

**IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

---

---

**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT  
MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING, AND  
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FIFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

APRIL 17, 1997

Printed for the use of the Committee on Governmental Affairs



U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

40-201 cc

WASHINGTON : 1998

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

FRED THOMPSON, Tennessee, *Chairman*

WILLIAM V. ROTH, JR., Delaware	JOHN GLENN, Ohio
TED STEVENS, Alaska	CARL LEVIN, Michigan
SUSAN M. COLLINS, Maine	JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN, Connecticut
SAM BROWNBACK, Kansas	DANIEL K. AKAKA, Hawaii
PETE V. DOMENICI, New Mexico	RICHARD J. DURBIN, Illinois
THAD COCHRAN, Mississippi	ROBERT G. TORRICELLI, New Jersey
DON NICKLES, Oklahoma	MAX CLELAND, Georgia
ARLEN SPECTER, Pennsylvania	

Hannah S. Sistare, *Staff Director and Counsel*

Leonard Weiss, *Minority Staff Director*

Michal Sue Prosser, *Chief Clerk*

---

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT,  
RESTRUCTURING, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

SAM BROWNBACK, Kansas, *Chairman*

WILLIAM V. ROTH, Jr., Delaware	JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN, Connecticut
ARLEN SPECTER, Pennsylvania	MAX CLELAND, Georgia

Ron Utt, *Staff Director*

Laurie Rubenstein, *Minority Staff Director and Chief Counsel*

Esmeralda M. Amos, *Chief Clerk*

# CONTENTS

---

Opening statements:	Page
Senator Cleland .....	2
Senator Brownback .....	3
Senator Lieberman .....	4

## WITNESSES

THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 1997

General Julius W. Becton, Jr., Chief Executive Officer, District of Columbia Public Schools .....	6
Dr. Bruce MacLaury, Chairman, Emergency Transition Education Board of Trustees .....	9
Hon. Lamar Alexander, Former U.S. Secretary of Education .....	23
Hon. Ed Koch, Former Mayor of New York City .....	26
Dr. Jay P. Greene, University of Houston, Author of "The Effectiveness of School Choice in Milwaukee: A Secondary Analysis of Data from the Program's Evaluation" .....	38
Jeanne Allen, President, The Center for Education Reform .....	41
Kathleen Sylvester, Vice President of Domestic Policy, Progressive Policy Institute .....	45
Kevin Chavous, D.C. Councilmember, Chairman, Committee on Education, Libraries and Recreation .....	53
Mark Roberts, Parent of Student in District of Columbia Public Schools .....	56

## ALPHABETICAL LIST OF WITNESSES

Alexander, Hon. Lamar:	
Testimony .....	23
Prepared statement .....	83
Allen, Jeanne:	
Testimony .....	41
Prepared statement .....	149
Becton, Gen. Julius W., Jr.:	
Testimony .....	60
Prepared statement .....	65
Chavous, Kevin:	
Testimony .....	53
Prepared statement .....	160
Greene, Dr. Jay P.:	
Testimony .....	38
Prepared statement .....	98
Koch, Hon. Ed:	
Testimony .....	26
Prepared statement .....	86
MacLaury, Dr. Bruce:	
Testimony .....	90
Prepared statement .....	78
Roberts, Mark:	
Testimony .....	56
Prepared statement .....	168
Sylvester, Kathleen:	
Testimony .....	45
Prepared statement .....	154

IV

APPENDIX

Page

Draft entitled "Children First," dated March 17, 1997, submitted by General Becton .....	71
A study entitled "Effectiveness of School Choice: The Milwaukee Experiment," by Jay P. Greene and Paul E. Peterson .....	103
An article entitled "New Research Bolsters Case for School Choice," dated Jan. 21, 1997, p. A14 in <i>The Wall Street Journal</i> , submitted by Jay P. Greene .....	148
Charlene Drew Jarvis, Councilmember, Chairman Pro Tempore of the Council of the District of Columbia, prepared statement .....	173
Dr. Howard Fuller, Distinguished Professor of Education and Director of the Institute for the Transformation of Learning, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, prepared statement .....	176
Ms. Chris Llewellyn, Washington, DC, submitting a report entitled "Persons with Disabilities and Proposed Closings of DC Public Schools" .....	180
Letter dated April 18, 1997 from Tonya Vidal Kinlow, At-Large Representative, District of Columbia Board of Education, with additional news articles and a position paper from the Hearst Elementary School .....	181

**IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 1997**

U.S. SENATE,  
OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING,  
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SUBCOMMITTEE,  
OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:20 a.m., in room SD-342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Sam Brownback, Chairman of the Subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senators Brownback, Lieberman, and Cleland.

Staff Present: Ron Utt, Staff Director, Esmeralda M. Amos, Chief Clerk, and Joyce Yamat, professional staff member.

Senator BROWNBACK. We will call the hearing to order. Appreciate our witnesses coming today. I have a couple of quick announcements. We are going to go out of order on opening statements due to Senator Cleland's other obligations that he has. I want to make one introduction of a witness that is not here to testify but that is here to help us out on the TV industry, an item that we had a hearing on yesterday. Dean Jones is with us. Dean, you might remember from "Love Bug," and "That Darn Cat"—Dean, stand up—some 40 other movies, pictures, and now wants to work to help clean up television and produce some good family quality films in the future so he is here meeting with you. Thanks for joining us.

Mr. JONES. It is a pleasure to be here.

Senator BROWNBACK. And we want to help and support your effort. I do need an unanimous consent from the other Members, if I could, on extraneous matters being introduced into the record that some of the witnesses put forward.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Without objection, we will allow that information to be put into the record.<sup>1</sup>

Senator BROWNBACK. This is a key hearing today on education in the District of Columbia. We have a number of excellent witnesses. We have some tough questions on what has taken place on the educational system within the District of Columbia that we need to confront for the citizens of the District and also for the citizens of this Nation. So I hope we can have a very enlightening, a very frank, a very clear discussion on what we are going to do to

<sup>1</sup>Miscellaneous statements and information submitted for the record appears in the Appendix on page 173.

better provide for education of the children in the District of Columbia. I have an opening statement as does Senator Lieberman, but as I mentioned at the outset in the interest of Senator Cleland's time, who has some other obligations, I would like to turn the microphone over to Senator Cleland for his opening statement before I issue my own. Senator Cleland.

#### **OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CLELAND**

Senator CLELAND. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your indulgence and the indulgence of Senator Lieberman. Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased that the Subcommittee is holding a hearing to determine just how to improve the public schools in the Nation's capital. I came to Congress with a strong commitment to public education. I am a product of that public educational system. I went through the public school system in De Kalb County, graduating from Lithonia High School in Georgia. I was a State Senator from that area and sat on the Education Committee, and as former head of the Veterans Administration, I ran the largest educational program in the country, the GI bill.

I do believe the Federal Government should be a partner with States, local districts and schools, to provide the educational opportunities that will allow all children to reach high academic standards in positive learning and teaching environment. I also believe there is tremendous common ground here in the Congress and in the country in support of efforts to improve public education, both by making sufficient resources available and by insisting on more accountability, more safety and more discipline and higher standards.

It was unfortunate, in my view, that in the last Congress, the efforts to improve the D.C. schools centered on a divisive and controversial effort to push private school vouchers paid with public tax dollars. In my opinion, this was not good educational policy. It was not frankly constitutional. I hope in this Congress we can work on a bipartisan basis and move forward with an agenda to improve public schools in D.C. and in every urban, suburban and rural school in the country. As I said before, there is considerable common ground here. I believe it can be done. We must give every child a healthy and safe school building, teachers who are certified teachers, up-to-date textbooks and state-of-the-art educational activities, and the support services of health care, nutrition, and enhanced parental and community involvement to make it possible for teachers to teach and students to learn.

These must be joined by effective measures to improve accountability and standards in our public schools. Serious concern has been raised about the Milwaukee and Cleveland voucher programs. The recent Milwaukee study, which we will hear about today, has been criticized by a variety of academic researchers for serious methodological flaws. For example, a question has not been answered apparently, which is what happened to the 25 percent of the voucher accepted students who left the voucher schools each year in Milwaukee? At this point, I think it is fair to say that the research on Milwaukee does not prove the case that significant achievement gains have occurred because of vouchers, something

one would expect to see if the proponents of vouchers are right that private schools are inherently better than public schools.

Mr. Chairman, now is not the time to give up on our public schools. What we now need is public school reform. The most creative ideas often come from teachers, parents, students, locally elected boards of education, principals and community members. We need to have curriculum and assessments that embody high academic standards, an effective discipline policy, and a professional development program that enables school staff and administrators to implement good teaching and learning practices. The forms adopted under this system will be realistic and empower teachers to teach and students to learn and parents to get involved.

At a time when government spending at all levels of government are heavily constrained, we must avoid shifting public tax dollars away from public educational improvement. No company has retooled itself on the cheap. My strong preference would be to have this Subcommittee focus our efforts in how to improve our public schools and not on how to transfer a few students into private and parochial schools with public dollars. Mr. Chairman, unfortunately my schedule does not permit me to stay here for the testimonies. However, I will look forward to reviewing your written remarks and I apologize to the witnesses for they have traveled so far.

Senator CLELAND. Mr. Chairman, thank you again for allowing me to make these remarks. Thank you so much.

Senator BROWBACK. Thank you, Senator Cleland.

#### **OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR BROWBACK**

Senator BROWBACK. I want to welcome our many guests and my colleagues and our very distinguished panelists in our series of oversight hearings. This is our second hearing that we are having today on the District of Columbia. Our first hearing covered tax incentives for the city's revival, and today we will focus on education in the District's troubled school system.

I have to note at the very outset some extraordinarily troubling incidences that have been reported in the newspaper this week that occurred last week. I cannot tell you how troubled I was to read this in the Wednesday *Washington Times* about school sex incidences being common, that the President of the D.C. School Board is saying that these incidences involving 9- to 12-year old children disrobing, performing sexual acts in the classroom, that is just incredible. It is outrageous. My daughter is in the fifth grade, 11 years old, and would be in that category of age, and I cannot imagine this taking place. This is beyond the pale, and I want to talk about this today, about what is it that we do to change this because this is not right for the kids. It is just not right and we have got to stop those things from taking place.

I hope we can have some good dialogue. I know you are in the middle of sorting some of this out of what we have to do to resolve that, but this cannot be allowed to continue, and I want to discuss that here today, and Senator Lieberman and I will be discussing this after this hearing in this room, as well as about these unfortunate incidences that have taken place.

Now, getting back to the issue at hand, I find that despite the availability of financial resources, which do compare favorably with

other school systems, the District of Columbia schools suffer from poor performance, threats to safety and well-being, shortages of materials and supplies and a crumbling infrastructure that has necessitated court ordered closings and repairs. And as for educational performances, I am sad to say that the facts do speak for themselves. For elementary school students, reading scores are well below the national average and have actually declined significantly in three of the city's wards. Performance on the Comprehensive Test Basic Skills is below the national average. Scholastic Aptitude Test scores are also well below the national average and below those of the neighboring jurisdictions.

Because of these and other reasons, last November the control board exercised the responsibility given to it by Congress and stripped most of the responsibilities from the existing school board, replaced the superintendent, and appointed the Emergency Transitional Board of Education Trustees, representatives of which are here with us today.

Before we begin, I would like to add to these brief introductory remarks another perspective to this hearing by trying to express what this issue means to our Nation's most precious and most vulnerable asset, and that is our children. It is they who are the chief victims of failed schools and failed approaches to badly needed reform. Although the outward manifestations of school failings are many, perhaps none is more harmful than the exceptionally high dropout rate that leaves an alarming number of students without a diploma. In today's demanding world, costs of these failures are extreme, and these dropouts will pay this price everyday for the rest of their lives and then on top of that some of these sex instances within the schools, and that impact is just extraordinarily damaging to our children.

Losses of this magnitude are one of the many burdens that are being imposed upon our children, but even worse for those students who already begin life in some cases with too many disadvantages. As Americans, this should be a source of shame for us, and it should motivate us to do better than we have and to look for new ways to solve our problems. To help us develop these reforms, Senator Lieberman and I have invited some of our best and brightest education experts from all walks of life to share with us their wisdom and experience with an opportunity to hear also from the distinguished General Becton, several of America's former top State and local officials, concerned parents and experienced educators. I think we will have a very productive session this morning as we talk about one of the most difficult issues confronting the District of Columbia and certainly confronting some of our most vulnerable and most important assets in the form of our children.

We will have our first panel up momentarily. I would like to turn the microphone, though, first over to Senator Lieberman for an opening statement. Senator Lieberman.

#### **OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR LIEBERMAN**

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I am really delighted to continue to work with you on these problems of mutual concern. I share with you obviously the sense of profound concern but really outrage particularly at this event with the students in-

volved in so-called consensual sex, young people. I have a 9-year-old daughter so we all identify with this in a personal way, but you know it struck me as I have been following this story in the papers and TV, radio, here in Washington, that this is one of those events where we hear so much bad news, sometimes it becomes an avalanche, and we are unable to distinguish, but this is one of those events that we ought to stop and absorb in all its horror and see it as a sign of the decline of our civilization that this could have happened in a public school which used to be, in *loco parentis*, in place of the parents. You know this kind of thing was unthinkable and maybe it will rivet our attention. You remember decades ago, the Kitty Geneves case, where this woman was being attacked and screamed out and neighbors—later it turned out an awful lot of people heard her but were too frightened to do anything about it. And this dreadful event may be so horrible that it may galvanize public opinion and a willingness to focus on the kids, who, as you said, are the victims here.

Too much of the argument about what to do about education in political circles has to do with vested interests, with the status quo, with protecting the form of education as opposed to focusing on what is best for the kids. And that is what I hope we will do here today. The plight of the schools of the District of Columbia is tragic and disgraceful. When it happens in the District, it becomes not only a local tragedy and a local disgrace, it becomes a national tragedy and a national disgrace. But the truth is what is happening here, though worse than in many cases around the country, most cases, is also typical of what is happening in a lot of places in our schools.

