintendents and CEOs. It is not at risk of being taken over by the central office or of bureaucratic restructuring. Because of this model, it is not susceptible to changes in attitudes that often accompany changes in district leadership or waves of education reforms.

Another interesting and successful partnership that provides accessible data to the public is the Illinois Interactive Report Card, a partnership between the Illinois State Board of Education and Northern Illinois University.

In 2012, a legislative mandated required that the Illinois State Board of Education create a new parent-friendly report card. In partnership with Northern Illinois University, the board launched the Illinois Interactive Report Card in partnership. NIU completely overhauled the existing design and launched the new report card in 2013.

While NIU designed the previous report cards since 2004, the new report card was to be user friendly and geared toward parents and the general public.

The Illinois State Board of Education collects most of the data in the Illinois Report Card from school districts through data systems such as the state's Student Information System, throughout the school year. NIU is responsible for analyzing the data and maintaining the report card website.

By outsourcing this task to the university, the report card benefits from the interdisciplinary skills of the NIU design and development teach. I believe that the ability of an independent organization to access this skill and talent is what makes the report cards such a success. Programmers, database specialists, graphic artist, and writers were highly skilled university employees or grad students.

The accessibility, depth, and transparency of this website cannot be overstated. The spectacular data visualization makes it easily accessible by both non-academics and researchers. In 2014, it was receiving 80,000 visitors a month.

The website is beautiful, with easy-to-read data and graphics, and an easy-to-use interface. It allows for comparisons at the school, district, and state level. The data uses consistent metrics across multiple years. These report cards go beyond test scores and present a deep-dive into data representing multiple factors about the state's schools. [ii]

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[i] The database contains complete administrative records on all students for every semester since 1919, course transcripts of all high school students since 1992, achievement test scores since 1987, national student Clearinghouse data on college enrollment, diploma attainment of CPs graduations since 1998. The archive also uses the Census data,

Chicago Police Department data, students' addresses and school addresses to provide additional background information and the context of schools in neighborhoods. That's in addition to the cycles of many biannual survey responses from students, principals, an teachers about school experiences, and background information not collected elsewhere.

[ii] Examples at the district: average class size, total school days, district finances, health and wellness, PARCC scores, SAT, Science assessments, Participation Rate, Achievement Gap, Freshmen On Track, Graduation Rates (4 to 7 years), Post Secondary Enrollment Post secondary remediation; student enrollment, racial/ethnic diversity, low-income, IEP, ELL, Homeless, Mobility, Dropout Rate, Chronically Truant students; Teachers demographics, retention, pupil ratio, evaluation, attendance, salary; Administrator turnover

CREATING A RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP WITH REAL-WORLD IMPACT

Statement of

Josh Boots

Executive Director, EmpowerK12

before the

Committee of the Whole & Committee on Education

Council of the District of Columbia

PUBLIC HEARING ON BILL 22-776, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA EDUCATION RESEARCH ADVISORY BOARD AND COLLABORATIVE ESTABLISHMENT AMENDMENT ACT OF 2018

July 13, 2018

Chairman Mendelson, Chairman Grosso, and members of the Council, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the benefits of rigorous, quantitative, and qualitative research for the District's public education practitioners.

Last year, the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University published a study on the value of different types of scientific research, ranging from pure basic research to applied research to use-inspired research. The report, entitled "Tracing the Links Between Basic Research and Real-World Applications," used financial and impact survey data to narrow down what type of scientific research most often had the greatest real-world impact. Here are the recommendations from their work:

- **Limit the degrees of separation between scientists and the people who will apply the research outcomes.** For PreK-12, teachers and school leaders have the most direct impact on student growth, so our recommendation would be to include them in research-design.
- **Science does not just rest at the top or in silos.** Their paper talks about the importance of availability of research outcomes even when the research shows limited applicability or results different than anticipated. We think this is why a research-practice partnership with multiple entities involved, living outside the sphere of any political interest, will best support our community.
- **Aim for use-inspired research.** The authors found a focus on real-world problems boosts not only direct application but also new science, bringing profound advances to their communities. A successful research-practice partnership should be built from the ground-up, starting by creating trust with educators first to identify problems and then working with them to design data-gathering solutions.

The current proposed bill containing the research consortium has been advanced from the top-down, lacks a structured governance that ensures trust between scientists and educators, does not have complete independence from political interest, and is disconnected from the everyday application level at schools. In my time in the DC education system, starting as a DCPS 7th grade math teacher in 2002 and including stints in the OSSE Assessment & Accountability department, as KIPP DC's first director of data, and now as Executive Director at EmpowerK12, the type of research I hear educators discussing as the most helpful have been the organic studies designed in collaboration with LEAs (e.g. New Leader's school leadership research, EdFuel's teacher DC teacher compensation studies, TNTP's instructional rigor work, and our own analysis of schools beating the odds.)

Yesterday, EmpowerK12 released a report, entitled "Lessons for All from DC's Bold Improvement Schools," that illuminated amazing things happening at 10 DC schools serving high at-risk student populations and demonstrating PARCC growth rivalling their higher-income peers in Ward 3. We used complex analytics to dig-into publicly available data and then partnered with LEAs to arrange school site visits, interview staff, and analyze individual school-collected data. Then, at the FOCUS DC Data Summit, 350 educators from across the public sector learned from and had the opportunity to interact with the achievement gap-closing schools we identified in the report.

Brandy Tyson, Principal at Center City PCS, and Eric Dabney, Assistant Principal at Kimball Elementary, shared several data-driven practices they implemented that have direct impact on improving academic growth. They discussed strategic teacher looping based on growth data,

how they engage with out-of-school time providers to ensure they complement the material being taught in class, and how they get teachers and students to own their data as part of personal continuous improvement cycles.

Each of the Bold Improvement award-winning principals made unique choices grounded in data. Some of their solutions were not previously stipulated by LEA policy, but after analyzing data and assessing human capital capacity they created solutions resulting in huge positive impacts for students. They also told us a couple ideas they implemented which did not show results after initial evaluations, so they cancelled them.

EmpowerK12 believes the Bold Improvement school paper is the type of research-practice partnership required to move the needle for student growth and achievement in the District, partnerships where the research is being conducted for the benefit of practitioners first. We are extremely concerned about the prospects of quality research that supports educators when that research is conducted by an entity with the threat of subpoena power and potentially guided by political special interests. Will LEA leaders, principals, and teachers have the trust that is required to share candid quantitative and qualitative data under this scenario?

We believe the Office of the DC Auditor should, with increased engagement from the Council and State Board of Education, play the crucial role of auditing education data on a variety of topics--residency, attendance, graduation, student test scores, etc.--on an annual basis. The Auditor will require the financial resources to conduct these audits and should receive input from the Council and State Board of Education on which areas may require additional scrutiny.

We recommend amending the legislation to capitalize on the ability of the DC Auditor to ensure data quality within DC education agencies, but separate out the research function, relying on strong public-private partnerships. Council may be able to best support an education research consortium by funding an innovation grant to seed the effort.

Testimony of Marcia Rucker
before the Committee of the Whole and Education
on Bill 22-776, District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board
and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018

My name is Marcia Rucker, and my testimony is solely on my own behalf. First, though, let me thank staff in the offices of Councilmembers Cheh and Todd for their offers to help me understand this bill.

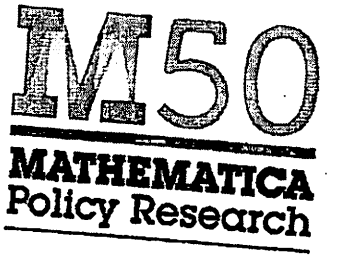
I am pleased to see a bill that aims to broaden and deepen the discussion on where we are on the road to a good school for every child within DCPS traditional and charter schools. I'd like to offer some observations on what the bill might do better to achieve its aim.

At this stage in its development, 22-776 (lines 53 through 61) allows current policy makers and administrators a strong voice on the Advisory Board that would set the direction for the Collaborative, with four Mayoral appointees: from DCPS Central Office, the DME, OSSE, and the DCPS Charter School Board. Their point of view should surely be heard.

What point(s) of view the SBOE representatives (lines 62 and 63) and the 10 members to be appointed by the Council (lines 64 through 70) would bring to the discussion isn't clear. It is clear, though, that the point of view that gets only a whisper of a voice is the voice of the great majority of the teaching and other professional school-based staff, including school-based behavioral health staff and social workers. The professionals on the ground, the people who have the most intimate knowledge of what works and what doesn't work in their school, have only one voice—one out of 16, slightly more than 6%—on this board. For the sake of the vigor of the discussion that 22-776 is intended to engender, I hope the mark-up process will result in a more appropriate representation of school-based professionals' point of view.

Another informed and valuable point of view is laid out in the July 27 Open Letter to Mayor Muriel Bowser and the DC Council. The letter is signed by twelve organizations and 97 individuals and lists thirteen elements the signers hold necessary to building a better school system. I hope the mark-up process will incorporate into 22-776 a way to take advantage both of the list itself and of the educational expertise of the signers of the Open Letter.

Thank you for your time and attention.



HOW THE DC COUNCIL CAN HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION DATA

STEVEN GLAZERMAN, MATHEMATICA POLICY RESEARCH

TESTIMONY TO THE DC COUNCIL (AS DELIVERED IN PERSON)

JULY 13, 2018

Distinguished members of the DC Council, thank you for inviting me to discuss this committee's bill to establish a DC education research collaborative.

My name is Steve Glazerman. I am a senior fellow at Mathematica Policy Research, where I lead the Educator Impact Laboratory and have been studying the effectiveness of education programs and policies for the past twenty years. In my work I have relied heavily on data from DCPS, DC charter LEAs, My School DC, and OSSE to conduct scientific research in close collaboration with these agencies. I've reviewed this legislation and I'm happy to share my feedback with members of the Council today.

ACCOUNTABILITY OF PUBLIC FUNDS IS IMPORTANT, BUT SHOULD REMAIN SEPARATE FROM SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.

First of all, I applaud the Council for its legislative efforts to foster continued education research in DC and to make data more available and transparent. However, there are some small changes that would make this effort more successful. The entity that is being created by this bill can serve an important function, but I strongly recommend removing the term "research collaborative" from its name. In a moment I will outline some positive steps the Council can take to support an actual research collaborative in the future, but the current Council action should really focus on the audit function, which is distinct from research and is characterized more by oversight of government agencies than collaboration with them.

Combining scientific research aimed at improving education, with an audit function aimed at increasing accountability of public funds, the legislation tries to accomplish too much at once. Both roles are vitally important, but they should function separately and independently. Building a scientific research agenda to learn what works and improve practice requires a close and trusting relationship between education practitioners and the qualified researchers. On the other hand, strong accountability requires an arms-length relationship between auditors and the agencies they are investigating.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PROVIDES A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS.

A good example we can look to to see these separate functions is at the federal level, where Congress has set up two separate entities, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO). CBO is a respected broker of non-partisan policy analysis and budget forecasts. The GAO is an independent investigator which determines if public funds are being spent appropriately and can compel agencies to provide data and access to them in their work. Similarly, the Council should consider separating the District's education research and auditing functions. I would recommend that the Council change the name of the Education Research Collaborative in this bill to the "Education Accountability Office" or something of that nature.

THE BEST WAY FOR THE COUNCIL TO PROMOTE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN EDUCATION IS TO SUPPORT DATA INFRASTRUCTURE.

What can the Council do if it does want to support a true research collaborative, to promote program improvement and scientific research using education data in DC? I believe that such an entity would require multiple funding sources for independence and sustainability. DC taxpayers don't have to do all the work here. The most appropriate role for the Council would be to provide infrastructure. This would come primarily in the form of fostering creation of a pure data governance entity, to warehouse, maintain, and share data with qualified requestors, basically a DC Education Data Center.

A DC Education Data Center, modeled on a similar entity that has been both successful and self-sustaining in North Carolina, the North Carolina Education Data Center housed at Duke University – but a DC version, could provide various education agencies, such as OSSE and DCPS, with better ways to archive, store, and use their own data. Researchers and other qualified stakeholders, including the proposed Education Accountability Office, as well as journalists from places like the Washington Post or WAMU, would have a one-stop-shop for obtaining data for legitimate purposes. The Center would be acting on behalf of the DC's education agencies, to screen data requests, translate privacy laws to data users, execute data use agreements, and oversee data destruction at the completion of data use agreements. In fact, OSSE and DCPS already do this reasonably well, but perhaps there are more efficient ways to accomplish these tasks, such as outsourcing to dedicated experts so the agencies don't duplicate each other's work.

I am just about out of time, so I am happy to answer questions, and I thank you again for inviting me here to testify.

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DC PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

Testimony of Rick Cruz
Chairperson
DC Public Charter School Board

Hearing on the District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018

Committee of the Whole and the Committee on Education
July 13, 2018

Chairpersons Mendelson, Grosso, and Councilmembers, my name is Rick Cruz and I am the Chair of the DC Public Charter School Board. I thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018.

The DC Public Charter School Board is fully supportive of this bill's goal to more deeply understand what all of our schools can do to fully serve our students. We also completely support more robust analysis of the progress we have made over the past decade of reforming our school system. And, we entirely respect the role of the DC Auditor to look into all aspects of our work. The auditor is an important part of our government's accountability structure.

We have seen the success of research consortiums in a few places, most notably in Chicago, and we are excited by the prospect of bringing that type

of resource to DC for our schools and educators. Chicago Public Schools learns valuable information from the research undertaken by their University of Chicago-led collaborative. Just last week the journal Governing profiled the reforms underway at CPS and the ways in which the partnership with the Consortium supports these efforts. In my non-PCSB capacity I've had the privilege of meeting with leaders and researchers at the Chicago Consortium—seen firsthand the various data they've collected and, importantly, the ways that they work with Chicago Public Schools at the district level and at the school level—the tools and the materials that they create to make their findings concretely usable by principals and administrators. Through the course of their work— and over many years— the consortium has done some fantastic analysis on many of the same issues we face in DC, such as improving attendance, improving on-track and graduation rates, and student mobility. As well, the consortium has been able to liaise with other research institutions nationally to share findings, and to align on best practices and benchmarks. This is exactly the type of resource and support we could use in DC.

All that said, I have some concerns with the proposed bill. My biggest concern, as someone who has worked closely with both schools and research institutions, is that the research and auditing functions, as written, are intertwined. While I am not opposed to either the research or the audit

function operating independently of each other, I am not sure how the offices would work together and what unintended implications that relationship would have for the outcomes of both.

My understanding is that the Chicago consortium's success stems from their independence - from political pressure, from operating pressures—by being housed within a university. Their relationship with Chicago Public Schools is one of partnership, this and the consortium's service orientation, produces willing buy-in of schools. To replicate this success in DC, we would hope that this new research entity would be housed within a non-profit or at a university that has similar independence. Chicago is not alone in this—you see this foundational structural element in what other jurisdictions have set up, including Los Angeles and Baltimore. We believe this approach will better serve students and the aims of both Council and school leaders.

