

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.