I can tell you that it hits particularly close to home for me this morning, Mr. Chairman, because the capital city of my State, which is Hartford, Connecticut, is going through a similar crisis. Just yesterday, the General Assembly of the State of Connecticut dissolved the Hartford Board of Education and took over the Hartford schools because the school system, like so many around the country, has been plagued by a shrinking tax base and an increasingly disadvantaged and segregated student population, and years of petty bickering and political turf fighting among political people, teachers unions, administrators unions, and in the midst of it all of it what is forgotten is the kids.

Obviously, the D.C. Control Board took much the same action last fall as the Hartford School Board endured yesterday. And I think there is a broad consensus that that was the right and necessary thing to do. We are very privileged to have with us this morning the new management team to testify for the first time before Congress, and I want to personally welcome you, General Becton and Dr. MacLaury. I admire your courage in taking on these assignments. As General Becton said, he has some friends who have suggested to him that he should have checked with a psychiatrist before doing this, but let us put it this way, I put the emphasis on your courage.

There has been a lot of speculation about your plans for resuscitating the District school system, and I look forward to hearing from you what those plans are and how we can be of help to you. The Chairman, Senator Brownback, and I are very anxious to play

a constructive and supportive role. In some cases, frankly, to play an advocacy or agitating role as the Senate's Oversight Subcommittee for the District of Columbia, if that seems appropriate. We are going to explore today some innovative ways to go at this. One is the whole question of a scholarship or voucher program for low-income families. I was sponsor of legislation a year ago that would have created such a program, offering annual scholarships of up to \$3,000 to more than 1,000 District students who qualified based on need.

That legislation actually garnered the support of a majority of the Congress and will likely do so again this year, but for it to work, it has got to have broader support including the full support of the folks who are running the District of Columbia school system. I am also very interested to hear about the city's new charter school program. I must say that I am concerned by the pace at which this program is moving forward and some of the reports I have heard about its mismanagement. So I will look forward to hearing from both of you about that.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, let me reiterate what you have said, which is our need to be open to new ideas here and new solutions, remembering that these are not normal times, and they do not call out. These are not normal situations in the school system, and they call out, in that sense, for abnormal, bold, radical, unconventional responses, which recognize that we are not just losing generations of young people, we are destroying generations of young people. There was a startling statement in a report produced by the control board here in Washington, which said that the longer students stay in the District's public school system, the less likely they are to succeed educationally. Can you imagine that? Well, we have to turn that around, and I hope together with you, we can. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you, Senator Lieberman.

Our first panel is General Julius W. Becton, Jr., the Chief Executive Officer for the District of Columbia Public Schools. Along with him will be Dr. Bruce MacLaury, Chairman of the Emergency Transition Education Board of Trustees. General Becton, we welcome both of you to the Subcommittee. We look forward to a discussion of what we can do to solve this crisis problem for our children, and General Becton, I may suggest this may be the toughest battle in your distinguished career that you have joined. It is certainly one of the most important.

Welcome General Becton.

**TESTIMONY OF GENERAL JULIUS W. BECTON, JR.,<sup>1</sup> CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

General BECTON. Thank you, sir. Mr. Chairman, Senator Lieberman, at the outset let me point out clearly I share your outrage of the events that you mentioned, and I assure you that we are doing everything legally possible in this matter. I welcome the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss improvement opportunities for public education in the Nation's capital. I have with me

<sup>1</sup>The prepared statement of General Becton appears in the Appendix on page 65.

several members of my senior staff who I may ask to respond to some of your questions. I will summarize my remarks but I have a prepared statement that I would like to submit to you at the end of my report.

Senator BROWNBACK. Without objection.

General BECTON. Mr. Chairman, to understand where we are and where we are going, it is important to consider the tremendous change that has occurred within the last year in the governance and direction of the D.C. public schools. As you stated, I became the chief executive officer through an order of the D.C. Financial Authority on November 15, 1996. As CEO, I serve both as Superintendent and Chief State School Officer. This order also establishes the 9-member Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees, of which I am a member, and of course, Dr. MacLaury is the Chairman.

Six months before the Financial Authority's order, in April 1996, Congress passed the District of Columbia School Reform Act of 1995. This act required the development of a long-term education reform plan. It also required the design and implementation of a comprehensive program for the repair, improvement, maintenance and management of the public school facilities.

In addition, the act established a charter school law for the District of Columbia.

Having set the context in which we are now operating, a context that provides tremendous opportunity for a positive change, I will now turn to our goals for improving public education in the District. To characterize our goals as simply as possible, I believe that by June 30, 2000, our successes or failures will be judged on whether or not we achieve fundamental improvement in three core areas: (1) academics; (2) school facilities; and (3) personnel and financial management systems.

What I mean by fundamental improvement is that these core areas will be on a firm foundation for continuous progress in future years. My guiding principle in this effort is "Children First."<sup>1</sup> All of our efforts must be weighed in terms of their impact on children first. Our goals for the core area of academics embrace the objectives of the School Reform Act of 1995 and elaboration on those objectives in the Children First Framework developed by the Emergency Board of Trustees. The Children First Framework provides the blueprint for the long-range education reform plan we are now developing. I have included a copy of the framework for the record.

Our first goal is to ensure that all students are taught to world-class academic standards to prepare them for productive work, further education and responsible citizenship. To accomplish this goal, we must first adopt rigorous content and performance standards, with aligned curriculum, assessments, and professional development.

Our second goal in the core area of academics is to provide an academically competent, well trained and caring staff and hold them accountable for results. To accomplish this, we must adopt clear standards for competency for hiring and evaluating principals and teachers.

<sup>1</sup>A draft entitled "Children First," March 17, 1997, appears in the Appendix on page 71.

Our third goal in the core area of academics is to promote school autonomy and accountability through decentralization and greater parental choice. To accomplish this, we will foster a variety of school restructuring efforts and facilitate the development of high quality charter schools.

Concerning public charter schools, we intend to facilitate the development of high quality charter schools that will serve as laboratories of change for the entire school system. To accomplish this, we will work closely with the two existing chartering authorities. We are also developing an expanded role for the Emergency Board of Trustees. As a State education agency, the Emergency Board of Trustees has responsibility for all public schools, including charter schools.

The School Reform Act of 1995 permits the establishment of up to 100 charter schools over the next 5 years, including the conversion of existing public schools, now operated and managed by the Board of Trustees and the CEO. We believe that charter schools with high quality educational programs and sound business management hold great potential to improve the choices and quality of public education available in the District.

Last, a comment on tuition vouchers, one form of school choice that may become a topic of much debate, as it has before in this city. While the Emergency Board of Trustees does not have an official position on tuition vouchers, we do have several concerns. Our first concern pertains to accountability. While charter schools are privately operated, independent schools with performance contracts through public bodies, can similar accountability for students' outcome be built into a voucher arrangement? Would private schools receiving tuition vouchers agree to meet certain standards? If so, how would such schools differ from charter schools?

Our second concern relates to the impact a protracted debate over tuition vouchers, or an effort to implement them, could have on our progress in achieving the fundamental reforms just underway, including implementation of the charter school legislation. As you consider potential legislation in the area of tuition vouchers, we ask that you consider these areas of concern.

In the core area of school facilities, we have developed a Long Range Facilities Master Plan, which we believe will allow us to return our school facility inventory to a safe environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. We intend to submit this plan to the Congress by April 25, as required by the School Reform Act.

Our goals for the third core area, personnel and financial management systems, involves rebuilding broken systems and implementing new ones. We must restructure the ways that we develop, evaluate, and track personnel. Our first goal must be to know exactly how many employees we have, what they are doing, and how they are funded. We will have that effort completed in May. Then we must determine whether their jobs are consistent with our goals. Our goal for improving financial management includes presenting a budget for fiscal year 1998 that is built from scratch and from the bottom up, based on a school-based budgeting formula as required by the School Reform Act of 1995.

To conclude my statement, I feel compelled to restate my guiding principle: Children First. The pledge I make today, and the pledge

I will continue to make, is that all of our efforts in achieving fundamental improvements in the three core areas of academics, school facilities and personnel and financial management systems must be weighed in terms of their impact on children. Failure to meet the needs of the children in this city is not an option. Sir, that concludes my portion of the remarks, and I would like to turn it over to Dr. MacLaury.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you very much, General Becton, and we will look forward to a good discussion. Dr. MacLaury, thank you for joining us.

**TESTIMONY OF BRUCE MacLAURY,<sup>1</sup> CHAIRMAN, EMERGENCY TRANSITION EDUCATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Dr. MACLAURY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Senator Lieberman. It is a pleasure to be here today. Let me preface my comments by saying that I share your outrage at the incidences that have occurred within the D.C. public schools this past week. I have full confidence in General Becton and the actions that he has taken and is taking and will take with respect to both violence and safety in the schools. That has been enunciated as our top priority. This week shows that we still have a ways to go.

The 9-member Board of Trustees was established by the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority to act as agents of that Authority responsible for the operation and management of the D.C. public schools. Five of the trustees, all of whom reside in the District, were appointed directly by the Authority. One member was selected by the Authority from a list of three parents of D.C. public school students, submitted by the mayor. One member was selected by the Authority from a list of three D.C. public school teachers provided by the Council of the District of Columbia.

The CEO/Superintendent, General Becton, is a member of the trustees, as he said, and so is the President of the D.C. Board of Education. Those are the members of the new Emergency Board of Trustees. The Financial Authority established the trustees after declaring a state of emergency in the District's public school system. This drastic action was precipitated by its finding "that in virtually every category and for every grade level, by virtually every measure of performance, the District public school system has failed to provide a quality education for all children and a safe environment in which to learn." That is a quotation from the Control Board's order.

More specifically, the Authority concluded that, despite per pupil expenditures that exceeded the national average, the D.C. public schools had student test scores, as you pointed out, Mr. Chairman, that were consistently below the national averages, that the schools were unacceptably violent, that they lacked such vital materials and services as textbook, and teacher training, and that they displayed gross mismanagement in the areas of personnel, facilities, procurement, budget and finance.

Based on these findings, the Authority directed, authorized and empowered us as trustees and the CEO/Superintendent: To im-

<sup>1</sup>The prepared statement of Dr. MacLaury appears in the Appendix on page 78.

prove the quality of education services provided to D.C. public school students; to strengthen school system management; to reduce the costs of non-educational services—that is a key point; to develop a long-term educational reform plan; to develop District-wide assessments and establish procedures to ensure that teachers are accountable for student performance; to make recommendations to improve community, parent and business involvement; to assess D.C. public school students' opportunities to participate in such events as arts and athletics; to establish procedures that ensure that D.C. public school students acquire the skills necessary for employment; and to enact policies and procedures that ensure that the school system runs ethically and effectively. That is a long list of mandates that came to the trustees from the Control Board, and we are doing our best to live up to these mandates.

Toward these ends, the trustees have, to date, approved a draft education framework for the D.C. public schools, which General Becton has submitted for the record. We have also devoted considerable time and energy to assessing nationally recognized academic standards as well as aligned assessments and teacher training. It is our intent to have those high standards in place by the beginning of the next school year.

In a parallel effort to improve school system management, we have approved a proposed 1998 budget for the D.C. public schools that is school-based, as General Becton said, and premised on the reduction of non-instruction positions. We want people in the classroom who are competent and can instruct the children, but we do not need more people in the schools or in the central offices than are absolutely necessary to provide needed services.

We have also begun the arduous task of closing schools and will vote to close a number of our buildings by the end of this month. The ultimate goal of the trustees is set out in the vision statement that we adopted. It is to educate all D.C. public school students in schools of the future, that are collegial communities of professional and intellectually prepared teachers and administrators who teach to world-class standards in safe and caring environments in which children master academic, technological and social competencies that give them real choices in life and provide bridges to further education, productive work, and responsible citizenship.

Now that is a very big mouthful. It is a high aspiration. The children deserve no less, and it is the trustees' responsibility to see that this vision is translated into reality. We undertake this responsibility with great seriousness, Mr. Chairman. I will end my remarks here and will be happy to respond to your comments and questions.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you, Dr. MacLaury. I appreciate that. Because there is so much on my mind, I want to start off with this incident of the sex in schools taking place because I just find this horrendous that it actually occurred and with students of that age. What immediate steps are being taken to ensure that these acts do not occur now or in the near future or ever again in the D.C. schools? What is taking place now?

General BECTON. Mr. Chairman, I wish I could assure you that they will never occur again, but I also recognize the fact that what we had in that school was the result of, in my judgment, inatten-

tiveness on the part of a teacher, who by the way had a class that was twice the size it should have been, a failure of the system to provide the teacher that should have been replaced, and the concern or lack thereof on the part of the principal, but we are in the process, as we speak, of taking a hard look at exactly what happened and, as I mentioned earlier, we are in the process of dealing with the two people directly concerned. I cannot discuss publicly what actions I have taken until they have had their legal procedures process provided to them. We are using this as a vehicle to get to all the other schools to point out to teachers and principals alike that these kinds of things cannot be tolerated, that we must pay attention, we must assume certain responsibility, we cannot leave children unattended in large groups behind closed doors. And we also appeal to the public, to the parents, that they must take some responsibility, too, because according to what I read in the papers, as you did, some of these ideas came from children who have seen videotape at home of some of the acts. I would like to tell you that we can control that; we cannot.

Senator BROWNBAC. The President of the D.C. School Board said in Wednesday's newspaper, and I just want to read you this quote, and ask you to tell me this is not true. But he said if the media wanted to go around and look at other schools, they would see incidences like that going on all the time, referring to these sexual incidences that occurred on April 7 with these children ages 9 to 12. Is that true?

General BECTON. I do not believe that is the case.

Senator BROWNBAC. What steps are being taken to put in place a zero tolerance for sexual acts in grade schools in the District of Columbia? To me, I hope you are establishing that as a standard yesterday.