If a research body is housed in the DC auditor's office, schools may be hesitant to work as cooperatively than they otherwise may be, given the inherent watchdog nature of the office of the auditor, and the possibility of negative attention on their program. As the Chicago consortium states in a 2009 report "[Consortium] researchers do not just comprise an independent group that does studies on schools and occasionally announces findings. Rather, [their] studies and products (for example, the individual school

reports) are resources that practitioners use to manage their own improvement efforts." This is an incredibly important element of their success. It is clear from Chicago's own analysis that the research and analysis that we are talking about undertaking needs to be done by experts in the field with the utmost thoughtfulness, and with the trust of schools.

Finally, I urge this Council to think carefully about any impacts this new body or bodies would have on OSSE and its data team, and the work currently underway at the agency. The high-stakes and time-sensitive accountability work of the DC Public Charter School Board depends on getting timely data from OSSE. We rely on this data to produce everything from our School Quality Reports, to our charter review and renewal reports, and many of the reports we submit to Council. If we get this data late, it affects our ability to fulfill our commitment to families and to schools and to all of you.

Over the past four years, the city has invested significantly in OSSE's capacity to collect data. While still a work in progress, OSSE's data capabilities have improved meaningfully. Shifting, or adding, to OSSE's responsibilities at this juncture could undermine or undo the progress made. It is critical that we ensure the quality, timeliness, and security of student-level data. If the Council uses this bill to deepen the commitment to OSSE's

data collection infrastructure and personnel tasked with handling data, the research collaborative will be best positioned to reach its goal of producing new insights from the wealth of student and school-level data that OSSE manages and currently makes publicly available.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Office of the State Superintendent of Education

Public Hearing on
B22-776 – the "District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018"

Testimony of
Hanseul Kang
State Superintendent
Office of the State Superintendent of Education

Before the

Committee on Education
The Honorable David Grosso, Chairman

Council of the District of Columbia
Room 412
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Introduction

Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson, Chairman Grosso, members, and staff of the Committees of the Whole and Education. My name is Hanseul Kang, and I am the State Superintendent of Education. I am pleased to join you for this hearing on B22-776, the "District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Act of 2018."

Today's hearing is about the importance of ensuring that stakeholders – parents, policymakers, advocates, and the general public – have access to high quality and actionable data on the performance of our schools, which has been pillar of OSSE's 2015-2018 strategic plan. At OSSE, we recognize the importance of making policy decisions transparently and based on evidence. However, we believe the proposed legislation, which would establish a DC Education Research Collaborative with an advisory board that would be housed in the Office of the Auditor, would comingle research and audit functions in a way that may hinder quality research and inform practice. Instead, we must work to ensure that the data that grounds research is collected and reported with precision and integrity.

In my testimony, I will elaborate on OSSE's role in data collection, reporting, and research, and provide comments and recommendations on the proposed legislation.

Role as the SEA

As the state education agency, OSSE plays a significant role in sustaining, accelerating, and deepening educational progress in the District of Columbia. One way that we do that is by ensuring that our education partners, such as local education agencies (LEAs), community-based organizations, policymakers, advocates, parents, and the general public, have access to high-quality data about our schools so that they can make informed decisions and better support all learners. To improve quality, we work to ensure uniformity, accuracy, and integrity in the data that we collect and report.

First, OSSE plays a critical role in ensuring consistency in the collection and reporting of certain data across schools in the District of Columbia. Schools must be able to operate in such a way that serves their students well, and every school's routines and operations are different. We strive to balance our data collection system with the administrative burden it places on schools. Data entry, for the most part, occurs at the school level in student information systems (SIS). Every day, teachers and administrators enter information on a wide variety of metrics, for example, attendance, grades, disciplinary actions, academic interventions and supports, and others. Some of this information, like attendance and discipline, makes its way to OSSE through data feeds and reports on a daily or an annual basis while others, like grades, do not. OSSE sets rules that work towards greater consistency in the collection of data across schools.

Second, OSSE works to improve data accuracy. OSSE puts in place a series of checks to ensure that data, when it flows in, conforms to rules. We provide tools to LEAs that flag errors that need attention. For example, if we get an attendance entry on a day that school is not scheduled to be in session, we flag it, so either the calendar or the attendance data can be updated. We want to ensure that schools and LEAs address these problems before the data is reported final.

Third, OSSE must ensure integrity in data collection and reporting. OSSE, along with LEAs, has a role in identifying inaccuracies. Much of the data we review originates with individual educators and leaders, and it is important provide tools that support ease, accuracy, and appropriate checks. For example,

coming out of the graduation and attendance reviews last winter, we are monitoring DCPS to ensure that updates are made to its student information system, Aspen. For data that has significant implications for schools, for example, data for enrollment audit and for school accountability, OSSE requires the head of school to certify the accuracy of their data during a time period of data verification.

OSSE publicly reports much of the data that it collects. Either through federal or local compliance efforts or through public reports, OSSE reports more data on the performance of the District's schools than ever before leading to an unprecedented level of transparency. Annually, OSSE produces an attendance report and a discipline report that not only includes data at the state and school levels but also by subgroup. Both reports include original analysis. OSSE also releases a broad range of publicly available data consistently through downloadable files, policy reports, and other analytical tools. You may find a listing of the data reports that we release on our website in Appendix A. OSSE provides downloadable spreadsheets for its annual PARCC release, as well as the data on Equity Reports. We will also release downloadable files for school-level data for the new accountability system to be released later this year. OSSE also publishes an extensive volume of reports to comply with our statutory requirements from this Council. OSSE submitted 20 public reports during this Council period. You may reference a listing of these reports in Appendix C. And finally, our new school report cards, a collaborative effort with the State Board of Education, will include over 50 individual information points on school offerings and performance, and new functionality so users can search and compare schools. You may find a full listing of the report card data elements in Appendix D. These report cards will be released for the first time in December 2018 and annually thereafter. In short, the data that we collect on schools is available for public review and use.

OSSE also partners with governmental and non-governmental entities to conduct independent research and analysis. Some of those are with the University of Virginia to study the effects of DCPS human capital efforts, the US Department of Education to study the Opportunity Scholarship Program, and Westat to study the KIPP to College program. Collectively, these efforts add significant value. It is rigorous research, like this, that must guide our education investment and policy efforts. We are transparent about these research partnerships in our annual performance responses to this Council. You may find these listed in Appendix B.

OSSE has come a long way, and I am proud of the team we have assembled at the agency. The reality is that much of the reporting and analysis that we currently do, including our most recent investigation into graduation and attendance, would not have been possible a few short years ago. It is a detailed process of getting data from the school level to the state education agency with accuracy and precision. The public and this Council are pushing us to do better and to do more. It is a daunting challenge, but I can assure you, we are up to that task.

B22-776, the "District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Act of 2018"

Turning to the legislation before us today, Bill 22-776 establishes the DC Education Research Collaborative with an advisory board that would be housed in the Office of the Auditor. The Collaborative would manage education data from education agencies, design, and execute long-term educational research. Additionally, Council and the State Board of Education could request long term research through resolution. The legislation requires the Collaborative to audit data and data management and collection practices within OSSE and other education cluster agencies. The legislation

also requires agencies to provide enrollment, student-level, school, and facilities data as far back as 1998.

OSSE agrees that program and policy evaluation is important for good public policy, and embraces the need for rigorous, objective research led by a third party on the effectiveness of our efforts and the performance of schools in the District of Columbia. However, a research collaborative in the Auditor's office, as proposed by Bill 22-776, is not the best way to accomplish this goal. Further, auditing broad data sets from as long as 20 years ago would create additional, excessive demands for OSSE and hinder our ability to do more meaningful and impactful work. Please allow me to discuss these concerns more in a more detailed way.

Outside Third-Party Better to Run Collaborative

The Office of the Auditor serves a critical role for good governance in the District of Columbia by providing oversight over agency operations and practices. Consistent with local law, OSSE fully cooperates with the auditor's inquiries pertaining to OSSE's accounts and operations, and we take the findings from the Office seriously. Yet, we do not believe that the important work of the Auditor should be comingled with the evaluation of policy choices and the management of research because these are two distinct functions. We are concerned that turning policy research and analysis into a compliance and oversight function would distract from the very real need for research that drives instructional practice. As noted in earlier testimony today, many cities and some states have established research organizations with many of these efforts located completely outside of government, but working in tandem with public agencies and stakeholders. The District of Columbia should consider these models as examples of best practices of research partnerships and collaboration.

Audit Doesn't Help Improve Data Accuracy

The legislation attempts to audit OSSE's data collection and reporting processes through a burdensome, vague, and unrealistic audit that would divert resources away from OSSE's efforts to do more meaningful and impactful work. Section 203 of the bill requires the Collaborative to audit data in the education cluster. This is problematic for several reasons. First, it requires the Collaborative to collect public school data since 1998, which is well beyond OSSE's existence in its current capacity. Second, the data and assessment landscape has changed numerous times in the last 20 years putting into question the availability and certainly the quality and consistency of any data that goes back so far. For example, in 2001, the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) significantly changed and expanded the amount of student-level data collected and reported across the country, and in DC, we have had a number of different student assessment systems and changes in governance and structure during this time period.

Finally, the list of data requested is too broad. Without clarity on what specific data elements and in which formats are required to comply with the audit prescribed in the bill, we are unable to say if we could feasibly provide data within the 180-day time period as the bill requires. The legislation would send the Collaborative on a scavenger hunt through OSSE, collecting reams upon reams of data, with the goal of inventorying the agency's data against what the Collaborative thinks that we should have. Complying would require significant capacity from OSSE, and would do very little, if anything, to actually improve data quality. This new scope of work would prevent OSSE from providing more meaningful tools to schools, LEAs, and the public, and could potentially hamper our ability to meet our current, significant local and federal data and reporting requirements

Research Transparency

OSSE views more public engagement on research priorities as a benefit, especially in light of our efforts to engage the public on school report cards. We understand the public's interest in shaping research priorities, and believe engaging them is important. We have engaged the public on report card content, layout, and language, and we believe that the report card will be a strong data reporting tool that will be beneficial to parents and the public at large. There are several models that could be used to support public engagement for any potential research collaborative; models that we have investigated use advisory boards, committees and public engagement and representation in various ways to inform research.

Technical Issues with the Bill

As currently drafted, the legislation has several technical issues that should be addressed. First, lines 185-187 of the bill states that all student-level data be de-identified prior to the item's release to the Collaborative. It is critical to protect student data; however, this provision may significantly curtail the Collaborative's ability to conduct high-quality, rigorous research. Further, it makes merging data sets in a reliable way quite difficult.

Second, education agencies are the custodians of student-level data. Since we collect the data, we are required to manage the sharing and use of it, and only for reasons permitted by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). It is unclear if the Collaborative is seeking to "collect and manage" education data in place of education agencies. Therefore, we believe that the role of the Collaborative in "collecting and managing" data, and the role of the District's education agencies as custodians of these records, requires further legal examination and discussion to ensure the work moving forward still protects student privacy while efficiently providing transparent information and opportunity for research.

Finally, OSSE's current data sharing agreements with research entities are written for specific research purposes. Researchers only have access to student-level data for the narrow purpose of conducting their specific research project and only for a certain period of time. It is also important that prior to releasing student level data that the researcher demonstrates the ability to safeguard student data. If they cannot, we do not share the data. OSSE does not currently have agreements with researchers that provide student level data for broad research use for an unlimited amount of time. We will need to explore the details of these arrangements and look to models like Chicago and North Carolina for these details on how they balance legal protections for student information with research needs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I am pleased that the Council is engaging in debate on data quality and research transparency. This is an important issue that if done in a reasonable way, in collaboration with the people that lead this challenging and significant work every day, can take the District Columbia in the right direction. Thank you for allowing me to testify. I look forward to answering your questions.

OFFICE OF THE
STUDENT
ADVOCATE

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Committee of the Whole & Education Public Hearing:
B22-776 – District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018

Official Written Testimony of Faith Gibson Hubbard, Chief Student Advocate
Office of the Student Advocate, DC State Board of Education

Good morning, Chairman Mendelson, Chairman Grosso, members of the committee, and staff. Thank you for this opportunity to testify. My name is Faith Gibson Hubbard. I am honored to serve in the role of the Chief Student Advocate for the District of Columbia and lead the Office of the Student Advocate, which is an independent office housed within the DC State Board of Education (SBOE).

In March of this year, Dan Davis delivered testimony on my behalf for The Future of School Reform roundtable held by the Committee on Education[1]. In that testimony, I discussed the history of the Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007 (PERAA), the impact of this shift to mayoral control, and the steps our office has taken to ensure that families feel knowledgeable and that they are an integral part our education landscape. We know that the goal of PERAA was to improve outcomes for students in the city's public schools. PERAA established mayoral control, leading to the division of educational accountability into three bodies— the Executive Office of the Mayor, the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). PERAA and mayoral control have shifted public education oversight and accountability, and there have been some improvements in the past eleven years. Even with that improvement, we have missed red flags for systems and processes in need of amendment or further development.

[1] The Future of School Reform Testimony. Retrieved from: https://sboe.dc.gov/page/official-testimony.

PERAA did not address all aspects of our governance structure. While it created three education agencies, the legislation did not specify how these agencies should work in conjunction with each other or provide the guidance to do so. Structures created by PERAA in response to the lack of accountability came with increased complexity of an expanded governance structure. With such a disaggregated public education system, we have seen the effects of lack of collaboration within and between local education agencies (LEAs). Beyond that, we have seen a lack of coordination across education agencies, resulting in a misalignment of policies, resources, and implementation and practices. In this past school year alone, we have seen the effects of this misalignment. With a series of "scandals"[2], lack of confidence of public school governance, and a legacy of distrust in educational leadership, education stakeholders (from families to school staff to elected officials) are questioning whether or not claims of school progress are valid. Confidence in the public school system's ability to improve student outcomes has been weakened. However, with the list of shortcomings now widely recognized, we as a city have the opportunity to address our system's faults.

The proposed Education Research Advisory Board and Education Research Collaborative could address gaps in data collection and management. We have seen models of other groups that work in conjunction with school systems and even individual schools to improve student success over time. With the uniqueness and complexity of our landscape and the fragmented nature of our system, this bill does not seem to address other challenges of our current structure coupled with our need for access to data and its independent collection and analysis. The bill also does not appear to fully consider our city's past research partnerships (i.e. Urban Institute, the National Research Council of the National Academies of Science, and the Education Consortium for Research and Evaluation (DC-EdCORE)[3]) and the barriers they experienced in their research; possible lessons to learn from. The success of this type of research consortium hinges on our city's education agencies', LEAs', and existing research

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[2] regarding graduation rates, attendance, suspension rates, enrollment, and standardized test scores

[3] led by the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at George Washington University

groups' ability to work in conjunction with each other. To date, we have seen some incremental successes, but I urge careful consideration and a measured approach in adding another layer to an already crowded landscape.

In order to increase transparency and accountability, education agencies and their roles and responsibilities need to be more clearly defined to avoid a duplication of efforts. In many states, this role for data collection is taken on by the state education agency. As our state education agency, OSSE provides "a one-stop source of statewide school data on each traditional and public charter school"[4]. Yearly, OSSE compiles and releases school-level, sector-wide, and city-wide data in their equity reports and other information-rich campaign sites like Learn DC and even My School DC. Even with the work done by the proposed collaborative, OSSE should be empowered around their state-level work and data collection as it will take on the role of supporting schools directly in their reporting.