General BECTON. We have started, sir, not just yesterday, but from the very beginning of my administration. On the subject of matters of sexual harassment, we have a zero tolerance policy stated. And the employees know that; the students have heard that. I have used the term whenever I had an opportunity to point that out. You are asking what specific things we have done subsequent to that action last week? We have not put anything out in writing except to reiterate what we have in writing already.

Senator BROWNBAC. Dr. MacLaury, do you care to respond to any of those statements or questions I had?

Dr. MACLAURY. Again, I have no knowledge that this kind of incident is rampant in the schools. I do not know. I have not spoken with Don Reeves, the President of the School Board, as to the basis on which he made that statement, but I will speak with him. If he has any evidence of that kind of activity, he should be bringing it to us rather than just reporting it to the press.

Senator BROWNBAC. I think this is an item of primary importance. I mean if you have children that age doing sexual acts, how are they ever going to learn in that type of environment where things are taking place. I just cannot even imagine that they could possibly learn if these are instances that are occurring.

Dr. MACLAURY. I think that it is fair to say that you are absolutely correct, but the same thing could be said of acts of violence or intimidation or drugs or any other kind of illegal activity that

is taking place in or near the schools. This is not a single kind of action that is being focused on. It is the entire environment in which the children must have security and safety in which to learn.

Senator BROWNBACk. Well, answer me this then. Should we not be providing them choice or vouchers to the parents of children at Winston School where this incident occurred today so that they are not having to stay in that environment? I mean, General Becton, if you had troops that were pinned down in an area that was very damaging to their health or situation, you would do everything you could to get them out of there immediately.

General BECTON. That is correct.

Senator BROWNBACk. Should we be allowing those students or their parents if they desire to get out of that school that they get out immediately with a voucher or whatever other options are available for education?

General BECTON. Mr. Chairman, the parents obviously have a choice of moving from a school to another school with sufficient reason for that. I do not believe that this should be used as an example of a typical activity, typical environment in Winston or in any other school. I think what we have, as I said before, is an aberration. I would hope that it would never happen again. I cannot give you my word on it. We can work to make sure that teachers and principals are sensitive to it, but I do not think that this should be the reason that we should start a new program called vouchers. I think there are many, many other areas that we should certainly explore and also consider what we are saying when we do talk about the subject of vouchers.

Dr. MACLAURY. Senator Brownback, may I add to that one comment?

Senator BROWNBACk. Please.

Dr. MACLAURY. It seems to me we have an obligation to all of the children and all of the parents in that school and in every school. We have to make sure that that school is safe and not just give vouchers to those parents who have sufficient concern and ability and interest to move their children. Vouchers may be a possibility, but, in addition, we have to fix that school so that cannot happen for those parents who do not choose to have their children move.

Senator BROWNBACk. Currently, children and parents do have choice within the public educational system in the District of Columbia. You would grant to any of those parents concerned about their students today that they are allowed to move their children out of Winston School today if they are concerned about this instance?

General BECTON. We would.

Senator BROWNBACk. OK. I will have additional questions, but we are going to move this back and forth some on a time clock. So Senator Lieberman, I am happy to let you have a round of questioning.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Obviously I am just going to briefly continue on this subject of this incident with the fourth graders just because it rivets us and it is the extreme of what we have heard although obviously we have heard a lot of different horror stories, and I want to just focus on what is happening

now because obviously this is a critical moment in terms of the messages you are sending. What is happening to the teacher and the principal involved here now? Are they still on duty?

General BECTON. They are not.

Senator LIEBERMAN. So you have by some form you have administratively suspended them?

General BECTON. They are on administrative leave right now.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Yes. That was something you ordered, General, or—

General BECTON. That is correct.

Senator LIEBERMAN. OK. That is good. And now there is a disciplinary process or adjudication process of some kind going on?

General BECTON. That is correct, sir.

Senator LIEBERMAN. OK. Well, obviously you have to make the judgment, but I appreciate the strength of your statements because everybody is watching, particularly other people in the school system, and the way in which you handle this and the severity of the reaction, I think, is going to be the beginning of a deterrence policy to try to stop this from happening, but again, we are putting a lot of pressure on the schools in this period of our history because families have failed, the culture has failed. We held a hearing here yesterday about the impact of television on kids' values, and we had some experts here. They have studied the impact of violent television shows on kids, and they find that they make the kids more violent. The research is just beginning on the sexual content of the entertainment culture, but I would be shocked if the research does not show that if kids come home from school and they watch these trash talk shows and all they hear about is sex and sex and sex, if they turn on the soap operas in the afternoon when they come home, and they see people constantly getting into bed half naked and being involved in sexual acts, and there is no standard above them, whatever, either parents or religion or whatever, they are going to bring this into, human nature being what it is, it is going to come into the schools and then we are going to ask you to deal with it.

So I do not blame it all on the school system, but now it is your problem, and I think the least we can ask is that you create a climate in which there is, as the Chairman said, zero tolerance and real tough punishment of anybody responsible for this kind of behavior. Part of the public outrage here was not just the fact that this occurred with young kids, but the reaction of the administrator on the scene who sort of dismissed it as, well, it was consensual sex. I mean, can a 9, 10, 11, or 12 year old, can we say that appropriately?

As you know, one of the parents, at least one, has said that their daughter was not consensually involved. All right. I am going to leave that for now and let me just step back from your opening statements and ask you this. You are both people of experience and admirable accomplishment, and you come to this at about 2 minutes till midnight here, and this is late in the day, and we are putting a lot of pressure on you and hope on you. Let me just ask you, apart from the opening statements, which I heard, speak to me, we are just meeting across the table, you have been given this enormous problem to deal with, what do you see? What is the problem?

How have we gotten to a point here in our Nation's schools, our capital school system, where school violence is out of control, 40 percent of the kids do not graduate from high school. I mean it goes on and on and on. Bloated administrative budgets. But what is wrong? If you had to cite the top three things, just talking across the table, what has happened here? How has this happened? General, do you want to start?

General BECTON. Sure. Let me first point out, Mr. Lieberman, I came to the District in 1964. I have five grown children, all five of our children attended school in the District of Columbia, two graduated from Coolidge. The third one entered sixth grade and her mean old father took her out of school in 12th grade and took her to Killeen, Texas. It took her a long time to get over old dad doing that to her. But the point I am trying to make is I know what a good school system looks like. We had one.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Incidentally forgive me for interrupting. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton was here testifying before us about a month or so ago, made the same statement. She is a graduate of this school system. I got to know her—not that this is a badge of success for her or me—but when we were both at Yale Law School together. So I mean she clearly got well prepared in the District school system. This was not always the case. You are absolutely right.

General BECTON. So the point I am saying it has taken a long time for the District schools to get where they are today. If you take a look at the maintenance of the school buildings, we have according to GSA about \$2 billion of deferred maintenance. It did not get like that over night. It took a long time of not paying attention to details.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Two billion dollars.

General BECTON. Two billion dollars. That is GSA's figures.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Schools in disrepair physically.

General BECTON. That is correct. That is what GSA tells us. School violence, I think is the No. 1, my No. 1 challenge when I assumed the responsibility back in November, to reduce the level of violence because I am convinced that if you can do that, you can permit the student to learn and the teacher to teach without having fear of being attacked or something happening in their classroom. We have reduced the level of violence.

Senator LIEBERMAN. So your first goal, and it seems like a reasonable one—if any school 20 years ago would have said what? That is my first goal? But that is what you saw. That is very important.

General BECTON. To me it is the most important. And also by the way I put up there safety of that youngster.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

General BECTON. Where we are talking about fire code violations or nutrition—all those things go to create the environment.

Senator LIEBERMAN. School violence, General, you mean among students, students against teachers, what?

General BECTON. All of the above.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Including—

General BECTON. And we have outsiders to come into our schools who do not belong in the school, which is why we are restricting

the entrance so that we can identify who is coming in and also check through metal detectors. We have not bought a new metal detector in the school system. Everyone we have has been donated, and were all donated back in 1990 and 1991. We have requested through our budget request that Dr. MacLaury mentioned \$12 million for our security so that we can buy state-of-the-art equipment, so we can do something about the level of violence.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Because students and others are bringing weapons in the school.

General BECTON. They are.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Guns?

General BECTON. Yes.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Knives?

General BECTON. Yes. Matter of fact, we had the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department give a presentation and they showed the weapons that have been brought in. It was shocking to see what they picked up.

Senator LIEBERMAN. And teachers are being threatened?

General BECTON. Teachers have been threatened.

Senator LIEBERMAN. And violence is being committed against teachers? That is what you found.

General BECTON. We have had examples of that.

Senator LIEBERMAN. So, you feel you are making progress on that front?

General BECTON. We are making progress although I must tell you that when you pick up the paper, it does not reflect that way. But I get a report every morning on the level of incidents, and we believe we are making progress.

Senator LIEBERMAN. OK.

General BECTON. A second thing, just as important, however, are the academics. What are we doing about that? You asked how did we get where we are. I cannot give you an answer how we got where the longer you stay in the school, the worse off it is becoming.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

General BECTON. What we are trying to do, however, is to make sure that the teachers are teaching at the level that they should be. We are also trying to make sure that the students are no longer being pushed along just because they are a certain age, but they actually can read at a certain level before they move on, and we are dealing with that, where we call it social promotion or whatever you want to call it. That is an area of great concern.

And the third one related to that: academic support. Our teachers in the Nation's capital are the lowest paid teachers in the area. And we've got to do something about that, and we are trying to do that through our budget request.

Senator LIEBERMAN. You got a large number that are not certified; am I right?

General BECTON. No. There are not a large number not certified.

Senator LIEBERMAN. I got one note here saying 32 percent of classroom teachers do not have required certifications.

General BECTON. I do not recognize that number at all. I can check with my experts, but—

Senator BROWNBACK. My number says 19 percent of classroom staff have no certification to teach according to the Control Board.

General BECTON. There are two examples. Let me ask if I could, if you want to——

Senator LIEBERMAN. You can respond to that.

General BECTON. OK. We will respond to that in writing.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Fine.

General BECTON. The other area which is a great concern and I think we are making progress there are our total physical plant. I mentioned deferred maintenance, and we are trying to do something about. Dr. MacLaury alluded to that. We have 157 schools, for a population of less than 80,000 students. Those buildings were built basically for almost twice that number. We have some schools that have 25 percent utility, utilization of their classroom space.

We want to reduce that number so we can spend the money back where it belongs, to deal with the subject of academics, to deal with the subject of reducing the violence, to deal with the subject of maintenance, so we can, in fact, have a physical plant that merits what our students should have. Those three areas again I've got to do something about: violence, security, safety. I've got to do something about the academics, about the academic support, and we have got to do something about the teachers so that they have a drive to teach, want to come to work and teach, and have that kind of motivation that you and I had in our teachers back when we went to school.

Senator LIEBERMAN. I have actually used my time for this round?

Dr. MACLAURY. I would simply add, if I may, one point.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Please.

Dr. MACLAURY. As to General Becton's comments, I agree with all of them, but it's the management information systems that the schools have, or frankly do not have, that lead to our standing on quicksand every time we ask for numbers about finance, budget. We are building new systems as we speak, but in the area of personnel, we know how many checks are being written. We do not yet know where all employees are assigned and what duties and responsibilities they have. Similarly, with respect to student and school performance, I do not feel confident yet, as I speak with you, that we can track, as we must track, the students' performance and the schools' performance. So, in each of these areas we have plans in place to improve management information. It's a very dry old subject, but until we can get accountability, we do not know where we are.

Senator LIEBERMAN. I agree. Let me just indicate for the record that 32 percent number came from the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility Management Authority Report, "Children in Crisis," November 1996. It says that 32 percent of classroom teachers do not have required certifications.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BROWNBACK. If I seem outraged and rough towards you, it is just because I am outraged and you are in front of me. But I hope you take it as a message from the Senate and as a message really from the Nation. I know you are both trying and working as hard as you can to do everything possible you can. We have to do

more and we have to do better. So please take these, I guess, as constructive comments, as I am sure that you will.

General Becton, you say that everyday you get a report of violence in the schools, level or incidences of violence. What are the numbers? How many incidences of violence are we having in the D.C. public schools daily?

General BECTON. I can submit that for the record. If I used the term "everyday I receive the level of violence," I said I received incidences of what is happening in the last 24 hours. Violence is one of those things that is reflected.

Senator BROWNBACk. How many are you regularly hearing about in the D.C. schools on a daily basis roughly?

General BECTON. Well, let me give you an example. Yesterday I believe we had 11 incidents reported.

Senator BROWNBACk. Of violence yesterday?

General BECTON. No. That is incidents.

Senator BROWNBACk. OK.

General BECTON. To include violence, but also to include a stolen property, to include a drug related act, to include a stolen purse. We are talking about 157 schools. We are talking about 79,000 people plus another 10,000 employees. So those are the numbers and I receive a report every morning of these kinds of things, and I will be more than happy to provide to the Subcommittee.

Senator BROWNBACk. I would like to see those, but are you saying that 11 incidences classified as criminal activity occur on a daily basis?

General BECTON. There are allegations that something happened. They are not all criminal allegations. They are allegations of, could be allegations of a truant that got into a little trouble, later to be proven or disproven.

Senator BROWNBACk. How many allegations of criminal activity would you normally get daily in the D.C. public schools?

General BECTON. I am saying, Mr. Chairman——

Senator BROWNBACk. Stolen purses, guns.

General BECTON. I am saying I believe yesterday the number was 11.

Senator BROWNBACk. Is that a normal day?

General BECTON. I would say that is about average.

Senator BROWNBACk. And these are in a situation where you have unarmed children? The rest of the children are unarmed; is that correct?

General BECTON. I will read yesterday's figures, sir. I just got them passed to me. There were three allegations of concealed weapons, there were three fights, one truancy, four larcenies, and one burglary, it looks like.

Senator BROWNBACk. But the rest of the children are unarmed, but these incidences are taking place against some children in the D.C. public schools; is that correct?

General BECTON. That is correct, sir. Again, I point out we are talking about 78,000 or 79,000 children. We are talking about 10,000 employees. I can only relate that to a recent experience where I was the president of a university with 5,000 students, and while we would not get this many, but we would get examples of those kinds of things happening, and certainly in the military, that

number would be relatively small for a unit that had 80,000 soldiers.

Senator BROWNBACk. Adults?

General BECTON. Adults.

Senator BROWNBACk. But 80,000. What if you still had young children in the D.C. area?

General BECTON. Do I still?

Senator BROWNBACk. No. I understood you to say your children were graduated; is that correct?

Senator BROWNBACk. I have five grown children, 10 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Senator BROWNBACk. Congratulations. I am still working up. I have got three little ones, but would you leave them in the D.C. public schools today with those sort of incidences? Your children?

General BECTON. Yes, sir.

Senator BROWNBACk. You would leave them there today?

General BECTON. I would because I know what we have in our schools. I know the excellence of our schools. I know the dedication of our teachers and principals. I am saying these are isolated incidents while they are repeated, but these go throughout the entire school system.

Senator BROWNBACk. But you both have commented about the current system as a failed system by test scores, by what is happening in violence. Dr. MacLaury, you say this is a failed system.

Dr. MACLAURY. Certainly. The Control Board instituted the emergency trustees. We take the words "emergency trustees" very seriously. There was, and still is an emergency. We have 3 years as emergency trustees in which to try to put this system back in shape so that it can continue under an elected board of education.

Senator BROWNBACk. Let me follow up on that and I will let you finish that. But you say 3 years to put this system into place, and I appreciate, General Becton, you are saying you should be judged on June 30, 2000 as to whether you are successful. You need some time to transition, and I recognize that you do not change things overnight, particularly when they have atrophied or gone down to this distance. You do not change those overnight. But what about the children caught in that system today? Should they be relegated while you are trying to change the system? I applaud your efforts to change that system, but we have to change that system. Do you lock those children in that system while you are making the changes? Dr. MacLaury?

Dr. MACLAURY. Well, I do not think one locks anybody in any system. One should not. I understand the implication of your question, I believe, and we are very much in favor, as you know, of charter schools. We will come back to that, I am sure, in the questioning, if you wish to. Students do have choices within the system now as we speak, and there will be more choices when charter schools are, in fact, put in place. We have to fix this system as fast as we can, and I will be interested in your views as to what else we can and should do in terms of improving the system.

I was simply going to say that the school closing effort that has been going on, and I might say, taking a great deal of our attention away from a lot of other things that we should be dealing with, is a necessary distraction. I have been out visiting all of the 16

schools nominated for closing. I have been surprised and impressed with the quality of the principals that I have been meeting in those schools. My only point is that, while it is perfectly understandable and appropriate to focus on what is going wrong and is bad about the D.C. public schools, it is still true that there are “Eleanor Holmes Nortons” who are graduating from the D.C. public schools. In addition, there are principals and teachers who are devoting their lives to the instruction of children, and children are learning as well as having great difficulty in some of the schools. We are going to do the best we can to fix our schools, but we should keep a balanced perspective.

Senator BROWNBAC. And I know you will do that, but when Eleanor Holmes Norton, who is a great product of the D.C. public school system, in front of this Subcommittee, she said that this is not the town she grew up in, and this is not her school system that she came through. You say that they are not required to be in this system, but they cannot get outside school choice within this system. Now some people with the financial wherewithal it appears to me voted with their feet.

Dr. MACLAURY. That is correct.

Senator BROWNBAC. And the President takes his daughter somewhere else and votes with their feet. Now do we relegate people who do not have the financial wherewithal to stay locked in a system that you have defined and stated has failed until we get it to a point that it is no longer a failed system for 3 years?

General BECTON. Mr. Chairman, may I make a comment?

Senator BROWNBAC. Please.

General BECTON. Parts of the system are broken. That is acknowledged. Parts of the system are doing outstandingly well. We have estimated between 2,000 and 4,000 students who come into our school system from outside of the State, outside of the city limits, who by the way do not pay tuition, but come to our schools because there are good schools here. Not every school is broken. Not every student is suffering under any kind of thing we are talking about. And while I indicate outrage at 11 incidents, I remind everyone that we've got 157 schools. We have a lot of good places where students can go and learn. We have parents. We've got support. We've got foundations. Every one of our schools has supporters from outside to include members of this body are providing assistance to our schools. I am very proud of what they are doing. I am proud of where we are as reflected in those reports.

That is why we are doing something about it. You asked the question would I be willing to put my youngsters in? Yes, I would. And we are going to make sure that every other citizen can feel the same way about it. But the ones we have today we are going to try to help.

Senator BROWNBAC. But, General Becton, did you not just make the point right there that—and I appreciate the quality of schools that are working and that they are making a difference and they are a good difference for the students—if this is the case, the parents will also vote with their feet to go to those public schools that are working if they have the choice to do that in or out of the system? Will they not be able to track it themselves? The parents will make that judgment then for their children. You would leave your

children and you would keep your children in there. There would be others from outside that would come in, but should not they be the ones making that judgment rather than us locking them into this system?

General BECTON. I do not believe we are locking them into the system, Mr. Chairman. I think that they—

Senator BROWNBACk. They do not have the financial wherewithal. They are locked into that system.

Dr. MACLAURY. But may I say that if, and it is not “if,” it is “when,” we establish charter schools, there will be per pupil allotments to the students who choose to go to those charter schools. There will be choice, and I favor that very much. It is a question of how quickly we can get that up and going.

Senator BROWNBACk. Senator Lieberman.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Senator Brownback. One question on these closings. Members of Congress live in two places. I have my home where I live in Connecticut, but we are actually obviously in this town and so we read the papers and all. And this Subcommittee has this extra or personal involvement in the District. I have been reading about some of the school closings, and a rather eloquent plea in the *Washington Post*, I guess, over the weekend, from one of the parents writing about this Hearst Elementary School in upper Northwest. Here you have a school that looks like it is a success. It is one of those places, General, that I presume you would be comfortable sending your children or grandchildren, and did you say great-grandchildren, too?

But why was it closed? In other words, you got an integrated school. You have a fair number of kids coming in on your public school choice program from other sections to Hearst. So why close it? In other words, why not consider what appears to be academic success? I gather it is over into the 90th percentile nationally in terms of academic standards, so this is one of your star schools, it appears. Why close it?

Dr. MACLAURY. If I may respond? There has been no decision yet by the trustees on which of the 16 schools proposed for closing will, in fact, be closed. We are close to that decision. We are getting additional information from the school’s administration, as we speak, and when we get that information if we are satisfied, we will within the next week or two at the most be announcing the schools to be closed.

What I think you should—I would suggest that you keep in mind, and I have been saying this to parents who have—and we have had three public hearings, and I have been going out to the schools and talking with local school restructuring teams. Please keep in mind that we are talking about closing buildings. We are not necessarily closing programs. Teachers and pupils can perform well in different physical settings. So we have to keep that in mind as we are talking about closing physical facilities. We are depriving the children of this District of wherewithal by keeping far more schools open and paying for them—the custodial services, the heating and the lighting. If that money could be saved and put into education, all of the students would be better off.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Yes. I, of course, understand it, and Members of Congress and the various enactments we have made about

the D.C. school system have wanted you to be tough on closing schools, but it just seems to me that, and again you are on the front lines, but from what I have been reading about this particular school—and I am glad to hear it is not a final decision—it is true a building is just a building. On the other hand, sometimes you do create a positive learning atmosphere, a positive social atmosphere around a particular neighborhood, a particular school, and, if it is working, if it ain't broke, don't fix it, I guess is what I am saying.

[Applause.]

Senator BROWNBACK. Please. I appreciate the audience's passion here because it is important, and I certainly have my own, but let us hold it down.

Senator LIEBERMAN. OK. Let me go on to the charter schools. This is my last area of questioning. Incidentally, Senator Coats and I are going to come back with our proposal for we are calling it a scholarship program. It is really a choice program for the thousand students. It is a drop in the bucket over a 5-year period. It was supposed to go up to 11,000 scholarships. We just think this is—look, there are a lot of middle class parents. A lot of people who can afford—it is true, the worst does not exist at every school in the D.C. system, but there are a lot of schools that are so bad that it is clear that any parent who can afford it is taking their kids out, and a lot more parents who cannot afford it from everything we hear would like to take their kids out and liberate them and give them a decent education.

So we are going to continue to push on that school choice program. Meantime we have adopted the charter school program. It has had a very rocky start here. Frankly, I felt, respectfully, General Becton, that your comments on it in your opening statement were almost defensive or not defensive but had more questioning to them that support or an attitude of trying to make this charter school program work. I hope I was wrong. If I am, I want to give you the opportunity to tell this Subcommittee now that your leadership, and Dr. MacLaury's, are committed to the charter school program, and you are going to aggressively implement the authority that we have given you to create some choice within a public school setting.

General BECTON. Yes, sir. I am delighted with the charter school concept. It should make public education better. I have submitted a request to the board of trustees to request the Congress to give me the authority to have State school responsibility for charter schools. I do not have that now.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Tell me what you mean.

General BECTON. Right now the charter school responsibility rests with the board of education. There is also another chartering agency within the city. I do not have the responsibility to ensure compliance, monitorship, certification or anything else.

Senator LIEBERMAN. So you want to focus the charter school implementation in your office?

General BECTON. I would like to have the responsibility like any other State has.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Yes. No, that is an important point. I think we ought to do everything we can to make sure that happens. I

know there has been an overlapping jurisdiction, and it has been a problem.

General BECTON. But as far as encouraging the idea of charter schools, we've got a lot of people doing a lot of talking about it. We have talked with Smithsonian. We have talked with other folks. I talked yesterday with some folks about alternative schools for purposes of chartering, and I am convinced that we are doing the right thing.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Dr. MacLaury, do you have anything you want to add? I mean, look, you mentioned about standards before. You know that is part of the whole idea of the charter schools which have worked on here which is that you set the standards in the charter, and if the school does not meet their contractual obligation to educate the kids after the 3-, 4-, or 5-year period of the contract, that is it for them. You know you should go to another charter.

Dr. MACLAURY. Except, Senator Lieberman, I believe that there should be high standards for the entire District, public schools and charter schools. Any charter school ought to be able to meet the high standards set for the District as a whole, and there ought to be the same kind of assessment test for public and charter schools. In fact, I believe that, written in the law, is a requirement that there be a standardized test that is given to all of the public schools in the District, including charter schools.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Absolutely.

Dr. MACLAURY. Right.

Senator LIEBERMAN. I mean that is the whole idea in my opinion of the charter schools. Set the highest standard, free the charter school of some of the bureaucratic rigmarole. Let the teachers or the parents or whoever is in charge, maybe a private business, run it the way they think is best to achieve the standards, and if they do not, cut them off, and hopefully in doing that you raise up the standards of the whole system.

Final question because I know we have to go on. Directly, frankly, is the teachers union in the District of Columbia helping or hurting you in your effort to improve the public school system?

General BECTON. I believe they are helping us.

Senator LIEBERMAN. And how about the charter school approach? Are they supportive of that?

General BECTON. I think that the teachers union have been neutral on the subject of charter schools.

Senator LIEBERMAN. So you have not felt pressure from them in any way?

General BECTON. I have not.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks to both of you.

Senator BROWBACK. Gentlemen, thank you for engaging in the front-line battle for America's soul and for our children. I have thought for some time that the enemy that can destroy us is no longer external. It is internal and it is our culture, our own demise of family, our own difficulties in schools, so General Becton and Dr. MacLaury, I am glad you are engaged in that front-line battle. Thank you for freely and frankly discussing this with us and I apologize for some of the doggedness perhaps at times, but it is just such an important issue. You are the Nation's local school board.

You are the Green Bay Packers for the local school district and people are watching. And we are going to be watching to make sure that this works. Thank you for joining us today.

Dr. MACLAURY. Thank you very much.

General BECTON. Thank you, sir.

Senator BROWNBACk. The next panel will be the Hon. Lamar Alexander, former U.S. Secretary of Education, former Governor of Tennessee, who has a great deal of educational experience, and also the Hon. Ed Koch, the former Mayor of New York City, and two people who have worked a great deal on the education issues. So, if we could have that panel join us.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I just want to take a special moment to welcome Mayor Koch. I was about to say, and it is true that he has been not only a hero and an inspiration and a mentor but a friend, and in doing so I did not want to oblige him to take responsibility for all of my actions in public life, some of which, very few of which, we had disagreements on, but it is great to see Ed Koch, who is one of the most creative, bold, honest, direct thinkers around. So, anyway, I just wanted to say hello to my friend, and I bring not only my greetings, but those of my wife, my mother, and even my mother-in-law.

Mr. KOCH. Cannot do better than that.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Welcome, Governor Alexander, too, and thank him for all his leadership in this area.

Senator BROWNBACk. Thank you for waiting during the previous discussion, but I hope it was also illuminating to you as well about the problems we are confronting. I do not know if you have any agreement between who would go first or second on this? I have the panel listed down as Lamar Alexander as going first so if that is OK, Governor, or Secretary? Do either of you have scheduling problems?

Mr. ALEXANDER. I do not.

Mr. KOCH. I have none.

Mr. ALEXANDER. OK. I will go first.

Senator BROWNBACk. So we will put you on, and thank you for joining us.

**TESTIMONY OF THE HON. LAMAR ALEXANDER,<sup>1</sup> FORMER U.S.  
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION**

Mr. ALEXANDER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Senator. Good to see you both. And Ed, it is a privilege to be with you, and I am glad I had a chance to hear the discussion before. I admire General Becton's integrity and his service and his willingness to do this. And I have submitted a document for you, which I would like to try to summarize, and I will keep it reasonably brief so that we can have a chance to focus on whatever the senators would like to talk about.

I know the Subcommittee has before it a broad range of issues, pensions, financial management, prisons, but what I would like to suggest today is that the clearest and easiest way to renew confidence in the District of Columbia and restore the luster of the District of Columbia is to set out on a mission to give every child

<sup>1</sup>The prepared statement of Mr. Alexander appears in the Appendix on page 83.

of every family in the District the opportunity to attend one of the best schools in the world. That would be the mission for the District that would make the most difference in the District's future, and I want to talk specifically this morning about the steps that I believe it would take to cause that to happen.