Over time, the Education Research Collaborative could ensure that the problems that have recently come to light do not go unchecked. Having a specific group designated to identify trends for our schools, school staff, and students will undoubtedly be beneficial in the long run by providing a more robust picture of what is happening in our public schools. However, there are many other facets that must be considered prior to creating another layer that only appears helpful for government stakeholders. While the emphasis on longitudinal research is important for our system's future, we must consider if and how this will impact families trying to make decisions now. There are a few questions that should be addressed:

- How will the creation of this entity directly impact and benefit schools? LEAs? Students? Families?
- Is there a plan for how district-wide and local education agencies should use this data?
- Will this/how will this streamline the process of data collection and data sharing?

[4] Office of the State Superintendent of Education. Retrieved from: https://osse.dc.gov/page/about-osse.

- How will schools be supported in collecting data that they are not already collecting?
- What work needs to be done to clearly define roles of education agencies within our current structure? Will this include expectations for collaboration amongst education agencies?
- What work needs to be done to clarify roles and lines of accountability with this proposed body?
- Will this improve families' access to data and aid in their decision-making?
- Lastly, is the Auditor's office the right place to house such a function?

Accountability requires information to be transparent and easily accessible. The creation of this research collaborative could be one solution of the many needed to see that the goals of PERAA are realized. We will also need to move forward with other plans to address educational shortcomings that will be more immediately impactful. If our current oversight structure is not successfully monitoring all facets of educational outcomes, it is our duty to take the appropriate steps to ensure that all students are successful and that confidence in our public education system is rebuilt.

In closing, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to testify. I welcome any questions you might have and look forward to engagement more on this important topic. Finally, if there is any person interested in contacting our office, they can do so by calling us at 202-741-4692 or emailing us at student.advocate@dc.gov. Again, I thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Testimony of

Fritz Mulhauser

Before the District of Columbia Council
Committee of the Whole and Committee on Education

On

Bill 22-776, "D.C. Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018"

July 13, 2018

I appreciate this opportunity to testify in support of the bill. It directs the D.C. Auditor to design a new and independent source of knowledge that can inform practice in District schools. My own experience, and the most recent thorough review of District schools, suggest this is a worthwhile goal.[1] And a structure bringing together researchers and educators to collaborate is worth exploring here along the lines of "research-practice partnerships" in several major cities.

Calling for more and better research is familiar in many areas of social policy where action is needed yet reliable information lags. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 mentioned "scientifically based research" no less than 100 times, ordering states and school systems to follow it when deciding how to spend the federal funds the law authorized. Sadly, the supply did not match the demand and even well-supported advice must find a place in the world of schools where much is already "given."

I look forward to returning in two years as the Council and the community review the groundwork of the auditor and the new board and decide on further directions. Today I suggest six foreshadowed issues that need attention in thinking through a new structure to do research that we hope will become a basis of more effective action in schools.[2]

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[1] I have spent some time thinking about what useful knowledge looks like, how to increase it, and how to get it used to improve work of schools and government. From 1973 to 1983 the research-practice link in education was a main theme of my work on the staff of the House Committee on Education and Labor and in a research program I directed at the U.S. National Institute of Education. Improving evaluation to serve policy generally was my focus 1983-93 when I was assistant director in the Program Evaluation Division of the U.S. General Accounting Office. More recently I joined others in urging the D.C. Council to expand education data and research in response to the National Research Council 2015 report on the years of school reform here. The first two recommendations in that report's final chapter called for a better data system and ongoing independent evaluation and research and the third repeated the call for "accessible, useful and transparent data about D.C. public schools, including charters." Most important, the authors lamented no single entity in D.C. looks analytically at the way all public school students are being educated. National Research Council. *An Evaluation of the Public Schools of the District of Columbia: Reform in a Changing Landscape.* Committee for the Five-Year (2009-2013) Summative Evaluation of the District of Columbia's Public Schools, Board on Testing and Assessment, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2015. Available at https://bit.ly/2L9tzeP.

[2] My thinking has benefited greatly from conversations with Professor Joshua Glazer of the George Washington University about his observations of research-practice partnerships elsewhere (locations I do not know).

1. **Organization context.** People in organizations decide what to make of new research, whether it describes a situation or suggests theories of action. Features of the D.C. schools' work environment that will influence the collaborative's effects on practice include existing leadership, commitments to teaching materials and prior reforms, and internal communication channels. Planners will need to look ahead to those conditions and any necessary changes so that research is received, understood and used. Support of the new D.C. Public Schools chancellor will be key and should be emphasized in the selection process.

2. **Access to data.** The new collaborative needs all existing data (subject of the initial reconnaissance the bill requires) and authority to collect more to fill gaps. Other partnerships have found such libraries of clean data spanning many years among their most valuable results. But this result came only after lengthy negotiation to build essential trust. Council support may be needed to assure DCPS and charters agree. Without solid data, the promise of the collaborative will simply be impossible to fulfill.

3. **Teacher talk.** What is the depth of communication in schools about granular details of teaching and learning? If teachers already work together to discuss lessons, children's progress, and ways to enhance it, they will be most able to benefit—considering and adopting ideas that research suggests. The impact will be less certain where such a workplace culture is weak; efforts to strengthen it may need to accompany the research effort.

4. **Kinds of products.** Atul Gawande famously changed surgical practice with an operating room checklist (based on research on errors).[3] But he was just trying to prod expert doctors and nurses to do what they already knew they should do, but sometimes forgot in the complexity of the operating room. Education professionals are a few bricks shy of a full load of proven methods (equivalent to the scientific background that underpins medicine) for coping effectively with every student's unique learning needs. Still, the lesson from Gawande is that the form of passing on research findings can vary a lot. Educators hope to get from experts some new tools, but researchers are not typically tool-designers. If the collaborative wants to meet that understandable client need, the planning should think through the kinds of projects to be done and results delivered, which in turn has implications for partners to be recruited for the collaborative and most important, for promises made to educators.

5. **Independence.** Credibility is critical, and will be affected by many decisions even including the business plan – how the collaborative will be funded over time. A key driver of the legislation is widespread dissatisfaction with data and interpretations from the executive branch (though no one should be surprised that high officials' incentives are always to accentuate signals of progress). The new entity will have to establish itself as objective and trustworthy. Those key perceptions can be powerfully affected by where the collaborative is housed, who leads it, and who funds it. Universities' administrations and faculty have their own complex incentives (including the commonly remarked fact that faculty research is not evaluated for whether it is useful). Funders can encourage research on some topics but not others; users' preferences may not be high on their list. Early thinking about these will be needed.

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[3] *The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right* (NY, Picador, 2011).

6. **Charters.** Particularly in the District, the benefit of a research partnership will be undercut if it lacks full participation of charter schools. Educating almost half of D.C. children, they are laboratories whose relaxed regulation is cited by advocates as encouraging innovation. Thus they may be a supplier of valuable data on what works, but they also may be users. That's because at least some charter schools have organizational conditions that can increase use of knowledge. These include both strong mission and aligned program and staff selection, but also commitment to using data for feedback. Widely used team structures, as noted above, help ideas circulate.[4]

Last, modesty is in order. Education for District children has fierce challenges including isolation and persistent low achievement of minority and low-income students. Staff and leadership turnover remains high. Policy-making is complex and authority diffuse. The proposed collaborative thus faces daunting complexity in both its own planning and in the environment it will be working in.

Fresh analyses on well-chosen problems and better data accessible for many users will be good. But we shouldn't over-promise the collaborative results. A broader effort will be needed to get traction on the serious underlying causes of the present shortcomings of schools.

I strongly support the bill and look forward to being part of the work it calls for.

[4] On the significance of teacher teams in helping members teach better, drawing on data from a set of successful urban charter schools among others, see Susan Moore Johnson, *et al.*, "Ending Isolation: The Payoff of Teacher Teams in Successful High-Poverty Urban Schools." *Teachers College Record*, Vol. 120 No. 5 (May 2018), pp. 1-46.

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AND THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COUNCIL

Bill 22-776, District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018

Mary Levy **July 13, 2018**

As someone who has done research on many aspects of public education in the District for almost forty years, I welcome the establishment of an independent and expert organization for research and analysis on actual practice in our elementary and secondary schools.

There are multiple reasons why I and others have advocated for such an initiative for a long time, and they are not for "accountability" but to name just three, rather:

- We need a much better idea of what is working for our students and what is not, both in academic education and social-emotional support – as well as why, and what the limitations of any findings are.
- We need much broader and better ways to measure our student outcomes, and to evaluate the performance of our educators and schools. The lack thereof is a serious disservice to students, families, and educators, as well as to the community as a whole. The development of richer measures would ultimately be a real support for educators and schools, and students, families, and government officials as well.
- The state of data and information on public education in the District is disjointed, uncoordinated, inconsistent, burdensome for the providers at all levels, and wasteful of both time and money. One function of the research and practice partnership could be to provide guidance on what we really need to know, how to obtain the necessary data in a more efficient and effective way, and how to make the results fully public and transparent.

As to the process, yes to housing the initial stage in the D.C. Auditor's Office, yes to a data audit, and yes to the Advisory Board and its composition.

Finally, I want to stress two points essential to the accomplishment of our hopes for a research and practice partnership. First, the research organization must be independent of the education chain of command in the executive and it must include but not be dominated by advocates from within or without the government. Second, people in the organization need to be local and continuously involved, familiar with D.C. public education in its full context and history. Research is often done to prove a point or support a position, or to investigate specific questions in isolation from the broader context. We need something more, and this legislation promises to provide it.

D.C. POLICY CENTER

PUBLIC HEARING ON

BILL 22-776, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA EDUCATION RESEARCH ADVISORY BOARD AND COLLABORATIVE ESTABLISHMENT AMENDMENT ACT OF 2018

Before the Committees of the Whole and Education
Chairman Phil Mendelson and Councilmember David Grosso

July 13, 2018 at 10:30am
John A. Wilson Building

Testimony of Chelsea Coffin
Director, Education Policy Initiative
D.C. Policy Center

Good morning, Chairman Mendelson, Councilmember Grosso and members of the Council. My name is Chelsea Coffin and I am the Director of the Education Policy Initiative at the D.C. Policy Center, an independent think tank focused on advancing policies for a growing and vibrant economy in D.C. I thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Bill 22-776 correctly highlights the need for better data, stronger internal and external controls at schools, and research that can improve education practices in the District. But the bill has one major flaw: It will place all these functions under the Office of the Auditor. While both audits and research are critical to guide education policy and practice in the District of Columbia, when combined, the research will fail.

To be clear, there is great need for more external controls at District's education entities given revelations over the last year about overreporting of graduation rates and underreporting of disciplinary actions at schools. The Auditor is already positioned to investigate these under its current mandate. This office should receive adequate funding to do so and the District of Columbia's education agencies should receive adequate resources, both financial and technical, to comply with audit requests.

But the research aspect---what the bill calls the research consortia—should be independent, and separated from the government, and therefore does not belong in the Auditor's office. An independent research-practice partnership—the

commonly used name for research collaboratives—that generates scientific research is necessary to identify paths for continued improvements. The research-practice partnership needs to focus on information schools need and be completely separate from audits or politics. **Successful research-practice partnerships like those in New Orleans, Chicago, and New York, have buy-in from practitioners and trust of the schools and education entities where they conduct research.** They collaboratively choose research topics, have an advisory board that focuses on scientific merit, and rely on external funding from foundations or federal sources instead of just the city budget. In addition, many partnerships are hosted by a research institution or a university with a deep bench of academic researchers and expertise in cleaning, managing, and storing large datasets.

The District of Columbia should also integrate lessons learned from previous education research-practice partnerships in the city. For example, since 2011, **DCPS has partnered with researchers at University of Virginia and Stanford University** to examine the effect of IMPACT and now LEAP. DCPS, DC PCSB, and OSSE have also shared data with the Urban Institute to study **transportation to school** and Mathematica Policy Research to study **school choice in D.C.** In 2012, a group of researchers formed the D.C. Education Consortium for Research and Evaluation (**EdCORE**) based at George Washington University as a partnership between independent research firms and university-based faculty. EdCORE released **five reports** on D.C.'s 2007 school reform, known as PERAA. The Auditor served as the fiscal agent for EdCORE's work, which was mandated by the Council. DCPS and OSSE

were compelled to provide data to the study and were not partners in the effort. Without strong agency buy-in and consistent financial support, EdCORE became dormant when its commissioned work ended.

Looking at successful research-practice partnerships outside of D.C., the proposed research collaborative differs in ways that weaken its independence. It would be the only one to have an oversight and audit role in addition to carrying out research, and the only one where elected officials can directly request studies by policy. It is also unique in that it receives all of its funding from the city instead of grants from federal sources and foundations. Lastly, it doesn't incorporate a research institution or university as a partner or on its Advisory Board.

What are the characteristics of other research-practice partnerships?

Characteristic	D.C. (proposed)	Massa-chusetts	Chicago	New Orleans	New York City
Are some datasets made available to the general public?	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Can independent researchers (non-affiliated) access the data?	No	Yes	No	No	No
Does the data sharing agreement require individual project approval?	No*	Yes	No	No	No
Does the research partner conduct audits or oversight?	Yes	No	No	No	No
Do elected representatives directly shape the research agenda?	Yes	No	No	No	No
Does funding come from the city's budget?	Yes	No	No	No	No
Is the research partner housed by a research institution or a university?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Are research institutions or universities represented on the steering committee?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Mandated data sharing with Office of the Auditor
Source: Review of organizations' websites and outreach.

Rigorous collaborative research can inform how educators and policymakers improve their practice; independent audits can empower oversight over such

decisions—both functions are sorely needed, but best kept separated. If these two functions are combined, schools will be reluctant to participate in research wrapped up as audit and oversight. The research agenda will be shaded towards compliance rather than learning lessons for improving D.C. education outcomes. Unfortunately, the Council's proposed path will undermine the role of research in examining what works and what positive paths D.C. can build towards providing every student with an excellent public education.

Thank you very much for your time, and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Testimony of Danica Petroshius
Parent and Co-Vice President of the
Capitol Hill Public School Parent Organization (CHPSPO)
July 13, 2018

My name is Danica Petroshius. I am Co-Vice President of the Capitol Hill Public School Parents Organization (CHPSPO) and parent of two children in DCPS. I am here to testify in favor of the pending legislation in support of a Research Collaborative. I will offer guiding principles to frame the benefits of a Research Collaborative and frame how it should work. I have also included amendments to the legislation to reflect these principles.

Now is the time to do something different in DC. Since 2007 education reform, we have righted many wrongs in the system that we exist within. From opening doors and delivering books on time, to providing preschool for 3-year-olds throughout the city, we have seen significant improvements. But, it's been eleven years and these reforms have become stagnant. Today, the status quo is producing wide, growing achievement gaps in both public sectors and this must be addressed with great urgency. For example, in schools where more than 75% of student population is at-risk, only 9% of at-risk kids are proficient in math in DCPS schools and only 2% in charter schools, on average. This is a failure of the system and a failure to address equity. With the "District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018," we have the opportunity to bring together multiple stakeholders to drive a research agenda that supports practitioners in their daily work of improving practice and outcomes for all children, particularly for those underserved and at-risk.