In fact, even though the gentlemen who were here before have 3 years for their mission, I believe that it would be fairly easy to achieve the goal of creating the best schools in the world in the District of Columbia within a relatively short period of time, perhaps 5 to 10 years, which for a job that big is a pretty short period of time. I was reminded of both how important this is and how possible it is about 10 days ago when I was here in the District in the afternoon and the evening at a celebration that included hundreds of District citizens, parents, teachers, community leaders, all sorts of people from the District of Columbia. It was the 10th anniversary of the Best Friends program, which Elaine Bennett and Alma Powell and others run. It is a program to encourage young girls to abstain from sex and alcohol and drugs and to encourage self-respect. It is spreading around the country, and it all started right here at Amidon School 10 years ago. I had the privilege of escorting a young woman, a senior in high school here, who has won a scholarship to Spellman College. I remembered meeting her father 5 years ago when he was president of the PTA at Amidon School, and it was just one more reminder that there are plenty of parents and teachers and citizens and leaders in the District of Columbia who have the capacity. In fact, they have more capacity than the citizens in most communities to create the best schools in the world. So there is no reason that it cannot start here.

And I think, too, of all the tremendous institutions that are here. I mean the museums, the talented people. I mean there is not a concentration of more talented, creative, responsible, well educated people with money anywhere in the world than there is in the District of Columbia. And then I look at the figures, and I see that the District is second or third in the amount of money it spends per student on education, and that you are spending about \$7,000 or \$8,000 per student, and I think about what that could buy in terms of an educational opportunity. So that leads me to specifically what it would take to spend that money in these circumstances to help create the best schools in the world for the District children.

And they are these things: (1) choice; (2) freedom; (3) excellence; and (4), accountability.

Now, choice, what I mean by that is this. So that no child is made to go to a bad public school and so that every child has the opportunity to go to a great public school. Every single District family should be permitted to choose the school, public or private, that the child attends. Now in this case as well as in all the other cases, the proposals to implement what I am talking about are either already in law or have been recommended by the President or by the Congress. Speaker Gingrich proposed a bill last year that would give lower income families more of the same opportunities to attend District schools that wealthy families already have. To ensure that choice, Speaker Gingrich's bill ought to be enacted. That is the first thing.

The second thing is freedom. So that the families have the maximum choices of schools to attend, every District school should be a chartered school. Now that might take 5 or 10 years, but every single one ought to be. Diane Ravitch defines a charter school as simply to think of a public school district with one school in it that has the freedom to do what it wishes to do to meet the needs of children, and if it does it, it succeeds, and if it does not, its contract is revoked. That is the recipe for every single school.

The good news is that 25 States have charter school laws, and the District law is perhaps the best. Arizona's and the District's are the best. So all the authority is already in place. And what occurs to me is why does the National Geographic not have a charter school? Why does the Learning Channel not have a charter school? Why does the Smithsonian not? Why does the National Education Association or the American Federation of Teachers. Now, think of what \$8,000 per child could buy at a school operated by any of those institutions. Unleash that creativity, let it go. Now not all those schools will work. I mean the Marcus Garvey School seems to prove that already, but that is no reason to stop. Revoke its charter. I mean the job of the school board should stop being to try to invent the school and make everybody go to a specific school. The school board should step back and have as its mission to create an environment in which everybody else creates the schools.

And the school board's job is to make sure that the schools are safe, that children are learning to a high standard, and that they meet some common sense standard of reasonableness. So that the young Nazi League, or some other nut group is not running a school. That is the school board's job and the school board can do that. So the District already has that authority, and it should exercise it.

The third thing is excellence. On this score, President Clinton is right. President Clinton has recommended that the math and reading tests, which are already well established by the Nation's Report Card, be made available to the District Board and to all school boards to be used to see if, for example, fourth graders are learning what they need to know about math. That should be done, and the Congress should approve President Clinton's proposal for tests with consequences.

And finally accountability. Now this is the fourth step that the President has not recommended, and I doubt I will ever hear him recommend, but which the District ought to take and which it has the power to take. Choices will not be real, charter schools will not be real, children will not learn, until we change the attitude toward teachers and principals. We should expect principals to lead and teachers to teach, and we should measure their results and reward them and dismiss them based upon their ability. So what the District should do under its charter school authority is end tenure for teachers and begin to pay teachers and principals more upon whether the children in the school are learning.

What this means is that some District teachers will be paid as much as \$100,000 a year and some will be invited to have a new job somewhere. But until we do that, until we change the way we pay teachers and principals and permit principals to have the opportunity to organize faculties around the idea that children will

learn, nothing will happen. We all know families are the first teachers, that schools are not substitutes for families, but if there is no positive result as a result of a child going to a school, the school does not need to exist. We do not need to be spending \$8,000 per student. We should reward them on that basis.

So the recipe for creating new confidence in the District is to help the District over the next 5 to 10 years create the best schools in the world for its children, to be the national model, to be the shining city. If it were the shining city in that respect, it would be the single-most important thing that could happen here. That is the recipe. The ingredients are all sitting there on the table waiting for somebody to start cooking. (1) pass Speaker Gingrich's bill about choice; (2) exercise the charter school law that the District already has; (3) pass President Clinton's bill that would make tests available to the local school board; and (4) end teacher tenure and start paying teachers more, a lot more, based upon their ability and success of their students. Thank you.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you, Governor. Those are some very interesting ideas I look forward to pursuing further. Mayor Koch, I went to school in Manhattan, Kansas. We called it the "Little Apple," but watched you closely and from afar and was a great admirer for a long period of time. We are delighted to have you here at the Subcommittee.

**TESTIMONY OF THE HON. ED KOCH,<sup>1</sup> FORMER MAYOR OF NEW YORK CITY**

Mr. KOCH. OK. Mr. Chairman, I was very pleased, indeed privileged, when I received a letter of request that I come and give testimony.

I am not an educator. I am not a parent, and yet I think I do have some insights because I served as mayor of a city that has over a million children in the school system, and it is going up now 20,000 a year, and it has a parochial school system of about 175,000 and a private school system of about another 175,000. And I think I have learned something over the years, and I would like to just express it.

First, I sat through all of the testimony that was given earlier, and I believe because this subject is so important that we have to be totally honest, and it is not intended to be confrontational or adversarial, but I was amazed when the General said he would not hesitate to send his kids to the schools. I do not believe it for one minute, and the reason I do not believe it is that parents are not supposed to in the cause of any philosophy sacrifice their children. No one can expect them to do that. And if you are able to send your child, and I assume the General is, financially to a private or parochial school, you are going to do it in most cases.

Now why should you do it? And I am for public schools. But I am for them as one of several choices. I am for vouchers. I was for tuition tax credits in 1966 when if you were a liberal, which I am and was, and you were for tuition tax credits, you had to worry about getting elected in a district that ordinarily elects liberals. I mean they just hated the thought, although most of them sent

<sup>1</sup>The prepared statement of Mr. Koch appears in the Appendix on page 86.

their kids to private or parochial school. But the fact is I was then and am now a supporter of the equivalent, which would be vouchers. Why? Well, in the archdiocese, which probably has about 200,000, or a little bit less, students in Manhattan, Staten Island, the Bronx, a couple other places upstate, you have a graduation rate in high school in the first 4 years, 98 percent, and you have 90 percent or better going on to college.

Now, in our public school, we have a graduation rate in the first 4 years of 48 percent. I want to tell you I believe the 48 percent for public schools in central cities is high so it is not that we are doing badly if you compare us with other central cities. But I believe that parents ought to be given the option for a reason which is often discussed, but I think is the central reason, competition. I mean if public schools know that they are going to lose those dollars that are allocated for the classroom for that particular job, then they are going to compete for it.

I must say we have a problem, as I guess D.C. does, not only in the sexuality that you concentrated on earlier, but rapes that take place, and even more in terms of numbers of pregnancies. Nobody talked about that. If they are in New York, they are here. And the fact is that something has to be done about that. I spoke with a good friend of mine, who had been a commissioner in my administration, who happens to be very religious and has eight kids, and he sends them to a parochial school, Jewish, and we were talking 1 day about pregnancy in our school system, which the number was rather high at the time. I do not remember the exact number. It was rather high. They were wondering whether to put the kids in one school or to let them stay in the existing schools, and I said to Abe Biederman, who was my Commissioner of Taxation, Finance and also Housing Commissioner on another occasion, I said, Abe, do they have pregnant kids in the parochial schools, Jewish parochial schools? He said there was one case, he said, over the years, one case. I said what did they do? He said they closed the school.

Now obviously you cannot close the public schools nor should you, but it shows the nature of the response to this. Now we accept it. What is so terrible? I mean and I do not blame the kids primarily. I do hold them to an obligation, but I mean our society has regrettably moved in that area. The numbers of children born out of wedlock are astronomical so why should the school system be so different? But something has got to be done about that.

Now I spoke at Al Shanker's eulogy about 2 weeks ago. He was a great educator and, as you know, head of the teachers union in New York and then later nationally, and I said to this crowd of people, several thousand who knew him very well, I said I want you to know that 30 years ago, when I was a city councilman, actually 1967, I had a conversation with Al Shanker—I remember it so vividly—and he said to me—at that time we had a million kids in our school system, too—he said 5 percent of the students in our school system have to be removed from the regular classes because they are violent or disruptive and making it impossible for the other kids to learn. Now that is 50,000 students. Obviously, it is never going to be that high.

And then I said to this audience present for Al Shanker's eulogy, I said it took 30 years for the public school system to begin to ad-

dress the problem, and they now have adopted some regulations that if you bring guns to school, they are going to expel you. It seems to me it should have been done a long time ago, but that is the new rule. You will be expelled permanently from the school system, and the chancellor should get credit for that.

There is a problem in dealing with the special ed kids. You say that is the nature of their problem: disruption. You just cannot expel them, but you have to do something about it. I am not an educator. I am not going to tell you what they can do in all these cases, but I have in my text laid out 11 ideas. I am just going to mention them, and then if you are interested in any of them, I am happy to give you my own feelings.

The school vouchers, I am for them. Do not tell me it is unconstitutional. I do not believe it is. And if it is, the Supreme Court will tell us that and not this Supreme Court. This Supreme Court is going to find it constitutional. The fact is that we send Head Start kids to parochial schools and the government pays for it. Nobody seems to find that unconstitutional nor should they. The fact is that I could not have gone to law school if we did not have the GI bill and many other soldiers went on to parochial colleges, that is to say religious schools. That was not unconstitutional. So let us try it. I am sure we will like it, and I believe it will be held constitutional.

The charter schools. I find it funny when people talk about charter schools because I am for charter schools. What is a charter school? A charter school is a successful public school. That is the way I look at it. And why is it successful? Because you have removed those problems that you think are making the public schools unsuccessful. So why should you not do it for all the systems?

And it was always when I was an executive or even a Member of the Congress, and you had a problem, people would say, well, are you centralized? And if you said yes, then they would say, oh, you got to decentralize. And if you were decentralized, they would say, oh, you got to centralize, and instead of finding real solutions, it is just made up. Made up and grasping for straws.

Now, I also believe you have to bring in role models to the schools. So I once went out to the board of education at their building and I asked them to bring in their top 25 people, and I said let us have a little conversation. And they told me all their problems, and then I said I have an idea. The idea is that everyone of us and as many other people as I can bring in should teach in the school system twice a month. Just bring us in so the kids will see role models and maybe there will be something different. And the then acting chancellor, who was a very able man, he said to me, oh, Mayor, we can't do that. I said why cannot we do that? He said if you bring parents and others into the school system, they will get so disgusted at what they see, it will get even worse.

I thought to myself, this is unbearable, and I said you may not want to teach, but I will. And in those days if you were the mayor, you could get your way on a couple of little things. So I said I want a class. And they gave me a class, a seventh grade class, and I also brought in 400 people who were doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects, and commissioners in the government, to give 2 days a month and I did it, and I did it for two semesters, and I did one

in Bedford-Stuyvesant, which is a black area, and the second semester I did in the South Bronx, which is a Hispanic area. And everybody has their own quirks. I like to think that I certainly understand Standard English, and I think I speak it. But it so jars on me to hear the word "ax" and I know you cannot get a job—I mean would I hire somebody to answer my telephone or be my secretary who said "ax"? I would not. And it is not Black English. I mean it is central city English. Whites and Hispanics and Blacks, they all say it. Why? It is beyond me, but they do.

And so when I went into this classroom, I said, kids, I am going to write a word on the board. I want you to say the word. And I wrote the word "A-S-K." And I went to each and every child in that room—I think there were 25 or so—said "ax." And I worked with them for the whole semester, and at the end of the semester when I had my own little graduation class at Gracie Mansion, where the mayor lives, and I brought in their parents, I said, kids, how do you say the word "A-S-K"? And every one of them said "ask."

And then in the second semester when I went to the Bronx, I said to the kids there is a word. Do you know the word that will mark you as coming from the ghetto where you will not be able to get a decent job if you cannot say it correctly? Do you know that word? I did not think they would. And the class screamed out, yes, "ask." And I said how in the world do you know that word, and they said we heard all about you. [Laughter.]

Now I was proud of that, and I think, small potatoes maybe, but important nevertheless, and what interested me or so amused me, *The New York Times*, and I love *The New York Times*, and I could not spend a day without *The New York Times*.

Senator BROWNBACK. Now you are stretching my credibility, Mayor, if you are saying that.

Mr. KOCH. No. I mean there is no paper that is comparable. But they ran an editorial saying why is the mayor so interested in such an unimportant matter as "ax/ask"? There are so many other important matters. So I wrote them a letter. I said can you imagine what our recollections of Jack Kennedy would be if he had started his inaugural speech "Ax not what your country can do for you. Ax what you can do for your country?" Well, when I sent them the letter, they would not print it. They said you have to take that paragraph out. And I said not me. I did not have to because I write books. So I put it in my book.

Now, some of the other ideas. School uniforms. The same thing happened. I said why can't we have school uniforms. Try them. They have them in the parochial schools. I think it makes a difference. So I called up a couple of the haute couturiers. And they said, no, we are not going to do that. We have spent our charitable expenses. So I called up Moe Ginsburg. Do you know the name Moe Ginsburg? He is a discount clothier. And I said, Moe, I need uniforms, dresses for the little girls, and blue jacket blazers for the little boys, would you do it? He said of course. It cost him \$25,000 and he equipped the two schools. It was wonderful.

Now I think people understand. You have to give people a sense of pride. Aside from the fact it may end the robberies of sneakers and gold chains, etc., but just a sense of pride.

And then I initiated a summer school program. For 7 weeks, the city of New York paid the tuition and the bed and board for students at the most prestigious private schools in New York for 7 weeks and outside of New York as well. Then we tracked them, and we found that just that experience, 7 weeks in the summer, and we took people across-the-board. It was not just the better students. It was concentration on the lower scholastic student that we concentrated on. And we found that they did better just having that experience.

And then I once proposed to Sandy Feldman, who is currently the union leader, a great union leader. She is a personal friend of mine. She was at dinner at my home not very long ago. I say that because what I am going to say now might be considered critical or criticism. I said to her you know what I think we should do? I think we should have teacher bonuses. You say to the teacher we are giving you a class that is not reading at grade level. If you bring up the whole class to grade level, we are going to give you a \$10,000 bonus, one time. We will give you a new goal if you want to next year. But that is just a one-time bonus if you accomplish it, and if you only bring up half the class, we will give you \$5,000.

She said no, what we want to do—we are interested in your bonus proposal. What we want to do is give every teacher the \$10,000 and not because they accomplish a goal but simply because they are teaching. I said, Sandy, that is not a bonus. That is a salary increase. That is not what I am talking about, and we could not do it, because you could not unilaterally because of teacher contracts do what I thought would be very helpful.

I think there ought to be student rewards. Now maybe it is as simple as saying at the end of the semester, look, every student that accomplishes these goals, we are going to give you skates or skis or whatever it is that makes sense. People in a capitalist society, which is what we are in, go ask those CEOs of corporations whether they do a little better because of the stock options that they have in the event that the stock goes up. I think they do. And I think students might. Let us try it.

And then I do not claim that all these ideas are mine, but some of them are. And I push some of those on other people like, for example, forging ties between the major corporations and the schools. Not enough has been done with that, and it does not have to simply be a charter school. It can be just bring the corporation in to help and saying we will give you summer jobs if you reach a certain average. We will give you permanent jobs if you graduate in a timely way and with a good average, and similarly I brought in the private secondary schools, the private schools in a linkage with a public school in their area, sometimes even to exchange teachers, not often, but regrettably I do not think it is going on now.

And then special education reform. I proposed to our last chancellor, the one just before the one that we have currently, Chancellor Cortines, and I liked him. I liked Rudy Crew as well. I think they both did a terrific job. Special education, I think 13 percent of our students are in special education. It cost \$18,000 or more for each child in special education, and rarely if ever do they get out of special education. They are there forever. And I said what we should do is—excluding the profoundly mentally and physically dis-

abled, and you cannot ask them to do what I am going to suggest now, but the others—put them into a mainstream classroom with back-up teachers in a homeroom that they can repair and retire to if they become overwhelmed and see if they sink or swim.

And many will swim, you can be sure of it. And those that do not, at the end of the semester they will go back to special education. And 2 years later, you will give them another chance to do it. And Cortines thought it was a terrific idea, and, the school system, like the gods, work exceedingly slow, and they are still considering this proposal. But I am told that they like it. Well, that is a good sign.

Now, finally, two finals I should say, one is English immersion as opposed to bilingualism. Bilingualism as a crutch, terrific. Bilingualism as placing languages on the same par, ridiculous. It is terrific if you can speak two or three languages, you are going to get a better job, but if you can not speak English well, you are not going to get a first-rate job, and it is our job to teach you. Well, I believe that many of the people who support the continuation of bilingualism as it currently is now do it because it is a job program. You have to have the bilingual teachers, and, second, it is a cultural program. You know we are proud of our culture, and you should be. But if you want to get kids up and running, immerse them in English. That does not mean you cannot help them with the crutch of a bilingual teacher available, but immerse them in English. Children learn so much easier. Look at all the kids and how they handle computers. I can not handle a computer. Thank God I have a secretary who can.

But children can. My 3-year old niece is on a computer. I mean they are doing it because that is the way children learn, quickly, given the chance.

And then finally what I think that D.C. should do, you can make this happen, and someone said it before, perhaps you did, and that is D.C. should become the area that the rest of the country looks at because you can impose your will. I mean the D.C. Government does not have the money, and you can say you want us, you want the money to do it, this is what we want, and they are not going to refuse you. You can do anything, and obviously you should be responsible. I believe that you should create a national academy in D.C. beginning at high school and through the university that would attract students, perhaps only in D.C., but maybe from around the country, which would be my preference, whose tuition would be paid for from the beginning to the very end and that you would push them in the areas that the country needs: science and math. That you would do for the United States what other countries do. I mean there are comparable schools in France, I know, and Germany I believe, that out of those schools will grow youngsters who will someday be the best and the brightest and hopefully many of them will be in the halls of Congress. I will stop there. Thank you.

Senator BROWNBACK. That was an excellent presentation by both of you, very illuminating and enlightening and enjoyable as well. I am just struck. What both of you are presenting there is not all that much different. I mean each of you kind of go at it from a different angle. But they seem to make so much sense to me. I mean

if you are just kind of setting this down on a piece of paper and you are trying to do something that is right, these just seem to make sense in the context of a nation like the United States, a free, individualistic, entrepreneurial, capitalistic society.

And you are identifying items like competition and rewards and bonuses and choice. I mean that is kind of what I always thought we were about as a Nation. So why has this not happened to date and what can we do now with the situation that we have to cause it to happen. And looking back, why have we not done these things, and what is different now or what can we learn from past mistakes that we can cause some of these, what I think, are very sensible in our type of system of governance and Nation cause to happen in the future? Governor?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Well, Mr. Chairman, I think the answer to that is, first, most people do not believe we need it. See, that is the first problem. If you go out around the country and say not one State has a school system that meets the needs of its children, nobody really believes that about their schools. In the first place, they think of their public schools as a place that is revered as anything except for their church or synagogue. I mean this is the place you not only learn reading, writing and arithmetic. This is the place you learn what it means to be an American and then you go home and teach your parents.

So any criticism of that or the teacher, who is the closest thing to a Samaritan in most cases, I mean these are your heroes and your places of honor, and you do not go around criticizing them. Also the schools that we need are much different than the schools that we had, you have to learn a lot more. Today we need schools that are open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. all year to fit the needs of working families, not so that people go to them all the time, but just so they are open like grocery stores. You go to work, you know both parents are working, which most are. You drop your kids off when you go, and you pick them up when you come home.

Well, my grandfather went to school few months a year a few hours a day, to the fourth grade. That was all he needed. That was the way that family worked. Today families work differently. So the first problem is people do not see the need for it, and when I go out and start talking about choice, charter schools, people do not even know what I am talking about. Choice of what? I mean here is my school. What is a charter school? They do not understand what I am talking about. And high standards? What do you mean our kids are not learning? They are learning over here. There might be someplace maybe in this big city or that big city where they are not learning, but certainly not here.

The fact is most American kids are not learning what they need to know. The fact is in terms of choice, I used to say back in the 1980's that for law-abiding citizens the three greatest infringements on personal liberty in America were the military draft, land condemnation and pupil assignment. Now think about that. Now the military draft is gone. We now have a volunteer army. We have land condemnation and probably always will. And why we have a system where we tell people where they must go to school in a country where you do not say you have to live in Manhattan instead of Nashville or drive a Ford instead of a Chevrolet or go the

Yeshiva instead of Vanderbilt or marry this person or that person or take this job instead of that one, how in the world we ever ended up with our system, I do not know, but the main problem is people do not believe we need it.

Second problem is that there are a lot of forces of inertia. I mean just to take one example that I mentioned. It is time to end tenure. There is no need teachers should have a life-time job. It is time to start. I mean the mayor talked about paying teachers more for teaching well. Al Shanker, to his great credit, came to Tennessee in 1983 and supported my effort to pay teachers more for teaching well. I was willing to raise taxes, which Republicans do not do, to give the best teachers a 70 percent increase if we could pay them more for teaching well, and the teachers union killed it. Shanker was for it. The NEA killed it. We got it the next year because I devoted 70 percent of my time to it as governor and threatened to veto every teacher's pay raise as long as I was governor until we had some pay for performance, and so we got the only program still today in the country that pays some teachers more for teaching well and it is sort of the Model T, but in the District or in Tennessee or in New York City, we should end tenure, start paying teachers based upon their teaching ability and the success of their students, and we do not do it anywhere. So we do not see the need for it, there is a lot of inertia in the professional system against what we are doing. District is the best chance we have to break out and do things in the way that they obviously ought to be done and I agree with the mayor. You can require it.

Senator BROWNBACK. Because I would disagree with your first statement as far as the District of Columbia that the parents do not see that they need it. I think in the District of Columbia, they do see that they need to have the choice.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Well, some do. I mean it is pretty pathetic—this is a national embarrassment. Eighty percent of the kids here, 80 percent, do not meet a basic standard on academic learning, and 80 percent is not good enough. I mean basic is not good enough, 80 percent or below basic.

Mr. KOCH. Yes, I think so. In every central city you have the problems that we are talking about at this moment. D.C. is not alone. I do not know whether it is the worst or in the middle, but it is not alone. And that is why it is so critical. If you can find the answer here, there are cities all over this country that are waiting. Now why are responsible proposals not picked up and why do they not run with them, which was your basic question? It is a turf battle. I mean you talk to people who are in education. They probably would say to me what the hell do you know? You are not an educator. And it is true. I am not, but I have common sense. And I do not have my feet in cement defending what went on and maybe at one time was OK but is not OK anymore. And so they all become defensive and it is not my fault. I mean I am the principal. I do not have enough authority. I am the teacher. They are beating me up and nobody is doing anything.

The first thing that I did when I was mayor at the suggestion of my corporation counsel was to say every case where a teacher

has been assaulted by a student I want to prosecute that student in the family court, but we are not going to do what they did before, which is to say, OK, you have to sit in the classroom for a week or something like that, I mean some stupid non-inhibiting punishment. You commit a criminal act, we are going to pursue you criminally, taking into consideration your age, and that is being done now. And I think it is important.

Senator BROWNBACK. Senator Lieberman.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Senator Brownback. Thanks to both of you. Your testimony was great, it was a breath of fresh air, and full of very practical ideas. I mean the great thing about the two of you is that, not to diminish those whose ideas are academic or theoretical, but yours come from the arena—governor and mayor. We ought to put you together as a dynamic duo and send you around to every school system in America. Honestly, you have wonderful thoughts here.

I thought, Lamar, Governor, that your idea here about the riches, the human resources that are in Washington and are not being used was a very striking idea. I mean the National Geographic, the Smithsonian, the Learning Channel, it is all here and part of what you are saying by those examples is the extent to which a lot of the great strengths of the District and probably most cities around America have given up on the public school system. Part of it is because they have been so bad. They have taken their kids out. We have to get them back, and this is a way to get them back.

Ed, I thought you said so many things that struck me. The whole idea of the pregnancies, when you said we accepted it. Well, what happens when you begin to accept teenage pregnancies is that tragically you end up in a situation where 10-year-old kids left alone in a school room are engaged in oral sex and the principal—

Mr. KOCH. Senator Moynihan's statement established defining deviancy down, accepting it.

Senator LIEBERMAN. That is right. Exactly. Now maybe this has gone so far, we are going to all stand up and say outrageous, we cannot let this happen. We are going to push it back. The idea of rewards, bonuses for teachers, rewards for kids, I do not know. To use a little of my own bilingual experience, this has a lot of common sense to it.

Dr. Jim Comer, who is a child psychiatrist at Yale, has a program they put into effect in the school system in New Haven, a few of the schools, and it is now called the Comer school approach, but part of it is to do what a lot of kids have had the good fortune to have from their parents, first, convince the kids that they are able, that they have some ability; second, set some goals; and third, when they reach the goals reward them. And that is exactly what you are saying.

Let me ask you one question, which is a favorite interest of mine. You talked about the extraordinary record of the parochial school systems in New York, largely Catholic—it happens in New York some are also Jewish, and around the country a lot are Protestant parochial schools. From your experience and, of course, one of the allegations, and maybe you want to answer it, that the opponents

of choice give is, well, they are skimming off the top, they are taking the best kids.

Mr. KOCH. Not true.

Senator LIEBERMAN. But answer that, and then tell me why if they are not skimming off the top, they are doing so much better than the public schools are. What do we have to learn?

Mr. KOCH. They are not skimming off the top, and, in fact, when the charge is made, well, they can expel students. So I inquired how many students do they expel? And in each of the last several years, they could not find more than half a dozen cases in any 1 year, half a dozen, and let me say this, there is no question in my mind if you provided vouchers and the religious schools were eligible, they would give up the right of expulsion if you wanted them to. I do not think you should because there should be places where expelled kids go, a special expulsion academy, but not to be permitted to disrupt the other kids.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. KOCH. Now why do they succeed? Because they are held to the high standards. Now you should understand that in the archdiocese, for example, Catholic, 65 percent or more of its students are not Catholic.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. KOCH. And an equal number, in excess of 65 percent, are Black or Protestant.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. KOCH. Overwhelmingly. And they all do well. The school system is overwhelming now in the parochial schools, with their high graduation rate minority. It's the parents. That is the last thing.

Senator LIEBERMAN. You sent to us Bishop Ed Egan, who is now the bishop of Bridgeport, your friend.

Mr. KOCH. He is very good.

Senator LIEBERMAN. And he has a high school there that graduates over 90 percent.

Mr. KOCH. Yes, he is very good.