I understand that there may be testimony today about a potential partnership between the Urban Institute and the agencies under control of the Mayor: DCPS, DME, PCSB, and OSSE. They may claim that their partnership is the research partnership we need instead of this pending legislation and they may present promises from national funders in support of their work. I support DC agencies' authority to contract out research to strong research institutions like Urban Institute. DC agencies do this now and they should continue to do so. But let me be clear: their proposal is not a research collaborative and it is not in the spirit of the legislation. When government interests come first and the stakeholder community is an afterthought, it is not a research collaborative. When government agencies and their partners try to pre-empt the legislative process to take the DC Council role out, and thereby take the stakeholder role out, it is not a research collaborative. When the focus is looking at impact and comparisons to other cities, but not the research needed to support DC practitioners in DC schools and drive ongoing improvement in DC, it is not a DC research collaborative.

We have a great opportunity in this legislation to provide something different and relevant. The power of a research collaborative is to build something that is trusted by practitioners, parents, community members, researchers and government to fuel information and data with a strong feedback loop with practitioners to schools that will help them improve practice and thereby improve outcomes for students. And it is embedded in and committed to the nuances of local context that are critical to earning trust and developing ongoing improvement efforts. I believe that if done well, many private funders - national and local – will flock to support the research collaborative and the locally-driven agenda that the research collaborative and its advisory board creates.

To underscore the power of the research collaborative, I offer the example of preschool. Many national funders and research organizations are interested in the impact of preschool on long-term educational outcomes. A city agency may contract with a national research organization to look at the impact of preschool on 3rd grade test scores. They might compare their findings to other similar cities. That

information will be useful to national organizations looking to weigh the benefits of preschool in urban environments.

But that question will do nothing to help the District of Columbia now. We have publicly funded preschool starting at 3 years old, and across our mixed-delivery system, we serve 69% of three-year-olds and 89% of four-year-olds. Preschool is an extremely popular stronghold of our education system. Whether it has long-term impact is an irrelevant question *in DC*. Public preschool is not going away and demand will not go away. The pressing question in DC is: how do we help our preschool system work well for every student, in every community? What can we do to support our practitioners to ensure they have the tools, systems and policies that will most support their success? That is the pressing, locally-driven, locally-needed question that needs an answer.

We need a research collaborative that is in it for the long haul to address pressing local, practitioner-focused questions in service to ongoing improvement.

I want to see the legislation before us strengthened and become law. I want it to embody the following six principles for its vision (see attached for full text of the principles and related amendments):

- Focus on improving outcomes for historically underserved students
- Create feedback loops between research and practice
- Invest in trust through genuine, diverse and representative stakeholder engagement
- Commit to high-quality and transparent research
- Use the knowledge learned to improve practice
- Recognize that a high-quality Research Collaborative is hard work and takes time.

And I want it to embrace the following principles for it to work well in our unique, local DC context:

- Build the Collaborative with urgency
- Focus on DC's two public sectors and the needs of all students
- Incubate in the Auditor's office
- Support the critical role of the Advisory Board
- Ensure regular engagement and guidance of the Advisory Board

I want to underscore the importance of the principle *"Invest in trust through genuine, diverse and representative stakeholder engagement."* There is no Collaborative in Research Collaborative if the government agencies and the research institutions work it all out then later engage a few stakeholders. This is about a long-term partnership that works together to create a research agenda; leveraging the expertise of practitioners; ensuring the work is anchored in our local context; and placing an unwavering focus on continuously improving outcomes for all students, particularly at-risk students. Only with a strong, representative and active Advisory Board and a Research Collaborative that invests in practitioner feedback loops will this initiative succeed as a Research Collaborative.

I hope that the DC Council will embrace this vision and these amendments. I hope you will urgently lead us to the implementation of a strong Research Collaborative that helps boost efforts to close the achievement gaps and strengthen our two public sectors with equity and continuous improvement at the core. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Guiding Principles for a DC Education Research Collaborative

The Vision for a DC Education Research Collaborative
(Working Draft July 12, 2018)

Vision statement:
The DC Education Research Collaborative will aim to strengthen our public education system, particularly for historically underserved populations, by providing a roadmap for ongoing improvement using high-quality, rigorous research; genuine, diverse, and representative stakeholder engagement; and transparent methods.

The vision of the DC Education Research Collaborative should be guided by the following principles:

Strengthen our public schools with a laser focus on improving outcomes for historically underserved (e.g., "at-risk", economically challenged, homeless, English learner, etc.) students. Strengthening our public education system for all students requires identifying and closing persistent gaps in opportunity and achievement. This work must proceed with urgency, thoughtfulness and the engagement of practitioners who are most directly involved with students. This work should focus on the schools with a higher-than-average percentage of students identified as at-risk.

Create feedback loops between research and practice.
Continuous improvement is often defined as closing the gap between what is possible and what is actual[1]. This work involves constantly, incrementally, equitably, and consistently working toward what is possible for all students and schools, and changing course, as needed, when strategies do not work according to plan. Collaborative research partnerships are uniquely well-suited to bridge the gap between practice and research by rooting their research in the world of day-to-day school practice, creating research-practice feedback loops for educators, and importantly, by improving their own research with the addition of local educator expertise. Ultimately, the goal of this work is to build significant capacity among DC's districts, schools, teachers *and* researchers so that all critical stakeholders in the research collaborative gain skills and knowledge over time.

Invest in trust through genuine, diverse, and representative stakeholder engagement.
Genuine, diverse, and representative engagement is critical to the success of a research collaborative. Genuine engagement builds trust by gathering and using feedback and including stakeholder voices in processes and outputs. Diverse and representative engagement must reflect the diversity of the District and include stakeholders that are authentically invested in both traditional public schools and public charter schools in DC. This type of engagement ensures that historically marginalized voices are heard and prioritized in determining the

[1] https://www.carnegiefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/carnegie-foundation_continuous-improvement_2013.05.pdf

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research agenda and throughout all stages of research. This includes, in particular, teacher, parent, and student voices.

> *The Advisory Board should be made up of the DCPS Chancellor or representative, the Deputy Mayor of Education or representative, the State Superintendent of Education or representative, and the Executive Director of the Public Charter School Board or representative. The SBOE shall appoint 2 members. The other 15 members should be appointed by the DC Council and should include 2 DCPS parents, 2 charter school parents, 2 community representatives, 1 representative of the council of School Officers, 1 representative of the Washington Teachers' Union, 2 researchers, 1 charter school teacher, 1 DCPS teacher, 1 DCPS student, 1 charter school student and 1 representative from District-based non-profit with expertise in academic and other support strategies for serving at-risk students. The Council should ensure that the perspectives of all 8 wards are represented.*

Commit to high quality and transparent research.
A successful research collaborative must commit to high-quality and transparent research to generate and sustain trust among stakeholders, build capacity, and succeed in ongoing improvement efforts. Transparency requires that all projects have public-facing, useful and understandable products, meetings are made public, methods are clear, and no agency or single stakeholder has veto power over what products are released to the public. Further, high-quality research will not have political spin or include falsehoods that argue for particular policies or programs, or clearly work to benefit any agency or actor. Instead, this research should openly track progress and identify if and how programs and policies are working on the ground. Ongoing improvement is difficult and often controversial work; successful research collaboratives must remain objective, transparent, and focused on facts rather than ideology.

Use the knowledge of the Research Collaborative. The work of the Research Collaborative should include processes and activities to ensure that research findings are understood and embraced by a broad audience of practitioners to bring effective practices and ongoing improvements to scale across the city. To ensure collaborative products and outputs are accessible and usable, they should be in clear language and previewed multiple times by all relevant stakeholders. In addition, multiple interim products should be shared with partners so that practitioner partners have usable information in a timely manner.

Recognize that a high-quality Research Collaborative is hard work. To build trust among stakeholders, identify a relevant research agenda, and complete aligned research projects with a regular feedback loop with practitioners is very difficult work. This is not a check the box activity – this is a roll up your sleeves, in-it-for-the-long-haul investment in ongoing improvement. This is an investment that is worth the effort.

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Key Elements of How the DC Research Collaborative Should Work: The Research Collaborative should be positioned, supported and ready to:

- ***Build with urgency.*** The status quo in DC is not enough. The Research Collaborative, if executed well, can be one of the much-needed boosts to our system to start to change practice in support of improved outcomes for our at-risk students..

- ***Focus on DC's two public sectors, and on the needs of all students, particularly historically underserved students, through a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion.*** Representation on the Research Collaborative should reflect the makeup of students in the two public school sectors.

- ***Incubate in the Auditor's office to bring together government, research, practitioners and community in a trusted collaborative that focuses on supporting practitioners across our sectors.*** The Research Collaborative must be kick-started in the Auditor's office, which has access to data, has the trust of multiple stakeholders, and has the capacity to manage a local, transparent and participatory process.

- ***Develop a structure to support the critical role of the Advisory Board.*** The Executive Director of the Research Collaborative, who is appointed by the Auditor, should support the Advisory Board to accomplish its goals: set the research agenda for the Research Collaborative; provide ongoing oversight over implementation of the research agenda; assist in soliciting private funding to finance future work of the Collaborative; and report to the Council and the public on all aspects of the Research Collaborative.

- ***Meet, communicate and engage regularly with the Advisory Board and the public.*** The Advisory Board and the Research Collaborative will communicate in person and through other means regularly to ensure that implementation of the research agenda is on track and is meeting the needs of practitioners. As needed, communications will ensue to brainstorm on solutions to keep ongoing improvement moving forward.

- ***Develop projects based on the research agenda.*** The Executive Director will identify projects based on the research agenda in consultation with the Advisory Board. The Executive Director will identify small stakeholder advisory groups for each project and hold regular meetings with each group to ensure relevance and usefulness of the project. Projects will include a feedback loop with practitioners throughout the work.

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Proposed Amendments July 12, 2018 (working draft)
Danica Petroshius, Parent dpetroshius@yahoo.com
Iris Bond Gill, Parent iris007gill@gmail.com

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Chairman Phil Mendelson

Councilmember Mary M. Cheh

Councilmember Charles Allen

Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.

Councilmember Vincent C. Gray

Councilmember Brianne Nadeau

Councilmember Elissa Silverman

A BILL

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To amend the District of Columbia Auditor Subpoena and Oath Authority Act of 2004 to establish the District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and the District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative~~,~~ that supports the ongoing improvement in all DC public schools with a focus on historically underserved students and to require the Collaborative to undertake an audit of District school data and data collection policies.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the "District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018".

Sec. 2. The District of Columbia Auditor Subpoena and Oath Authority Act of 2004, effective April 22, 2004 (D.C. Law 15-146; D.C. Official Code § 1–301.171 et seq.), is amended as follows:

42 (a) The short title is amended to strike "Subpoena and Oath Authority".

43 (b) The existing text is designated as Title I.

44 (c) A new Title II is added to read as follows:

45 "Sec. 201. District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board.

46 "(a) There is established the District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board

47 ("Advisory Board"). The Advisory Board shall:

48 "(1) Provide guidance to the District of Columbia Education Research

49 Collaborative ("Collaborative");

50 "(2) Report to the Council on District data management and collection policies,

51 the Advisory Board's guidance of the Collaborative, and other matters; and

52 "(3) Assist in soliciting funding grants from individuals, foundations, granting

53 institutions, and other entities to finance the work of the Collaborative;~~.~~ and

54 (4) Set the Research Agenda for the Collaborative that will focus on supporting

55 ongoing improvement of practice in DC public schools with a particular focus on improving

56 outcomes for historically underserved and at-risk students, and consult on the research projects

57 of the Collaborative.

58 "(b) The Advisory Board shall be composed of 21~~16~~ voting members, who shall be

59 residents of the District of Columbia, and be appointed for terms of 3 years. The Advisory

60 Board's membership shall include:

61 "~~(1) 4 members, appointed by the Mayor, as follows:~~ (1) Representatives of the

62 Mayor's education agencies as follows:

63 "(A) ~~1 representative from the~~ the Chancellor of the District of Columbia

64 Public Schools ("DCPS") or designee ~~Central Office~~;

65 "(B) the Deputy Mayor for Education ("DME) or designee ~~1~~

66 ~~representative from the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education ("DME");~~

67 "(C) ~~1 representative from the Office of~~ the State Superintendent of

68 Education ~~'s ("OSSE") Division of Data Assessment & Research~~or designee; and

69 "(D) ~~1 representative from~~ the Executive Director of the District of

70 Columbia Public Charter School Board or designee;~~;~~

71 "(2) 2 members who are representatives from the State Board of Education

72 ("SBOE")~~)~~; and

73 "(3) 15~~10~~ members, appointed by the Council, as follows:

74 ~~"(A) 3 representatives from District-based non-profits with a focus on~~

75 ~~public education;~~ 1 representative from District-based non-profit with expertise in academic and

76 other support strategies for serving at-risk students;

77 "(A~~B~~) 2 ~~3 members of~~ DCPS ~~or public charter school~~ parents;

78 (B) 2 charter school parents; ~~organizations~~;

79 "(C~~C~~) 2 community representatives who reside in the District;

80 "(D) 1 representative from the Council of School Officers; ~~and~~

81 "(E) 1 representative from the Washington Teachers Union;

82 (F) 2 researchers;

83 (G) 1 DCPS teacher;

84 (H) 1 charter school teacher;

85 (I) 1 DCPS student; and

86 (J) 1 charter school student.~~,~~

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87 "(c)(1) Within 90~~180~~ days after the effective date of this act, the ~~Mayor~~ agency leaders
88 identified in (b)(1) shall appoint the ~~Mayor's appointees~~their respective appointees for the
89 Advisory Board.
90 "(2) Within ~~180~~ 90 days after the effective date of this act, the SBOE shall adopt a
91 resolution designating the members of the SBOE members who will serve on the Advisory
92 Board.
93 "(3) Within ~~180~~ 90 days after the effective date of this act, the Council shall adopt
94 a resolution with the names of the Council's appointees.
95 "(d) Within 90 days after completion of the activities described in paragraphs (c)(1),
96 (c)(2), or (c)(3) of this subsection, whichever is last, the Advisory Board shall hold its first
97 meeting.
98 "(e) Within ~~180~~ 90 days after the Advisory Board's first meeting, the Advisory Board
99 shall:
100 "(1) develop its own rules of procedure, except that the rules of procedure shall
101 provide that:
102 "(A) The Advisory Board shall meet regularly but at least in March and
103 September of each year;
104 "(B) All meetings shall be open to the public; and
105 "(C) A quorum shall consist of a majority plus 1 of the voting members.
106 "(2) Set requirements for the Collaborative to report to and collaborate with the
107 Advisory Board;
108 (f) within 1 year after the effective date of this act, the Advisory Board in
109 collaboration with the Executive Director of the Research Collaborative shall: ~~and~~

110 "(1~~3~~) Develop ~~initial research and data collection priorities~~the research agenda
111 that is focused on supporting ongoing improvement in DC public schools that will
112 improve outcomes for all students, particularly historically underserved and at-risk
113 students, for the Collaborative.
114 "Sec. 202. District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative.
115 "(a) There is established, as a subordinate division within the Office of the District of
116 Columbia Auditor ("Auditor"), the District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative
117 ("Collaborative").
118 "(b) The Collaborative shall:
119 "(1) Manage the school education data collected under subsection 4(a) of this act;
120 "(2) Collect and manage updates to the data described under section 4(a) of this
121 act, and additional, relevant data, on at least an annual basis;
122 "(3) Conduct short and long-term data analysis and ~~long-term education~~
123 ~~research~~research projects, in consultation with the Advisory Board, aligned to the research
124 agenda established in (e)(3);
125 (4) Develop small stakeholder advisory groups to advise on specific research
126 projects aligned to the research agenda established in (e)(3) to ensure there is an ongoing
127 feedback loop with practitioners; ~~;~~
128 ~~"(A) With the guidance of the Auditor, the Advisory Board, and the~~
129 ~~Collaborative's Executive Director; or~~
130 "~~(B) At the request of the Council or State Board of Education ("SBOE"),~~
131 ~~upon the passage of a resolution by the Council or the SBOE describing the scope of the~~
132 ~~research.~~

133 "(~~5~~4) Produce reports to the Mayor, the Auditor, the Advisory Board, SBOE, and
134 the Council on research projects, including:
135 "(A) For all research projects, final reports that include utilized data,
136 explanations of gaps in data, explanations of gaps in the District's capacity to collect data,
137 findings, ~~and~~ recommendations, including recommendations for further research, engagement of
138 the practitioner community, evidence of relevance and usefulness to practitioners, and plans for
139 implementing the findings at scale; ~~research~~;
140 "(B) For research projects lasting 2 years or longer, annual updates to the
141 Auditor, the Advisory Board, SBOE, and the Council;
142 "(~~6~~5) Produce a report to the Mayor, the Auditor, the Advisory Board, SBOE, and
143 the Council each July on the state of public education in the District;
144 "(~~7~~6) Produce an annual report to the Auditor, the Advisory Board, SBOE, and
145 the Council, on the Collaborative's finances, including information on grants received, active
146 contracts, and project expenditures; and
147 "(7) Where appropriate, award contracts on a competitive basis to private
148 organizations with an expertise in education policy or data management to undertake research
149 projects on behalf of the Collaborative.
150 "(c)(1) The Collaborative shall be headed by an Executive Director, appointed by the
151 Auditor, who shall organize, administer, and manage the functions and authorities assigned to the
152 Collaborative.
153 "(2) The Executive Director may employ and retain staff for the Collaborative,
154 and may retain as independent contractors professionals or consultants necessary to carry out the
155 planning, development, and operations of the Collaborative.

156 (3) The Executive Director shall enter into a research partnership with an external
157 research partner, such as a university or a consortium, and establish a memoranda of
158 understanding and data sharing agreements to facilitate and support execution of the work of the
159 Collaborative identified in Section 202(b); and
160 "(~~4~~3) Within ~~180~~ 90 days after the effective date of this act, the Auditor shall
161 appoint the first Executive Director for the Collaborative.
162 "(d) The Collaborative shall have access to papers, things, or property in accordance with
163 § 1-204.55(c).
164 "(e) The Collaborative shall conduct public meetings at least once per year to solicit
165 information and feedback on the ~~District's school system,~~implementation of the Collaborative's
166 research agenda and the data collection and management processes ~~including practices, policies,~~
167 ~~procedures, and data~~ for District of Columbia Public Schools ("DCPS"), the District of Columbia
168 Office of the State Superintendent ("OSSE"), the District of Columbia Public Chart School
169 Board ("PCSB"), and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education ("DME"). The
170 Collaborative shall provide notice to the public of these meetings at least 30 days in advance in
171 the District of Columbia Register.
172 "(f) Within 90 days after January 1, 2021, the Collaborative shall issue a report to the
173 Auditor, the Advisory Board, the Council, and SBOE that provides assessments of:
174 "(1) The current structure, administration, and guidance of the Collaborative,
175 including recommendations with respect thereto that the Collaborative may deem advisable; and
176 "(2) Funding for the Collaborative, including analysis of best practices of other
177 school research consortia and an assessment of the Collaborative's grant seeking efforts.
178 "Sec. 203. Data Management and Collection Practices Audit.

179 "(a) The Collaborative shall conduct an audit of data and data management and collection
180 practices of the District of Columbia Public Schools ("DCPS"), the District of Columbia Office
181 of the State Superintendent ("OSSE"), the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education ("DME"),
182 the Public Charter School Board ("PCSB"), and individual Local Education Agencies ("LEA").
183 In undertaking this audit, the Collaborative shall:
184 "(1) Collect District public school data from 1998 to present, including:
185 "(A) Enrollment data, including:
186 "(i) School lottery applications and results;
187 "(ii) School enrollment numbers, including data on attrition;
188 "(iii) Enrollment projections;
189 "(iv) Early childhood education enrollment numbers; and
190 "(v) Adult education program enrollment numbers; and
191 "(B) Uniquely identifiableed and longitudinal sStudent data~~ over time.~~,
192 including:
193 "(i) Standardized test scores;
194 "(ii) Student course transcripts;
195 "(iii) Attendance and truancy data;
196 "(iv) Data on suspensions, expulsions, and other disciplinary
197 actions;
198 "(v) Graduation and dropout data; and
199 "(vi) GED completion data; and
200 (vii) school of record; and
201 "(C) School and facilities data, including:

202 "(i) Food service and student nutrition data;

203 "(ii) Course catalogs, course postings, and other materials related

204 to course offerings;

205 "(iii) Curriculum standards, policies, and materials on specific

206 instructional requirements;

207 "(iv) Data on school staffing, including retention and attrition data;

208 "(v) Salary data;

209 "(vi) School and classroom capacity data; and

210 "(vii) Facilities data, including building size, fields and

211 recreational space records; and

212 "(D) Budget data;~~ and~~

213 "(E) Results of surveys administered to DCPS students, staff,

214 administrators; and

215 (F) other data and information as needed to implement the research agenda and

216 related research projects.~~.~~

217 "(2) Collect current DCPS and District public charter school data management

218 and collection standards and protocols;

219 "(3) Collect federal, state, District, and LEA data collection requirements and

220 mandates to which DCPS, OSSE, or DME are subject;

221 "(4) Conduct a review of comparable school jurisdictions to identify best

222 practices for data management and collection standards and protocols; and

223 "(5) ~~Conduct~~ Summarize research on ~~a review of~~ education research consortiums
224 ~~in large, urban cities in the United~~ and highlight structures and processes of effective partnerships
225 that may be applicable to the local context in the District of Columbia. ~~States.~~
226 "(b) Where any item described in subsection (a) of this section is found to include
227 information sufficient to identify a particular student, that identifying information shall be
228 removed prior to the item's release to the Collaborative.
229 "(c) Within 180 days after ~~the establishment of~~ effective date of the act. ~~the Collaborative,~~
230 DCPS, OSSE, DME, PCSB shall furnish to the Collaborative the data listed at subsection (a) of
231 this section. Where, after exhaustive search, the items listed at subsection (a) of this section are
232 not found or are available only in part, DCPS, OSSE, DME, and PCSB shall provide the
233 Collaborative with a written account of the missing data and a description of the search to locate
234 the data.
235 "(d) Within 1 year after the Collaborative is furnished with the data listed at subsection
236 (a) of this section, the Collaborative shall issue a report of its findings to the Mayor, the Auditor,
237 the Advisory Board, the State Board of Education ("SBOE"), and the Council. This report shall:
238 "(1) Include, in appendices or through a link to a digital repository, all data and
239 materials collected under subsection (a) of this section;
240 "(2) List all items DCPS, OSSE, DME, PCSB identified under subsection (c) of
241 this section as missing or incomplete;
242 "(3) Identify gaps in the District's collection or retention of public school data;
243 "(4) Identify gaps in the District's school data management and collection
244 standards and protocols;
245 "(5) Identify existing barriers to LEA's ability to collect data; and

246 "(6) Provide recommendations to the Mayor, the Auditor, the Advisory Board,
247 SBOE, the Council, LEAs, and the Collaborative for enhancing the District's public school data
248 management and collection standards and protocols~~, and for best practices for establishing the~~
249 ~~Collaborative~~."
250 Sec. 3. Section 2(f) of the Confirmation Act of 1978, effective March 3, 1979 (D.C. Law
251 2-142; D.C. Official Code § 1-523.01(f)), is amended to read as follows:
252 (1) Paragraph (54) is amended by striking the phrase "; and" and inserting a
253 semicolon in its place;
254 (2) Paragraph (55) is amended by striking the phrase "38." and inserting "38;" in
255 its place;
256 (3) Paragraph (56) is amended by striking the phrase "Title 2." and inserting
257 "Title 2; and" in its place; and
258 (4) A new Paragraph (57) is inserted that reads as follows:
259 "(57) The District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board.".
260 Sec. 4. Fiscal impact statement.
261 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal
262 impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975,
263 approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).
264 Sec. 5. Effective date.
265 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
266 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as
267 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December

268 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of

269 Columbia Register.

270

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Testimony to the DC Council Regarding the *District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018*

By Monica Herk, Vice President of Education Research, the Committee for Economic Development

July 13, 2018

Thank you, Council Members, for the opportunity to testify before you today regarding this important piece of legislation, which I support. My name is Monica Herk, and I am Vice President of Education Research at the Committee for Economic Development.

My three main points are:

1. First, if the goal of the Education Research Collaborative is to improve student education outcomes in the District, then the primary goals of the Collaborative and the people who staff it need to be **working *together* with all the public schools in the District – traditional and charter – to use data to improve student outcomes.**[1]

2. My second related point is, to be effective in doing that, the Collaborative needs both organizationally and philosophically to be structured as a *coach* and collaborator, working alongside public school administrators and educators, not as an evaluator of DCPS performance.

3. Finally, my third theme will be to talk a bit about the Chicago Consortium on School Research, which is the granddaddy of research-practice partnerships, and what DC can learn from it.

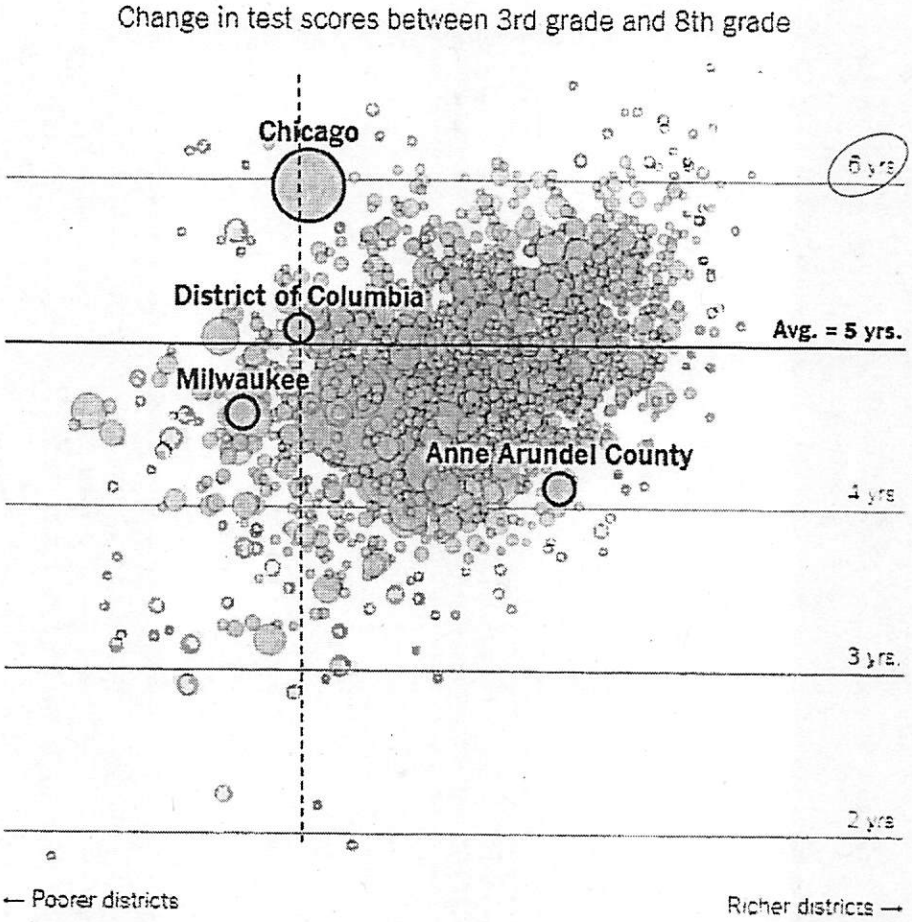
Let me start with my third point: the Chicago Consortium. CCSR, as it was originally called, was founded in 1990 at the University of Chicago. CCSR developed the model and the philosophy of what have come to be called research-practice partnerships.

The CCSR model has so many emulators because it has been very successful at improving student outcomes in Chicago Public Schools.

There are endless debates about how to measure and compare the performance of urban public school districts. The measure that I find most convincing is one developed by Sean Reardon at Stanford. Basically his measure looks at student test scores in 3rd grade and at the same student's test scores in 8th grade and then calculates how many years of learning each student achieved between 3rd grade and 8th grade. Did the average student in that district achieve five years of learning between 3rd grade and 8th grade? More than five years? Less?

[1] Throughout these comments I use "DCPS" as shorthand for all the public schools in the District – both traditional and charter.

How Effective Is Your School District? A New Measure Shows Where Students Learn the Most



Districts along the dotted red line have student populations with the same average socio-economic status. Size of circle represents the number of students.

Source: Figure is adapted from Emily Badger and Kevin Quealy, "How Effective is Your School District: A New Measure Shows Where Students Learn the Most," The New York Times, 12/5/17. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/12/05/upshot/a-better-way-to-compare-public-schools.html

Using this measure DCPS students achieve 5.1 years of learning between 3rd and 8th grade, which is ever so slightly above the national average of 5 years of learning. So that's not bad. But the students in the Chicago Public Schools, which is larger than DC but has a similar socio-economic mix in terms of economic disadvantage, manage to achieve *6 years* of learning, on average, in the 5 years between 3rd grade and 8th grade. Chicago really stands out among school districts, and especially among poorer districts.

What made this possible? I believe that the Chicago Consortium of School Research played a big role.

How did they do it?

In describing their model, CCSR emphasizes these points:

1) They maintain an **extensive longitudinal data archive** on Chicago public schools and students, going back to 1990. "Longitudinal" means that it's anonymized *student-level* data, meaning that the Consortium can look at student paths and experiences going through the Chicago public schools and then analyze how different paths and experiences are associated with different student outcomes. The data piece is clearly part of DC's plan in this bill before the Council.