Senator LIEBERMAN. And poor kids. And I said what about the skimming, Bishop? He said I will tell you about skimming. When I came and took over this school system, the kids were physically in such bad shape, that I opened the school-based health clinic. So do not tell me these kids are coming in from middle-class families. They are not. But the kids still do very well.

Mr. KOCH. Right.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Senator, Ed is right. The research shows that the single biggest difference between what the parochial schools do in the inner city and what the public schools do is they expect every student to learn to a high academic standard. In other words, they teach them to a high standard and expect them to learn and the result is they do.

Mr. KOCH. Right.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Now they also have these ingredients I mentioned. I mean parents choose the school first. Second, they let the teachers have the freedom to organize the school without a lot of bureaucracy.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. ALEXANDER. They have high standards, which we just mentioned, and they could, if they chose, pay teachers more for teaching well. So they have those elements. Same elements that create excellence in our colleges. I mean the mayor mentioned Head Start. The principles we are talking about here for our elementary and secondary schools are not something from the moon. And they help create a system that has the best colleges in the world and are based upon those principles of choice, freedom, excellence, and accountability. And we are just borrowing the same thing for other academic institutions.

Senator LIEBERMAN. What about the role of the teachers unions? I mean I was upset—time is running out—but when the General indicated that almost as if it was, well, indicated that the teachers union in Washington is neutral on charter schools as if that was a good thing. I mean that should not be. How can we engage? Al Shanker really took the AFT to a point where they became part of the solution instead of part of the problem. Do you finally have any counsel on that, governor, as to how we can do that? We ought to be working together on this, not in opposition.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Yes, I have a suggestion for you. You know you hate to just start up and say it's the teachers unions' fault, but often it is. And if you are in Tennessee and you are proposing paying teachers more for teaching well, and in the end there is only one outfit that is killing it, and it was the National Education Association. If you are in Massachusetts, and you are trying to increase the number of charter schools from 25 to a larger number, and you go down to the back room of the Legislative Committee, it is likely to be the teachers union opposing it. Now, I have a suggestion for you for the District. I think we should always give the teachers union an opportunity to be helpful.

For example, Shanker came to Tennessee and did support the master teacher program I proposed. So give them a chance. But we often put superintendents in charge of school districts as if that is going to change everything. And then we do not give them any authority at all. Here you have a General who everybody respects and he actually has some authority. So I would suggest that you pass Gingrich's bill, see if the teachers union supports that. I would suggest that you make every school a charter school; see if the teachers union supports that.

I would suggest that you adopt the President's proposal about standards. See if they support that. And I would suggest that you end tenure so that principals can organize their school and see if they support that. I would invite the General back once a month for a couple of hours, not to interfere with his day-to-day operations, and let him tell you how he is doing on those four projects and whether the teachers union is helping him or hurting him because by putting it out in public, you will literally be helping to give him the authority that he needs to make the kind of radical changes he needs to make here. This is the only place in the country where as a school superintendent, he will have that kind of authority and might have that kind of backing, and then you would not be asking me what is the teachers union doing, you would be asking the General what are they doing on these specific issues in this specific place and maybe

they will be supportive. And maybe they will be supportive, and if they are not, they will not have any place to hide.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Great idea. Thanks.

Mr. KOCH. There are two things that I would do, and the governor has mentioned them, but I want to reinforce them. I would end the D.C. teacher tenure, and I would put them on 5-year contracts. If it works, then it will spread throughout the country. There is no opportunity to do it elsewhere. You are constantly threatened with strikes and the populace in the cities is then brainwashed—this has something to do with intellectual freedom. It has nothing to do with intellectual freedom, the tenure. What it does is it keeps—listen, there are great mayors, good mayors, bad mayors, and the same for senators and members of Congress, and secretaries in the Cabinet. And you want to get rid of the ones that are at the bottom. You want to. And with tenures, you cannot. And so I would put them on 5-year contracts, and if it works here it will spread.

Second, I think public knowledge is extraordinarily powerful. And if I can just give you this little anecdote about it to show you how powerful it is, and that means that if you take the governor's suggestion and you hold every month or some reasonable period a hearing where they can tell you about their successes and their failures, and give it wide attention, they will get support from people living in the community. The community does not know about these things, and I will give you the best illustration of it.

When I came into office, I found that because we were on the edge of bankruptcy major corporations were not selling us goods, and we were paying the highest prices for shoddy goods, and the city of New York spends billions of dollars in goods and services, even then. And so I called in the 10 top commissioners and I said, listen, I want to get the good companies selling to us. Why do they not sell? And one of them said, well, Mayor, because we do not pay. We do not pay our bills.

So I said, well, that is a good reason not to sell to us. I said I want the bills paid in 30 days, and I want the cash discounts from now on. I did not really know what I was talking about, but I know it sounded pretty good at the time. So they said, well, it cannot be done, Mayor. I said, well, I want to tell you how I am going to do it. I am giving you 60 days to shape up. These were the 10 major commissioners. And then on the 90th day, I am going to publish in rank order which agency paid their bills on time and which did not and which is at the bottom of the list. And they began to yell, oh, you cannot do that, you cannot do that. It is so embarrassing. That is what they said. I said aren't you smart? Yes. That is exactly what it will be.

And 90 days later, we published the list. Nobody had a terrific record, but some had better records than others. And there was somebody at the bottom of the list. It happened to be the Parks Commissioner. Great Parks Commissioner, terrible payer. And he came to see me, and he said, oh, Mayor, I am so embarrassed. My name, my department is at the bottom of the list, but I want you to know, Mayor, it will never happen again. I said, well, how do you know that? He said, well, when I saw my name at the bottom of that list, I went back and I called in my people, and I said to

my comptroller if next month I am at the bottom of the list, it is your rear end. He was never at the bottom of the list again.

And I am saying public disclosure of who is doing a good job and who is not doing a good job gets people to do a better job.

Senator BROWNBACk. It does. Gentlemen, thank you very much. I think this has just been a wonderful and illuminating discussion from people that have been on the front line. So thanks for joining us, and we will welcome you back again any time for other suggestions, too. Thank you.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you. Great.

Senator BROWNBACk. Our next panel will be Dr. Jay Greene, University of Houston, who is the author of "The Effectiveness of School Choice in Milwaukee: A Secondary Analysis of Data from the Program's Evaluation;" Ms. Jeanne Allen, President, the Center for Education Reform; and Ms. Kathleen Sylvester, the Vice President of Domestic Policy, the Progressive Policy Institute. Our next panel will be looking at this issue from an academic and think tanks' view of what some of these options have been, their success or failure nationwide.

I appreciate the panel members having waited a considerable amount of time this morning for a couple of earlier panels. I think you can see we are wading through a mountain of information and a very troubling situation that is taking place in Washington, D.C., and we are serious about trying to do something about it. We are searching the Nation for the best ideas and for people that have been on the front line, and now we are returning to you for an evaluation of what some of those front-line efforts have been in educational reform across the country because we want to have the best educational system in the country here in Washington, D.C. So we hope that you can help us to be able to evaluate the various options that have been in place across the country. Dr. Greene, we will turn to you first, and your prepared statement will be put in the record. If you would like to summarize, you are certainly free to do that, and then we will have a good exchange. Dr. Greene.

**TESTIMONY OF JAY P. GREENE,<sup>1</sup> UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON,  
AUTHOR OF "THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL CHOICE IN  
MILWAUKEE: A SECONDARY ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM THE  
PROGRAM'S EVALUATION"**

Dr. GREENE. In addition to the written testimony I submitted, I have a copy of my study<sup>2</sup> and a *Wall Street Journal*<sup>3</sup> article that I would like to submit as well.

Senator BROWNBACk. Without objection, it will be inserted in the record.

Dr. GREENE. Imagine that another large government benefit, let us say Medicaid, were administered like education in kindergarten through 12th grade. We would require senior citizens to visit doctors and hospitals for which they were geographically zoned. Those doctors and hospitals would all be government employees and gov-

<sup>1</sup>The prepared statement of Dr. Greene appears in the Appendix on page 98.

<sup>2</sup>The study entitled "Effectiveness of School Choice: The Milwaukee Experiment," by Jay P. Greene and Paul E. Peterson, appears in the Appendix on page 103.

<sup>3</sup>An article entitled "New Research Bolsters Case for School Choice," *The Wall Street Journal*, appears in the Appendix on page 148.

ernment operated. Seniors could not choose a privately operated hospital, a religiously affiliated hospital, or one which was not considered closest to where they lived. Even imagine in the field of education that university education or preschool education were administered like education in kindergarten through 12th grade. The government would provide support like Pell grants and Stafford loans and day care tax credits, but only for students who choose public universities or publicly operated preschools for which they were geographically zoned.

We do not administer these government benefits in this way because it is widely believed that depriving citizens of choices about their doctor, hospital, university or preschool, would decrease the quality and efficiency of those services. Instead we deliver these government programs with vouchers or choice plans. The government provides a voucher good for open heart surgery by any licensed doctor at any accredited hospital anywhere in the country. Similarly, Pell grants and Stafford loans are effectively vouchers good for an education at any university—public or private, religious or secular.

Given the widespread conviction that choice promotes better services in medicine and in education, it is surprising that voucher systems are extremely rare in kindergarten through 12th grade. Only Milwaukee and Cleveland have publicly funded voucher systems right now, and the Cleveland program just began this fall.

The Milwaukee program has been running for longer, and with colleagues Paul Peterson and Jiangtao Du at Harvard, we conducted a study of the choice experiment in Milwaukee. The program was a very limited one. Only several hundred families participated. They were all low income, mostly minority. Vouchers were good for half of the per capita cost of a public education, and had to be accepted by the private schools as payment in full.

Families could only choose among a handful of secular private schools, and so as you can see, this was a highly limited program. But the program had one very nice feature, which is that students were accepted or rejected from the program by lottery when there were too few spaces. And this created an ideal experimental situation, sort of like a medical experiment, where you had a randomly assigned treatment and control group. Some people by lottery got the pill, going to the voucher private school, and some people got the placebo, returning to the public schools.

And what we did was study the test scores of the students randomly accepted and randomly rejected over a period of time to see whether there was a difference in their scores. Since random assignment should make the two groups exactly alike in all respects, any difference in their test scores can reasonably be attributed to the difference in the quality of their education. And in Table 3 in the report that I have submitted to you, you can see the difference in their test scores after 1, 2, 3 and 4 years. Even after the first year of being in a private school, students who won the voucher did better than students who did not, but the difference was not very large or statistically significant. But by 3 or 4 years into a private school education, students who were accepted at random performed significantly better than students who were rejected at random.

And these differences were quite large. The amount of the difference is about a quarter to a half of a standard deviation, which to put that in perspective, one standard deviation is about the difference between minority students were participating, if we could replicate the benefits of this program, in cities nationwide we might be able to close the gap between minority and white test scores by a quarter to a half, which would be a lot. And this is a period of 3 or 4 years with a limited set of educational opportunities. So the results for Milwaukee are quite encouraging.

But there are limitations. First, it is only one city and one program. Only several hundred students participated. And they only had a handful of schools participating. So it is hard to extrapolate from this one experiment to the entire country. Also, some data was missing or never collected, and therefore there are some uncertainties about the results. But the results are very encouraging, and if you had this kind of positive outcome in a medical experiment, let us say treating cancer or diabetes, there would be immediate demands for better additional experiments to identify the exact nature of the benefit of the treatment.

So what I think could be done here in D.C. is to have exactly this type of better designed experiment. An additional experiment here in a large urban school district just like others around the country suffering similar problems, would allow us to obtain a very clear picture of the effects of school choice on educational performance. It would also help provide information to communities around the country that are considering ways of improving their educational systems, and if Congress were to consider tax credits for private education expenses as a way of promoting education alternatives nationwide, a choice experiment in D.C. would provide valuable information to this body.

And I have some lessons that I think that can be learned from the Milwaukee experiment about how to design a better choice experiment here in D.C. First, I think an evaluation team should be selected well in advance to help refine the design to make it amenable to study. Second, all families should complete a survey, and all students should be tested as a condition of application. That would reduce the amount of missing data. Third, families should be allowed to choose among the largest possible set of private schools, which means including parochial schools to ensure that students have real alternatives. Fourth, students should receive vouchers by lottery to ensure fairness and to make possible comparison between similar treatment and control groups just like in Milwaukee. Fifth, resources need to be provided to track, resurvey and retest over several years those students who receive and those students who do not receive the voucher to see whether there are real academic differences between those who get a voucher and those who do not to see how beneficial the program is. And sixth, data collected by the evaluation team should be provided to other scholars for verification and replication.

Now, some people wonder whether voucher programs are unfair, and this was discussed in the last panel that perhaps it might just allow for the skimming of the best students from public schools. The experience in Milwaukee suggests actually quite the opposite.

The students who participated in the voucher program in Milwaukee were among the most difficult students in the city. They had on average under \$11,000 in family income, which was under half of the family income in Milwaukee public schools. They were half as likely to live with married parents. Under a quarter were living with married parents. And that is half as likely as the Milwaukee public school average. They began the experiment with far lower test scores than average Milwaukee public school students, and they had evidence of additional behavior problems.

So these were some of the most difficult students to educate, and, in fact, that may be precisely why their parents were seeking alternatives because public schools were failing them, and they were willing to try anything to improve the situation, and the evidence from our study suggests that private schools can make a difference even with the most difficult students, that there is no reason to write people off, to write off large segments of the population and assume that because of community or family problems that they cannot be educated.

So a choice experiment here in D.C. could similarly be beneficial to some of the worst off students, not the cream. And it is funny that we have choice in a variety of government services, as I suggested, in Medicaid and in university education and in preschool education. The government subsidizes choice including religiously operated institutions for all of these services. The only place where people do not have choice is kindergarten through 12th grade, and the only people among the population who do not have choice during those grades are people who do not have the financial resources to pay the tuition to a private school or to relocate to a community with better public schools. So, choice would likely be maximally beneficial to those who are least well off and with the least choices right now.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you, Dr. Greene, for your testimony. Ms. Allen, the President of the Center for Education Reform, we look forward to your testimony and interaction.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Mr. Chairman, with apologies, I wanted to extend my regrets to Ms. Allen and Ms. Sylvester and to you because I have to leave to go to a meeting. I am going to try to come back either at the end of the panel or for the next panel. I respect the work that both of you do, and I feel some involvement with Ms. Sylvester since she is with a think tank that I have more than a passing relationship with. So thanks for all you are doing to lead in this effort and thanks to you, Dr. Greene.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you, Senator.