2) Another key part of the Chicago research-practice partnership is that it's **truly a partnership**. It's not academic researchers or evaluators doing research "on" the district in order to get published in academic journals or to pass judgement on the effectiveness of the district. It is researchers working collaboratively with district educators and administrators to "ask questions that address the core problems facing practitioners and decision makers" in the Chicago public schools.[2]

3) A third part of the Chicago model is conducting **high-quality, scientifically rigorous research** but then making the findings broadly accessible and understandable to the full range of stakeholder groups, including parents and the general public. The research needs to be methodologically of high quality in order to be credible. But then, no matter how technically complex and rigorous the actual research is, it is still possible and necessary and important to communicate the findings in language and formats that are accessible to the average person.

4) Ultimately, the only way that student outcomes can improve across an entire school district is if what happens in the classroom – between the teacher, the student and what is being taught – changes for the better. And to achieve that, at scale, you need the trust and cooperation of educators and school leaders.

Chicago has been taking this approach for over 25 years. It's not that they have had a silver bullet. Rather they have identified and focused on the intermediate student outcomes that predict long-term student outcomes of learning and success. And then they have relentlessly experimented at the school level to try to improve those outcomes. They measured whether they succeeded or not based on the data they collect and then kept tweaking. Lots of little improvements, sustained over time are likely what has led them to look so much better than other public school districts, at least on the Sean Reardon measure.

This leads me to my second and third points, which are…

My second main point is that the District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative, when or if it comes into being, should be set up to be a coach and collaborator working alongside all public schools in DC, rather than an evaluator or a "stick" with which to beat DCPS. There is no doubt that the educational data that will be collected by the Collaborative as part of Section 203 of the bill, particularly around student outcomes, will allow the appropriate parties (elected officials, the public) to hold public schools accountable for their performance. But holding the

[2] https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/CCSR%20Model%20Report-final.pdf

district accountable, over the long run, for its performance should fall to elected officials and the public – not to the Collaborative. Otherwise, the Collaborative cannot effectively play its role of helping DC schools improve student performance.

And my final, related point is that when it comes time to choose the Executive Director of the DC Education Research Collaborative, it is crucial that that individual – in terms of both skill set and mind set – be oriented toward working collaboratively *with* educators and leaders in the DC public schools to improve student outcomes, rather than viewing the Collaborative's work as academic research or external evaluation. The Executive Director should have very strong research credentials but also needs to be personally committed to working "in the trenches" with District educators and to communicating with the general public to improve outcomes for DC's students. Thank you.

Committee on Whole and Education
Bill 22-776, District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018
Friday, July 13, 2018

My name is Suzanne Wells. I am the founder of the Capitol Hill Public Schools Parent Organization, and the mom of a student who has attended Eliot-Hine Middle School. I am here today to testify in support of establishing the District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative.

In March of this year, members of the Coalition for DC Public Schools and Communities (C4DC) met with city councilmembers to discuss our recommendations for a constructive path going forward for the city after a series of events, including the graduation audit and the discovery of enrollment fraud, created an opportunity to examine DC's public education path going forward. During those meetings a broad cross-section of public education supporters identified the need for an objective, independent review of our city's educational outcomes.

Our recommendations were based ~~on~~ in part on the 2015 review of the Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007 that was done by the National Research Council. The National Research Council recommended 1) that DC should have a comprehensive data warehouse that makes basic information about the school system publicly available, and 2) DC should establish institutional arrangements that will support ongoing independent evaluation of its education system with a focus on the serious and persistent disparities in learning opportunities and academic progress across student groups and wards. This Act will implement these two important recommendations.

It makes sense to at least initially house the Research Collaborative in the DC Auditor's office. Under Mayoral control, we have seen all too often an effort to spin educational outcomes into positive messages that sometimes don't reflect what the data tell us. The students in DC deserve honest evaluations that are independent from political influence, and the DC Auditor's office will provide this independence.

Section 203 of the Act requires a data management and collection practices audit. A large amount of data are already collected on our students and schools. Often

these data are in various locations, and not easily accessible. Getting the data management and collection piece right will take time and money, but is an essential step in conducting any evaluations on our public education system. While the act hints that these data will be publicly available, I would encourage there be an explicit requirement to make the data collected be publicly available.

I have had children in the DC public schools for the past twenty years. During this time, many initiatives have come and gone. As parents, we rarely know which initiatives have benefited our teachers, students and schools. It is my hope that having an independent review of educational outcomes will bring a constancy of purpose to our public education system in DC. It is my hope that our public education system will be able to learn what works, and will use what is learned to improve what happens both inside and outside of the classroom. Finally, it is my hope this research collaborative will focus on measures to strengthen public trust, for teachers, students and parents, in our public education system.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education

Public Hearing
on
B22-776, the "District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018"

Testimony of
Ahnna Smith
Interim Deputy Mayor for Education

Before the
Committee of the Whole
The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairman
and the
Committee on Education
The Honorable David Grosso, Chairman

Council of the District of Columbia
Council Chamber Room 500
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Introduction

Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson and Chairman Grosso, councilmembers, and staff. I am Interim Deputy Mayor for Education Ahnna Smith, and I am pleased to provide testimony today on Bill 22-776, the "DC Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018" (the Collaborative).

The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education works diligently to support our schools and the state education agency to collect and report accurate data, and share that data with governmental partners and research organizations, including the Council, the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor (ODCA or "the Auditor"), and independent research organizations. The research and oversight performed with these data help us to continually improve our practices and policies to achieve better student outcomes. However, my office has serious concerns regarding the proposed legislation, as we believe the proposed structure is seriously flawed and will prevent the proposed entity from achieving our shared goals of reliable data collection and research that improves student outcomes.

Bill 22-776, which would create a research collaborative housed in the Office of the District of the Columbia Auditor, would inherently politicize the research agenda and reduces the likelihood of creating a true partnership between research organizations and our District schools and education agencies. Additionally, the bill conflates the functions of audit and oversight with that of research, reducing the likelihood of developing research that yields educational improvements. The proposed legislation also requires agencies to provide an expansive set of student-level, school, and facilities data as far back as 20 years ago. We believe that Bill 22-776 will result in added layers of bureaucracy; politicize independent research; and ultimately, prevent us from achieving the goals of gathering quality, accurate data that leads to data-informed, objective research to continue improving our schools.

Ensuring Data Collection and Reporting is Accurate

I would like to start by discussing what I believe is at the heart of the issue today: accurate data collection and reporting, and the ability to take actionable steps based on reliable data. We rely on accurate data to inform educational practice and policy across DCPS and throughout our educational system. When data inputs, or the data entered into various systems, are incorrect, the resulting data outputs, or the data coming out of the system, will be inaccurate.

Mayor Bowser has tasked the entire education cluster with working transparently, swiftly, and decisively to develop and implement stronger internal control systems and processes to improve data collection. And, the District fully supports our LEAs and OSSE to collect and report accurate data about our students and schools. OSSE has done an outstanding job improving our data quality substantially over the years, by improving the processes and systems through which data is collected from schools and building out additional training and supports for schools and their staff, and the Mayor continues to invest in system improvements to continue this progress.

As a first order of business, inputs must be accurate to provide outputs that we can all be confident in, whether data is provided voluntarily, via an audit, or to a research collaborative. Rather than create an additional layer of bureaucracy, we should continue to focus our efforts and investments on ensuring that we have high-quality, accurate data.

Politicizes Independent Research
The structure proposed by this bill is inherently political. The proposed 16-member Advisory Board would be housed in the Office of the DC Auditor, an arm of the Council. That structure and the proposed Board composition, which would include four members selected by the Mayor and 10 selected by Council, appear to be driven by politics and not best practices in guiding quality, independent research collaboratives or consortia. While Executive agencies would be responsible for producing data, fulfilling research requests, and implementing any resulting proposals, the Council and Auditor would drive long-term research projects via the Collaborative. In addition, the bill contemplates issuing only some reports to the Mayor.

The insertion of an oversight dynamic into the realm of research, will impede opportunity for true partnership. Successful research-practice partnerships rely on authentic trust and expertise, and should not be driven by political concerns. We have heard from numerous research organizations that this proposed structure would deter them from partnering with the District.

Conflating Audit and Research
The proposed position and structure of the collaborative in ODCA also conflates the research and audit functions. The purpose of an audit is to form an unbiased opinion about whether processes and procedures were followed, often in areas such as performance or performance management. Audits are retrospective, and while they can produce valuable recommendations for process improvement, auditors do not take, nor have, responsibility for implementation or considerations regarding how those processes may actually need to be implemented in order to be successful. Meaningful education research helps us test current and new approaches to improving student outcomes, employing studies and evaluations that can help us understand whether particular interventions lead to the educational outcomes we seek and which interventions work best for particular types of students. I would point to the robust research and evaluation that has been produced in recent years, focused on our teacher evaluation and professional development investments. Through rigorous, external evaluation, we have learned about the types of development and supports that best position our teachers to make the most significant impact on students and how to better retain our strongest educators. This research did not tell us *how* to manage or deliver a particular type of professional development; instead, it helped us understand the context in which professional development best leads to improved student outcomes.

The role of an auditor's office is important in any government structure, and we recognize and cooperate with the DC Auditor regularly, because the DC Auditor already has the authority to audit education data systems and processes, thus additional legislation assigning those duties to a new division within the Auditor' office is not necessary. However, conflating audit and research within the proposed new collaborative division is problematic, as they are two separate functions.

Requested Data Will Not Help Us to Move Forward
The data requirements proposed in the bill are both overly broad and redundant. The required information includes student, school, facility, budget, and classroom and course information dating as far back as two decades. Some of the data requested has not ever been collected and is simply not available. Furthermore, it duplicates some of the data already collected by OSSE and

would potentially duplicate existing data collection, storage, and analysis efforts properly carried out by District education agencies. As we know, our data systems are constantly evolving and requesting information and these proposed requirements will divert the attention and resources of LEAs, schools, and OSSE away from supporting current students and the educational priorities determined by our education professionals.

The District has made substantial changes over the past ten years to move our schools into the future. OSSE has also made great strides to ensure that they meet their many federal reporting requirements, while also providing analytic tools and information to schools so they can best meet the needs of their students. For instance, OSSE now provides information about incoming special education students over the summer to ensure schools are prepared to serve those students from the very first day of school. OSSE has also developed an analytic tool that allows schools to track their chronic absenteeism in real time.

An Independent Research-Practice Partnership

We recognize that we have work to do to rebuild the trust of our students and families, councilmembers, and District residents. This is critical because we must work together to ensure that every student gets the opportunities they deserve and meets their full potential. Therefore, while we do not support the proposed bill as it stands, we encourage the Council to explore the organizational structure of other successful research-practice partnerships, such as those in Chicago, North Carolina, and New York, and believe that a model more appropriate for the District can be identified.

An ideal model would allow for the District's education agencies and public charter schools to work together directly with independent, experienced education researchers to establish data-sharing agreements and governance mechanisms to conduct robust research evaluation and analysis, and the governance structure would solicit parent and community input to help inform the research agenda. There would be no third-party, auditor-type intermediary. This structure would be based on trust across all parties involved, ensure independence in the analysis and evaluation, and set high standards of research integrity.

This type of independent, non-politicized structure would better ensure that a true partnership could be realized and that the ensuing research provides the most relevant and useful research products and tools for practitioners. However, the adoption of such a true independent research-practice partnership would not take the place of the important work that OSSE does and is building upon. OSSE will continue to develop the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data (SLED); provide data and reports to schools and the public; and ensure that our education data is robust. We imagine a true research-practice partnership to complement OSSE's hard work.

As you know, many proponents of Bill 22-776 have pointed to the University of Chicago Research Consortium on School Research (CCSR or "Chicago Consortium") as the model for this legislation, and we agree that the Chicago Consortium is a strong model of a research consortium. But, this proposal is not the Chicago model, and we question the usefulness of any model that is not driven by practitioners. The Chicago Consortium sits at the University of Chicago and is a shared effort between researchers at the University and researchers from the

school district and other entities. Trust and cooperation are required elements to allow this entity to function as envisioned.

The Chicago Consortium:

- Publishes long-term studies of practices and policies in Chicago Public Schools (CPS), statistical indicators, and reporting of long-term trends in CPS;
- Reports on key conditions and attitudes in CPS; and
- Provides short-term evaluations and research assistance.

The Collaborative proposed today does not promote trust or cooperation. Rather, it sets the Council and schools in opposition to each other unnecessarily. Such a structure will neither be helpful in addressing where we are today, nor will it assist us in getting our schools to where they need to be in the future.

The ultimate purpose and success of educational research is the ability to use it to see better outcomes for students. So I caution us against directing large amounts of time and resources away from schools and educators to any consortium or collaborative that is not independent, conflates audit and research, and is not serious about working with the practitioners and decision makers to develop relationships of trust and produce research that will be useful in helping us to most effectively educate students.

In order to create a true research partnership model, our education agencies have engaged in discussions throughout the last several months with the Urban Institute, an independent research organization that seeks to establish a research-practice partnership that aligns with successful models. This group has the expertise to develop a data warehouse, taking the burden of our schools and OSSE into account, as well as ensuring that our broader regional research community and the public is involved in advising and supporting the development of a robust research agenda. We look forward to further discussions with this group and sharing additional information with the Council should this partnership come to fruition.

The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education cannot support the "DC Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018" due to our significant concerns, including the politicization of independent research, duplication or burden of data collection and reporting requirements for schools and agencies, and the fact that the bill does not effectively address the underlying goal of improving school outcomes and educational practices through quality, independent, data-informed research, or a true research-practice partnership. However, we welcome the Council to support our efforts to develop a true research-practice partnership to benefit the District.

Thank you for inviting me to testify on this important matter. I am happy to answer any questions you may have for me at this time.

DC FISCAL POLICY INSTITUTE

Independent Research. Poverty Solutions. Better DC Government.

Testimony of Ed Lazere, Executive Director, DC Fiscal Policy Institute
At the Public Hearing on Bill 22-0776, The District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Research Collaborative Act
Committee of the Whole & Committee on Education Joint Public Hearing,
July 13, 2018

Chairman Mendelson, Chairman Grosso, and members of the committees, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Ed Lazere, and I am the Executive Director of the DC Fiscal Policy Institute. DCFPI is a non-profit organization that promotes budget choices to reduce economic and racial inequality and build widespread prosperity in the District of Columbia through independent research and thoughtful policy recommendations.

I am here today to speak in support of The District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Research Collaborative Act. The DC Fiscal Policy Institute, as a policy research organization, strongly supports the idea of creating an entity to conduct robust research that can inform education policy and practice. DCFPI supports the bill's goal to improve efforts to collect, organize, and streamline data on the District's public and public charter school systems. We also support the bill's goal to support research to evaluate the quality of education in DC, which can inform budget and policy decisions. Finally, we support the bill's proposal to create a diverse advisory board to ensure that the collaborative's research is relevant and actionable.

An educational collaborative is especially important given the District's major educational reforms, including mayoral control of DCPS and the support of a large charter school sector, and the fact that we continue to face vast inequities in school outcomes by race, income and geography. The research collaborative can play an incredibly important role in ensuring all children in our city's schools are provided the learning supports they need to succeed.
I am here today to support the goals of this legislation and provide several observations and recommendations for further improvement.

Recommendations on the Education Research Advisory Board

Bill 22-776 calls for creating an advisory board to oversee the work of the education collaborative. The advisory board would be made up of a range of institutional representatives, like DCPS and the Public Charter School Board, as well as a number of community representatives. Studies of similar public education research entities in Chicago, New Orleans, and Philadelphia show that institutionalizing stakeholder consultation through a deliberately multi-partisan and diverse group of school reform voices helps establish a strong foundation of trust between education agencies, advocacy groups, and families, which in turn enhances the quality and impact of research and data collection long term.**[1]**

DCFPI recommends some changes to strengthen the diversity and capacity of the advisory board. First, we believe the advisory board should include slots for people with K-12 education research experience and people with experience in developing and managing large databases. The current bill

has no slots reserved for people with this expertise. Second, we recommend that the rules governing the advisory board ensure that the community representation reflects the entire city. The community membership should include both DCPS and charter school parents, and it should include members who live in Ward 7 or Ward 8. Finally, we recommend considering an application process for non-institutional members of the advisory board, as some other advisory boards do, to ensure that the board includes members with relevant experience and interests.

Beyond the make-up of the Advisory Board, we also feel that there should be a formal and thorough process for the board to solicit public input on the agenda and work of the research collaborative.

Recommendations on Data Collection and Data Privacy

This bill rightly calls for improved collection of data on students and schools in both DCPS and public charters schools. When local education agencies rely on incomplete data to make informed policy decisions, students suffer.

While it is important to take steps to ensure that the District has comprehensive and well-organized data, it is not clear whether this should be conducted by the research collaborative rather than the Office of the State Superintendent. OSSE currently serves as the main source of education data collection, and it is likely that the research collaborative would need to get most of its data from OSSE. If OSSE's data is incomplete or poorly organized, then the data shared with the collaborative will also have shortcomings. Therefore, DCFPI recommends that the bill should include provisions to strengthen OSSE's data collection, and provisions for data sharing with the collaborative.

This should start with an audit conducted by the DC Auditor to identify what is currently available from OSSE, where there are gaps, and what resources are needed to fill those gaps. This would create a roadmap for new OSSE data collection efforts and the appropriate resources to do that.

The research collaborative then should have access to OSSE's data under a data-sharing agreement. DCFPI recommends that data be shared at the student level, without de-identifying student-level data as called for in the bill. Requiring elimination of anything that could be used to identify individual students would likely greatly limit the data analysis that could be conducted. As long as the research collaborative's data-sharing agreement prohibits them from sharing data with others, access to student-level data should not be a problem.

Recommendations on the Structure of the Research Collaborative

A final set of questions relates to the structure of the research collaborative. Under this bill, the collaborative would be incubated by the DC Auditor, and within two years it would issue a report with recommendations for its long-term structure.

DCPI supports having the DC Auditor incubate the collaborative and conduct an exploration of models in other communities. But we also think the District should move as quickly as possible to move to a permanent location for the collaborative. Our instinct is that the best structure for DC is to establish the collaborative as an independent DC government entity, with options to contract work when needed. We think it would be helpful for the collaborative to retain in-house expertise to

ensure the District's capacity to provide reliable measures of performance, use consistent data analysis procedures, and solicit community feedback. Having the collaborative housed inside DC government is likely to ensure that it is most responsive to the needs of education leaders and policymakers, and it also is likely to be the most cost-efficient approach. As noted, the collaborative should be given resources to contract out research when it lacks the capacity to undertake a given research project.

This could be accomplished through making the collaborative a stand-alone independent DC government agency, with the executive director hired by the board and other staff hired by the executive director. It also could be accomplished by making OSSE an independent agency and housing the collaborative within OSSE.

Conclusion

The District could greatly benefit from a partnership between proven researchers and the dedicated educational leaders that serve our children. We recommend the legislation include democratic processes for choosing Advisory board representatives, ensure the Collaborative reports to a politically independent entity long-term, and resource the hiring of in-house researchers to staff the Collaborative. Through extensive stakeholder engagement, enhanced efforts to build capacity and independence, and sustainable investments in internal coherence and data management systems we can be better determine what it will take to improve education for all DC students.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and I am happy to answer any questions.

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[1] *Roderick, M. (2009). A New Model for the Role of Research in Supporting Urban School Reform(Rep.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.*

Testimony of Karen Williams o Bill 22-0776
July 11, 2018

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committees of the Whole and Education. My name is Karen L. Williams and I am a Ward 7 resident and I am proud to represent my ward on the DC State Board of Education. My testimony today is my own and is not a statement by or on behalf of the State Board.

Bill 22-0776, the District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018 is a wonderful idea that will likely make our current problems getting good data even worse. Currently, four of the five District education agencies (DCPS, PCSB[1], OSSE and DME) are required by law or regulation to report on innumerable items. Many times, this reporting is repeated exactly or nearly exactly in slightly different wording, but frankly, Mr. Chairman, nobody reads the reports, or they are submitted so quietly that no one knows they are even being written.

I want to be clear, Mr. Chairman. I am not opposed to independent data and research. In fact, I think independent research could be very helpful in eliminating barriers to educational opportunities for our students. We are lucky to have so many fantastic researchers and universities calling this city their home. If we are to properly utilize their skills, however, they must have access to open and reliable information without having to rely on Freedom of Information Act requests. It does not make sense to me to set up a new entity that will be consistently underfunded and under resourced just by the nature of its existence. The Office of the Auditor, rightly, does not have an unlimited budget nor unlimited resources to delve into every aspect of government simultaneously. That isn't practical, and it isn't efficient.

District residents, the Council, the State Board, the press, even other mayoral agencies cannot get answers to their legitimate questions. This bill does nothing to solve the underlying problem that data is being withheld. The District of Columbia Data Policy that was issued by Mayor Bowser last year is a great first step in providing District residents and researchers with information. All District agencies, offices, boards, commissions and divisions under the mayor's authority must comply with this policy.

The Council should take the next step and enshrine the policy in law, applicable to all District agencies, even those that are not under the authority of the mayor. Without a legal requirement, a timeline requirement and consequences for failure, agencies will continue to ignore requests to provide the data necessary to make decisions on behalf of our students. Supporters of this bill claim that it will lead to better data and better research. That might be true, but not without fixing the data problem first.

Any organization that receives funds from the District government has an obligation to taxpayers to provide relevant requested information. Our failure as a city to require compliance is the reason

[1] It should be noted that PCSB and the public charter schools generally object to any authority requiring them to submit data. This has led to many regulations and state policies that are written in favor of the positions of the charter sector in an attempt to get some comparable data rather than what we actually need.

the trust gap between our schools and our residents continues to grow with very news cycle that brings more accusations, more fraud and more bad actors to the forefront. I have heard every member of the Council and the State Board echo the same refrain, "I requested the information, but we haven't gotten it." That is unacceptable. Any new policy, regulation or legislation related to data that does not contain penalties, either individual or agency, for non-compliance is a waste of time. Good data exists, Mr. Chairman, but we can't get to it.

This obligation "Good data" requires seven things:

- Accuracy and Precision.
- Legitimacy and Validity.
- Reliability and Consistency.
- Timeliness and Relevance.
- Completeness and Comprehensiveness.
- Availability and Accessibility.
- Granularity and Uniqueness.

I am struggling to understand how the proposed consortium will do a better job on any of these items. The same agencies will still be responsible for providing the data. The consortium will still be dependent on the same infrastructure. In my opinion, the bill provides all of the problems with getting data with none of the advantages.

Finally, I would like to suggest instead of creating another layer of bureaucracy when attempting to get input from the citizens, parents and students of the District of Columbia. If you need an independent actor to serve as an incubator or advisory authority, why not use an existing and established entity like the State Board? Our members were elected directly by the people of the city to be their voice in education policy. Why not use these resources?

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE & COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

CHAIRMAN PHIL MENDELSON
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
&
COUNCILMEMBER DAVID GROSSO, CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

ANNOUNCE A PUBLIC HEARING

on

Bill 22-776, District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018

on

Tuesday, September 18, 2018
3:00 p.m., Hearing Room 412, John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

WITNESS LIST

1. Matthew Chingos — Senior Fellow and Director, Education Policy Program, Urban Institute
2. Naomi DeVeaux — Deputy Director, DC Public Charter School Board
3. Ahnna Smith — Interim Deputy Mayor for Education

URBAN INSTITUTE · ELEVATE · THE · DEBATE

UPDATE ON A RESEARCH-PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Statement of

Matthew M. Chingos*

Senior Fellow and Director, Education Policy Program

Urban Institute

before the

Committee of the Whole & Committee on Education

Council of the District of Columbia

PUBLIC ROUNDTABLE ON BILL 22-776, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA EDUCATION RESEARCH ADVISORY BOARD AND COLLABORATIVE ESTABLISHMENT AMENDMENT ACT OF 2018

September 18, 2018

*The views expressed are my own and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders.

2100 M Street NW
Washington DC 20037
urban.org

Chairman Mendelson, Councilmember Grosso, and members of the Council, thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on the Urban Institute's efforts to create an independent research-practice partnership with the District's education agencies.

At the hearing on July 13, I spoke about the proposal to create a research-practice partnership that my Urban colleagues and I have shared and discussed with education agencies and other stakeholders over the past several months. This proposal builds on conversations that we initiated over a year ago, first with DCPS and eventually with PCSB, OSSE, and DME as well.

This proposal has three core elements, which I believe are critical to a successful research-practice partnership:

- First, the research must be conducted independently. We are not seeking to create a research partnership at the behest of the mayor, the council, or anyone else. Instead, we are working to create a hub where Urban and other research institutions collaborate on research aimed at improving outcomes for DC students.
- Second, the research must meet high standards of research integrity and quality. This requires ensuring that data are high quality, research methods are appropriate and transparent, and findings are communicated clearly and even-handedly.
- Third, the work must be conducted in collaboration with education policymakers and practitioners in the District so findings are relevant to and actionable for local decisionmakers. This will require building lasting relationships with administrators and practitioners at all levels of the education agencies.

What remains to be decided is how to turn these core principles into a formal structure and operational plan for a research-practice partnership. No decisions have been made, but the kinds of questions we have been discussing with the education agencies since July include

- how do we ensure that the research agenda reflects robust stakeholder input and engagement?
- what mechanisms should we put in place to guarantee that the research meets high standards of technical quality? and
- how do we foster research that is conducted independently but addresses questions that policymakers and practitioners care about?

Once we have worked out these kinds of details, the next step would be to sign legal agreements, such as data-sharing agreements and memorandums of understanding, among all the relevant parties. We have not yet started that process, which based on prior experience I expect will take several months.

Launching an effective research partnership sooner rather than later is critical because the challenges facing our education system are both daunting and urgent. The PARCC data that came out last month showed that two out of three DC students did not meet expectations in math and reading, and that enormous disparities by race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status persist.

Research will not fix our education system on its own, but it can play an important role in describing problems, identifying solutions, and contributing to an ethos of transparency and continuous improvement.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to answering any questions.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education

Public Roundtable
on
B22-776, the "District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018"

Testimony of
Ahnna Smith
Interim Deputy Mayor for Education

Before the
Committee of the Whole
The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairman
and the
Committee on Education
The Honorable David Grosso, Chairman

Council of the District of Columbia
Council Room 412
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson and Chairman Grosso, councilmembers, and staff. I am Interim Deputy Mayor for Education Ahnna Smith, and I am pleased to testify before you again on Bill 22-776, the "DC Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018" (the Collaborative).

I previously testified before the Council on July 13th to provide thoughts on the introduced version of Bill 22-776 and the research collaborative proposed therein. At that time, I noted my concerns with the proposed structure and shared my belief that a successful research-practice partnership (RPP) in the District should be independent of government and would require trust and willingness to collaborate by all parties, a sentiment echoed by all of the education professionals and research practitioners who testified that day. My belief in those key principles remains the same today.

I also testified that the education cluster's goal was to enter into a research-practice partnership that will result in actionable data that our educators can use to inform practice and produce better outcomes for our children. Anything short of that will be a waste of time and money - something that our taxpayers, but more importantly our students, cannot afford. Our students deserve the best that we have to offer them. That being said, we have to balance our sense of urgency with the focus and due diligence needed to design and develop a successful RPP that can accomplish the work that we all agree will be beneficial to the District. This effort must utilize the informed and thoughtful input from experts in research and education practice. Washington, DC stands in the fortunate position of being able to draw best practices from other established and successful research consortia, like those in Chicago and New York, in establishing our own RPP.

Chicago's consortium has been in existence for 30 years, and we should utilize lessons learned from it and other successful RPPs. Best practice dictates that our RPP model (1) be independent of government; (2) be a collaborative effort between practitioners and policymakers; (3) meet high-quality research standards; and (4) be focused on educational practices to help improve student outcomes. In addition, we heard at the July hearing and agree that a key factor we must incorporate is the feedback of other research and policy practitioners and community members through stakeholder engagement.

As explained previously by the Urban Institute (Urban) and the Executive, Urban approached the Executive with a proposal to develop an RPP well before the Council's bill was ever introduced. The education cluster has been in discussions with the Urban Institute regarding a research partnership since that time, and we have continued to do the work of exploring and designing an RPP that will result in the creation of a robust research entity informed by practitioners and stakeholders. The model for our partnership is currently a work in progress, but we know that it must include the four aforementioned points: independence, collaboration, and high quality research focused on improving student outcomes, along with community stakeholder input and access to data for other researchers. While our conversations with Urban have continued, we have not yet reached a final agreement.

Some councilmembers have expressed a sense of distrust regarding data received from the education cluster, but it is important to understand that the District's education agencies will play an integral role in any research partnership, no matter where it is housed or with whom we partner. A research partnership cannot function without data from our education agencies. It is,

therefore, critical that our agencies provide robust and accurate data. Accuracy and transparency are paramount concerns for the Mayor, along with the Council. And recent issues have highlighted the need to improve and clarify data collection and reporting practices. This effort has been underway since before issues with attendance came to light, and we continuously strive to improve our efforts in this area.

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), the Public Charter School Board (PCSB), and charter local education agencies (LEAs), have all made vast improvements on data collection over the years, and they will continue to work on and refine practices to improve year-over-year. The PCSB has instituted new processes to compare and flag data discrepancies. OSSE has set rules that work toward greater consistency in the collection of data across schools; put in place a series of checks to ensure that data that flows from LEAs conforms to rules; provided tools to LEAs that flag errors that need attention; is monitoring DCPS to ensure that updates are made to its student information system, ASPEN; and now requires the head of school to certify the accuracy of data that has significant implications for schools. DCPS has implemented improvements to student data systems that will support schools' compliance with its policies, conducted robust training to better support staff, students and families, and is implementing a monitoring framework to check for data anomalies on a monthly basis and flag to schools and staff.

In addition to the fact that Urban is a well-regarded research organization, including in the education space, Urban's proposal is attractive because it would utilize private, rather than government, funding. This is important for several reasons. First, the ability to raise and bring

private resources to bear demonstrates Urban's credibility in this space. This type of credibility is critical to ensuring that a partnership is a success. Next, that credibility will be essential to the sustainability of a partnership. We want to ensure that any partnership of this scale can be maintained over the long-term, much like the Chicago model. Finally, outside resources will create an accountability structure outside of government that both the research partner and District agencies must be responsive to. We believe that this type of accountability will help enable the partnership to be truly independent and produce measurable results. We are exploring an RPP with Urban not only because they are experts in the field, but because they have spent years successfully working in our schools and with various District agencies, including the Office of the DC Auditor, and have the trust of the private funding community who will support an independent RPP effort with private dollars.

The ultimate purpose of an education RPP is to inform the education sector and the community in order to provide real, tangible results and improvements for our students and educational system. We appreciate the Council's interest in this area, and we hope to partner more effectively to see a truly independent, valuable research-practice partnership to benefit our students, schools, and educational system. To that end, it is critical that we listen to the education practitioners and research sector experts in this area. This content area expertise should inform our decisions in the education sector. We should listen to the education and research experts as we move forward in creating something that can outlast all of us and help our children for years to come. I ask that you work with us to accomplish this goal.

Thank you for inviting me to testify on this important matter. I am happy to answer any questions you may have for me at this time.

DC
PUBLIC
CHARTER
SCHOOL
BOARD

Testimony of Naomi Rubin DeVeaux
Deputy Director
DC Public Charter School Board

Hearing on the District of Columbia Education Research Advisory Board and Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018

Committee of the Whole and the Committee on Education
September 18, 2018

Good afternoon Chairman Mendelson and Education Chair Grosso. I am Naomi Rubin DeVeaux, the deputy director of the DC Public Charter School Board. In my role of overseeing school quality, I have recently overtaken the responsibility of this proposed legislation. As my Board Chair stated on July 13, the DC Public Charter School Board is fully supportive of this bill's goal to more deeply understand what all of our schools can do to fully serve our students. We also completely support more robust analysis of the progress we have made over the past decade of reforming our school system. To date, I have read about the proposed structure shared through the Deputy Mayor's office. I look forward to continuing to learn about the structure and am happy to answer any questions you may have.

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Office of the Budget Director

Jennifer Budoff
Budget Director

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

TO:	**The Honorable Phil Mendelson** **Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia**
FROM:	**Jennifer Budoff - Budget Director**
DATE:	**September 21, 2018**
SHORT TITLE:	**B22-0776 "District of Columbia Education Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018**
TYPE:	**Permanent**
REQUESTED BY:	**Councilmember David Grosso**

Conclusion

Funds are sufficient in FY 2019 to implement B22-0776, the "District of Columbia Education Collaborative Establishment Amendment Act of 2018". $500,000 in FY2019 one-time funds were appropriated to the DC Auditor to fund the Collaborative's start-up efforts. This bill will be subject to appropriations commencing in FY 2020 unless sufficient recurring funds are allocated in the FY 2020 budget and financial plan to fund B22-0776. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer will issue an updated fiscal impact statement prior to this bill's markup in the Committee of the Whole.

Background

District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative

The bill establishes the District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative ("Collaborative"), which is composed of the Prime Grantee ("Prime") and its Sub-grantees ("Sub"). The Collaborative will conduct research projects on the District's public and charter schools. The Collaborative will provide annual reports to the Mayor and Council on all research projects. District agencies will execute data agreements with the Collaborative to allow research projects to be conducted.

Financing and Resources
The Collaborative will be funded through a competitive grant award process. The Collaborative may solicit, accept, and use non-governmental resources such as private grants, private gifts, or donations to execute its services per the bill and grant agreement.

Steering Committee
This bill establishes the Steering Committee ("Committee"), which is responsible for the selection of the Collaborative and establishing the research agenda. The Committee will conduct community meetings at a minimum of twice annually to solicit information and feedback on public and charter schools' practices, policies, procedures, data collection, and data management.

The Committee includes a total of eleven (11) members composed of seven (7) voting members and four (4) non-voting members. District government members may designate an employee of their agency to serve on the Committee in their place.

Voting (7 members)

1. The Chancellor of DCPS
2. The Deputy Mayor for Education
3. The State Superintendent of Education
4. The Executive Director of the PCSB
5. The Executive Director of the State Board of Education
6. One employee or trustee of a public charter school local education
7. One individual appointed by the Chairperson of the Council

Non-voting (4 members)

8. The Director of Child and Family Services Agency
9. The President of Washington Teachers Union, or the President's designee
10. The Director of Department of Behavioral Health
11. The Student Advocate

Education Research Priorities and Collaborative Selection
The Committee will adopt research priorities with an emphasis on improving student educational outcomes. The DC Auditor will award a grant of no more than $500,000 to a non-governmental research entity as the Prime, which shall be designated as the Collaborative by October 1, 2019. The Committee will manage and oversee the entire grant solicitation and award process, including any grant modifications such as executing option years.

Analysis of Impact on Spending
Funds are sufficient in FY 2019, however this bill will become subject to appropriations in FY 2020 if sufficient recurring funds are not allocated in the FY 2020 budget and financial plan.

Impact on Revenue

This bill will not impact revenue in the fiscal year 2019 budget and financial plan.

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 4
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 724-8026

MEMORANDUM

TO: Councilmember David Grosso

FROM: John Hoellen, Deputy General Counsel

DATE: September 21, 2018

RE: Legal Sufficiency Determination for Bill 22-776, the District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative Establishment and Audit Act of 2018

The measure is legally and technically sufficient for Council consideration.

This bill contains three titles. The first title, the District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative Establishment Act of 2018, would establish the District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative to conduct research on District of Columbia public schools and public school students according to priorities established by a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee would be composed of 11 members (7 voting, 4 non-voting), 8 of whom represent District agencies.

The Collaborative would consist of a prime grantee, selected by the Steering Committee and funded through a grant from the District of Columbia Auditor, and any subgrantees or contractors. The initial grant from the Auditor would not exceed $500,000. As a condition of receiving the grant, the prime grantee would be required to commit to raising non-District funds that match or exceed the District's grant. The Collaborative would be required to regularly report on its research to the Steering Committee and to annually report on its research and finances to the Mayor and Council. The title would expire 6 years from its effective date.

The second title, the Education Data Audit Act of 2018, would direct the District of Columbia Auditor to conduct an audit and issue a report

by October 1, 2019, on the data management and data collection practices of public local education agencies, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, and the Public Charter School Board.

The third title contains the bill's fiscal impact statement and effective date.

I am available if you have any questions.

Committee Print
B22-0776
Committee on Education
September 24, 2018

A BILL

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To establish the District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative; and to require the District of Columbia Auditor to undertake an audit of District public school data-collection policies.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the "District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative Establishment and Audit Act of 2018".

TITLE I. DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA EDUCATION RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE.

Sec. 101. Short title.

This title may be cited as the "District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative Establishment Act of 2018."

Sec. 102. Definitions.

For the purposes of this title, the term:

(1) "Collaborative" means the District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative.

(2) "DCPS" means District of Columbia Public Schools.

(3) "Local education agency" means any individual or group of public charter schools operating under a single charter.

34 (4) "OSSE" means the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of
35 Education.
36 (5) "PCSB" means the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board.
37 (6) "Prime grantee" means the research entity selected to receive the grant issued
38 pursuant to section 106(b).
39 (7) "Public school" means a school in the District of Columbia Public Schools or
40 a public charter schools.
41 (8) "Steering Committee" means the body established pursuant to section 105.
42 Sec. 103. Establishment of District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative.
43 (a) There is established the District of Columbia Education Research Collaborative
44 ("Collaborative").
45 (b) The Collaborative shall be composed of the prime grantee and any subgrantees or
46 subcontractors.
47 (c) The Collaborative shall conduct research on the District's public schools and public
48 school students according to the research agenda set by the Steering Committee and requests
49 from the Council pursuant to subsection (i) of this section.
50 (d)(1) The Collaborative shall regularly report to the Steering Committee on its activities.
51 (2) The Collaborative shall annually report to the Mayor and Council on all
52 research projects underway and completed in the preceding calendar year, including utilized
53 data, explanations of gaps in data, explanations of gaps in the District's capacity to collect data,
54 findings, and recommendations, including recommendations for further research.
55 (e)(1) The Collaborative's prime grantee may award grants or contracts to carry out the
56 Collaborative's research and reporting functions.

57 (2) Grants or contracts shall be awarded:

58 (A) On a competitive basis;

59 (B) With approval of the Steering Committee; and

60 (B) To organizations with relevant expertise in education research or data

61 management.

62 (f) Each Collaborative member shall be subject to quarterly financial reporting or audits,

63 as specified by the Steering Committee, for the duration of the grant described in section 106(b).

64 (g) By April 1, 2021, the Collaborative shall issue a report to the Mayor and Council that

65 provides an assessment of:

66 (1) The structure and administration of the Collaborative, including

67 recommendations with respect thereto; and

68 (2) Funding for the Collaborative, including an analysis of best practices of other

69 school research consortia, and an assessment of independent grant seeking efforts.

70 (h)(1) District agencies shall execute a data sharing agreement with the Collaborative to

71 permit the Collaborative access to data it seeks to carry out its functions under this title.

72 (2) All data sharing agreements executed pursuant to this subsection shall comply

73 with local and federal laws related to student privacy.

74 (i)(1) The Council may request the Collaborative to undertake research projects related to

75 District public schools and public school students by resolution.

76 (2) Within 60 days after the effective date of a resolution passed pursuant to

77 paragraph (1) of this subsection, the Collaborative shall publicly publish and transmit to the

78 Council a plan to complete the requested research, or, if the research cannot be completed, a

79 statement containing the reasons for being unable to complete the research.

80 Sec. 104. Collaborative financing and resources.

81 (a)(1) The Collaborative shall be funded through the grant awarded pursuant to section
82 106, other local appropriations as they become available, and non-District funding sources.

83 (2) The Collaborative may solicit, accept, and use private gifts, grants, or
84 donations according to procedures adopted by the Steering Committee pursuant to section
85 105(h).

86 Sec. 105. Steering Committee establishment.

87 (a) There is established a Steering Committee to set District education research priorities
88 and select the Collaborative's prime grantee.

89 (b)(1) The Steering Committee shall be composed of 7 voting members, as follows:

90 (A) The Chancellor of DCPS;

91 (B) The Deputy Mayor for Education;

92 (C) The State Superintendent of Education;

93 (D) The Executive Director of the PCSB;

94 (F) The Executive Director of the State Board of Education;

95 (G) One employee or trustee of a public charter school local education
96 agency, elected by other public charter school local education agencies through a process
97 organized by PCSB;

98 (H) One individual appointed by the Chairperson of the Council, who is
99 not employed by, or in a position of trust with respect to, an agency or entity represented in
100 subparagraphs (A) through (G) of this paragraph.

101 (2) The members serving pursuant to subparagraphs (F) and (G) of this subsection
102 shall serve terms of 3 years, and may serve multiple terms.

103 (3) The following individuals shall serve on the Steering Committee as nonvoting
104 members.
105 (A) The Director of Child and Family Services Agency;
106 (B) The President of Washington Teachers Union, or the President's
107 designee;
108 (C) The Director of Department of Behavioral Health; and
109 (D) The Student Advocate;
110 (4) District government members of the Steering Committee may designate an
111 employee of their agency to serve on the Steering Committee in their stead.
112 (c) A quorum of the Steering Committee shall consist of a majority plus one of the voting
113 members.
114 (d)(1) Within 90 days after the effective date of this title, the Steering Committee shall
115 hold its first meeting.
116 (2) Within 120 days after the effective date of this title, the Steering Committee
117 shall adopt rules of procedure governing its conduct.
118 (3) Subject to such rules as the Steering Committee may adopt, the Steering
119 Committee shall elect a Chairperson.
120 (e) Steering Committee meetings shall be subject to the Open Meetings Act.
121 (f)(1) The Steering Committee shall conduct community meetings at least 2 times per
122 year to solicit information and feedback on District public schools, including the practices,
123 policies, procedures, data collection, and data management of:
124 (A) DCPS;
125 (B) OSSE;
126 (C) PCSB; and

127 (D) The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education;

128 (2) The Steering Committee shall provide notice of a public meeting at least 30
129 days in advance in the District of Columbia Register.

130 (g) The Steering Committee shall facilitate the execution of a data sharing agreement
131 between the Collaborative and District agencies governing the Collaborative's use of and access
132 to education data.

133 (h) The Steering Committee shall adopt procedures to govern the Collaborative's
134 solicitation, acceptance, and use of non-District funding sources that promote transparency and
135 ensure the Collaborative uses such resources to further the research priorities established
136 pursuant to section 106.

137 Sec. 106. Education research priorities; selection of prime grantee.

138 (a) By March 1, 2019, the Steering Committee shall adopt research priorities for
139 examining data related to the District's public school students and public schools, with an
140 emphasis on research most likely to improve student educational outcomes.

141 (b)(1) By October 1, 2019 and pursuant to this subsection, the District of Columbia
142 Auditor ("Auditor") shall award a grant of no more than $500,000 to a non-governmental
143 research institution to serve as the prime grantee for the Collaborative and to conduct District
144 education research according to the research priorities established pursuant to subsection (a) of
145 this section.

146 (2) Notwithstanding section 1094 of the Grant Administration Act of 2013,
147 effective December 24, 2013 (.D.C. Law 20-61; D.C. Official Code § 1-328.13), the Steering
148 Committee shall be solely responsible for the content of the grant solicitation, including grant

149 length and the availably of option years; establishing grantee selection criteria and standards; and
150 selecting the prime grantee; provided, that the prime grantee shall:
151 (A) Employ an Executive Director to manage the administrative aspects of
152 the Collaborative and interface with the Steering Committee, members of the public, and District
153 agencies;
154 (B) Commit to matching or exceeding the District's grant through non-
155 District sources, and propose a plan for doing so;
156 (C) Have a track record of quality education research and sound financial
157 management;
158 (D) Propose a plan for successfully accomplishing the Steering
159 Committee's research priorities; and
160 (E) Comply with any other requirements imposed on the Collaborative by
161 this title.
162 (3) By June 1, 2019, on behalf of the Steering Committee, the Auditor shall
163 publish a solicitation for the grant to be awarded pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection.
164 Sec. 107. Sunset.
165 This title shall expire six years after the effective date of this title.
166 TITLE II. EDUCATION DATA AUDIT.
167 Sec. 201. This title may be cited as the "Education Data Audit Act of 2018".
168 Sec. 202. (a) Within 180 days after the effective date of this title, the Auditor shall
169 conduct or cause to be conducted an audit of data management and data collection practices of
170 all public local education agencies, the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent,

171 the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, and the Public Charter School Board using only
172 data from 2014 through the effective date of this title.
173 (b) By October 1, 2019, the Auditor shall issue a report to the Mayor and Council on data
174 collection practices and policies of the entities described in subsection (a).
175 TITLE III. FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT; EFFECTIVE DATE.
176 Sec. 301. Fiscal impact statement.
177 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal
178 impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975,
179 approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).
180 Sec. 302. Effective date.
181 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
182 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as
183 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December
184 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of
185 Columbia Register.