Ms. SYLVESTER. Thank you.

Senator BROWNBACK. Ms. Allen.

**TESTIMONY OF JEANNE ALLEN,<sup>1</sup> PRESIDENT, THE CENTER FOR EDUCATION REFORM**

Ms. ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, thank you. Thank you, Senator Lieberman. I would like to reflect on what I listened to this morning because it was fascinating to sit there and listen to various perspectives, and I want to just underscore, although my remarks are

<sup>1</sup>The prepared statement of Ms. Allen appears in the Appendix on page 149.

not focused on school choice so much, I want to underscore what Dr. Greene said and your two previous panelists about the need to let those people out, Senator, that you referred to as being locked in, and that all over the country it is not only research but truly first-hand experience that is showing us that people want those choices and that minorities in particular and those that are poor want those choices more than anybody else. It is no longer a question of whether we should have choice or not. The debate in the States and communities increasingly is how much and when? And I think it is very important to recognize that even the last few years as school choice has sort of matured, with Cleveland and Milwaukee having enacted programs, various States have gotten closer to enacting school choice than ever before, and while they are not succeeding at the rate that some people would like, particularly when we have more and more children falling between the cracks, the fact that the opposition is not able to (a) defeat legislators who support school choice anymore and (b) are not able to kill the bills they used to, I think also suggests something about the American public's attitudes and how much people are becoming increasingly aware of that problem.

And so I think in some senses, school choice is looked at as triage. Let us get the kids out who are right now failing who do not have any alternative and I think one of the ways the private sector is doing that is commendable is the various 30 some odd privately funded voucher programs around the country that are taking some of the same children that Dr. Greene and his colleagues analyzed, and they basically said we have a program. We are going to give you half-tuition up to a certain amount, the doors are open, you have to be at 185 percent of the poverty line, and these people are coming in droves. They have over 20,000 kids in those programs, an equal amount on waiting lists, and those people have to pay money.

They have had stories of people—Etta Wallace in Dallas getting her electricity cut off so she could continue to pay for her grandchildren because they were getting away from gangs in the public schools. I mean on and on and on. So there is clearly a need.

But what strikes me about the District, and what was interesting to listen to General Becton—who I have tremendous respect for, and who has a really rocky job ahead of him, and Dr. MacLaury, who I also have respect for—is that there is a tendency among any of us who get into a bureaucracy, I worked at the Department of Education once, so I speak also from personal experience, to begin to not think outside the box as much as we should, to focus on the process, and how you accomplish something within the realm of the way it has always been done, and I have watched the last year or so that Washington, D.C. has had charter schools with just amazement and anger. Amazement because our research shows that you have the second strongest law in the country right here in Washington, D.C., and at the same time the Congress passed the charter law, six other States passed charter legislation. Those States this fall will be opening up 98 charter schools. D.C., zero, unless you count the two existing that opened up last year under the school board's approval, only one that is really credible or reputable.

And even that is a perfect example of a school that has gone awry. Options School is a tremendous school run out of the Children's Museum by a woman named Katherine Martins, long-term scholar or academic, a teacher in the special ed field in Washington, D.C. She is to this day 9 months into the school year, still struggling for special education funding from the District of Columbia administration. The Federal grant that has been gone from the Department of Education, to D.C. still has not reached her doors. And every day there is another excuse, and she has been incredibly patient. She has a 17-year old recently that cannot read, but the District refuses to qualify him as learning disabled. Meanwhile we have kids that are locked in warehouses not getting the reading skills. I could go on and on.

That is nonsense and quite frankly when General Becton says I want to control the charter schools, and I wish Senator Lieberman were here to hear that, because I think that he responded very quickly and I think appropriately given his knowledge, yes, you should have that control; no, he should not have that control. That bureaucracy should not have that control. D.C. is very much like Arizona. They have a separate charter board. They have a State board that can approve charters, and local school districts can approve charters. The separate board was set up for one reason and one reason only, they reasoned in Arizona, again the strongest legislation in the country that has over 164 operating charter schools, the people in Arizona reasoned that if we set up a board whose only job is to charter schools, they will charter schools, absolutely.

So now the charter board in D.C. that mirrors that board in Arizona is finally appointed after several months of wrangling between the Department of Education and the mayor over appointments. Great group of people from what it looks like and very dedicated. Josephine was here earlier, the head of the board. Now they have staff, just now. They just got their money to start doing a process yesterday, but they are also talking, I have to say, with the District about having them run a process for them, and they are talking about having an oversight, and it is not supposed to be that way.

And so one of the recommendations that is in my written statement, as well as one I want to echo here, is that Congress, as much as I am a firm believer and supporter of local control, Congress has to step in and simply say here is the process, folks. You have 5 months because you have already had 9 months and you have blown it, you have 5 months, here is what you have to do, you set up the application process, we want charters starting up and running for people interested in January of 1998 and begin to run it for them until they can get ready.

And I will tell you why. Because—and even with that, it is not going to be the “be all and end all,” and as I said I have more detail specifics that I will mention in just a couple of minutes, in those recommendations for you, Mr. Chairman, but the other thing that strikes me as odd is every State that has enacted charter legislation, strong charter legislation like yours, has set about the task of promoting the fact that you have charter schools. This is not an issue in D.C., and it is not because there is not interest. You cannot rely on the conventional parent and education groups to

promote it because they do not seem to think there is a huge problem, and they have a vested interest in the current system. Yet there are tons of people incredibly interested in starting their own school, and I echo what Lamar Alexander said earlier about the cultural institutions. Has anyone asked or encouraged strongly the board to sit down with all those, think tanks, cultural institutions, museums, the opera, and said here is what we have? Because when that has happened in other places, they have come running.

In Phoenix, Arizona, you have a school for the arts that has been adopted by every cultural institution based in Phoenix including the zoo. Those kids take courses at the museum, courses at the opera. They do things with people who are musicians throughout Arizona. They have fine arts. I mean it is just tremendous the kind of play, and they are serving kids who are mainly dropouts who are now excelling in their field because the arts have commanded them. In fact, next week, we are bringing to Washington on Wednesday, and he is just a tremendous guy, Ray Jackson is the principal of ATOP Academy, also in Phoenix. Ray is a former elementary school principal. He was on contract with the school district to take all the worst kids. When he stood up and supported charter schools when it was going through legislation, the district cut him off. And so after the charter bill passed, he was the first to start a charter school. He is serving over 300 mainly African American children. He said all of this stuff about parents not being interested, he said we cannot, we do not know what to do with half the parents that show up to work between the shifts. A tremendous example of someone who wakes up in the morning, starts a school, and they go out and try to make things happen.

You do not need the superintendent. You do not need the school board. You do not need the extra accountability over and above what you already have. The accountability will come from the community, and, yes, you need the safeguard and you need someone saying here is the process, here is what you must abide by, health, safety, etc., and we can walk it at any time and we have everything down, and we will interview and your books will be open. But, guess what, those charter schools welcome that kind of vigorous inspection all the time. In fact, they are the ones out there opening their doors and bringing those people in.

So I think D.C. has to get with the program, and think among the recommendations I would suggest is nothing counts and nothing sells like seeing it yourself. And I think if there is any way, as I said, even with my respect for local control and the ability of parents and people at the district level, and the school board members we work with around the country, who have just a great ability to capture things, but even with that said, if there is a way for you to demand and force the school board and the charter board to get out in the field immediately, to Massachusetts, Michigan, elsewhere, that have charter schools and see it for themselves, to bring those people here as well as in public forums.

There are several community groups right now that are aching to get the charter movement promoted but cannot because they have not had the information. FOCUS is one of them, the Committee on Public Education, a new group called Apple Seed Institute is here. And they are all ready, willing and able. They know who

they are. There are experts around the country. There are these charter operators like Ray that is coming here next week. If they see it with their own eyes, if the community sees it, you will not be able to stop it.

But it has got to be a combination of you requiring a process at the same time a bottom-up approach, and I will tell you of the 480 charters operating around the country, only four have been closed down. The schools, by and large, as the evaluations are coming in, are serving the most needy as well as creating tremendous back to basics and traditional schools in the suburbs, but by and large they are more integrated, serving more disabled children. There is more parental involvement, and while that is not objective achievement evidence, that is evidence because those are the things, when you have those three indicators, you know that something good is happening.

And so I think that we can wait a little bit for evidence while we continue to move the movement on. Next year it will be over 600 schools serving over 160,000 students across the country. This is not a fad. It is not an alternative. It is going to be the new wave of public education, and that coupled with much of what you discussed this morning is what needs to happen, and Washington, D.C. is that crown jewel, and it will really be a sin if we do not take advantage of that now. Thank you.

Senator BROWNBACK. A very compelling presentation. I appreciate it and look forward to some questioning as well.

Next, Ms. Sylvester with the Progressive Policy Institute.

I know Senator Lieberman wishes he could be here to hear you. I rather imagine he will agree with what you are saying, given his association with your group.

**TESTIMONY OF KATHLEEN SYLVESTER,<sup>1</sup> VICE PRESIDENT OF DOMESTIC POLICY, PROGRESSIVE POLICY INSTITUTE**

Ms. SYLVESTER. Thank you very much. I think the Senator will mostly agree and, of course, he gets a chance to hear it from me a lot.

I am really pleased to be here this morning, partly because I am a D.C. resident and I care a lot about the city and its schools, also because my first professional job was as a teacher in an urban school in New Haven, Connecticut, and I saw first-hand, I experienced first-hand the heartbreak of knowing what it would take to help a child do better in school and not being able to do it because of rules and regulations and bureaucrats. And I am happy to see that a generation later we are beginning to create schools that would allow teachers to do some of the things that I wanted to be able to do then.

I think what is happening in D.C. is really a microcosm of what is happening around the country. People are torn between their long-held allegiance to public education and an urgent sense of doing what is right for children. We do not want to tell children and their parents that they have to wait 5 years while we improve the system. There is a strong impulse to say let them go, let them have vouchers, let them out of the system. But I think if we

<sup>1</sup>The prepared statement of Ms. Sylvester appears in the Appendix on page 154.

learned anything from Dr. Greene's study, what we should have learned is that when you put students of low achievement in schools that have high standards, that have flexibility and that are held accountable for helping those children, they thrive. Why should we choose by lottery some children to benefit from that when the alternative could be creating schools that do that for all children?

Charter schools are the right answer because they answer the fundamental problem of setting high standards instead of tolerating low ones. They do not just monitor inputs, how much money is spent, or what kinds of equipment is used. They monitor the outcomes for kids. They create healthy competition within the system. Unlike vouchers, they keep money in the public system, in the control of public authority, and finally they affirm our commitment to the common public school, which I think is an essential element in our democracy.

Washington is a perfect place to try this experiment on a whole large level. First of all, there is no central establishment with enough power or credibility right now to oppose the idea. There is an attitude here that there is nowhere to go but up. It is always easier to experiment in a system where people believe that you have nothing to lose.

We have written by this Congress a very strong charter bill that allows 20 schools a year with no cap. That means we could have 100 charter schools in 5 years. That is 100 out of 157. So there is a possibility to transform this system. As Ms. Allen said, we do not have any longitudinal data on outcomes for charter schools, but we do know some things about the schools that exist. There is a higher degree of parental involvement, there is more teacher commitment, there is a higher level of student engagement. The schools do not cream—63 percent of students in charter schools are non-white and 19 percent have disabilities. More than half qualify for Federal reduced or free lunches, and 4 percent were dropouts, kids that the school systems had already given up on.

Now those numbers are somewhat artificially high because when State legislatures and teachers unions were worried about the charter school issue, in many cases they allowed charter schools to be created for kids that they felt could be experimented on. So a lot of the schools are designated for children with disabilities or children of low income or children who were dropouts. That is the nature of experimentation, but the schools are proving that they can rise to the challenge of dealing with those children.

We have less than 500 charter schools out of 84,000 public schools. That is not enough leverage to change the system. The notion of charter schools was that some public schools would become independent and they would create pressure on others. But we can do that here in D.C. because of the broadness of the charter law, because of the new commitment by a broad sector of the public here in D.C. to try the experiment. And we know that when public choice is applied in a heavy dose, as it was in District 4 in New York—I am sorry that Mayor Koch did not talk about that today—or in Cambridge, Massachusetts, it tends to have a galvanic effect on other schools. It engages more parents and more students. It en-

ergizes teachers. It gets principals thinking about what the mission of their school is and what they have to offer children.

I would propose that the District of Columbia become a charter district. What does that mean? It means that the central authority in D.C. no longer runs all the schools but sets high standards. I do not think the fundamental problem in D.C. is a lack of resources. I do not think it is bad teachers. I do not think it is crumbling buildings, and I do not think it is children who are incapable of learning. I think it is a fundamental lack of high expectations. There are few people here who expect all of our schools and all of our teachers to be good. There are few people who expect students to succeed.

Failure to set high standards is only going to perpetuate inequality. When we do not expect children to finish school, they do not. Forty percent of the students in D.C. drop out. As we heard earlier, 80 percent are not meeting a basic level of skills. Setting high expectations is the key to making schools work. One of my memorable experiences in my first year of teaching in New Haven was teaching a young woman named Sharon who could not learn and who was constantly disruptive. When I told her for the hundredth time to be quiet or I would throw her out of my class, she stood up, she pulled a knife on me, and she let out a stream of expletives. Quaking in my shoes, I pushed her out the door. I said get out of my classroom, go to your guidance counselor, I do not want to see you anymore until we have resolved this problem.

And, of course, immediately after the bell rang, I ran down to her guidance counselor in tears and said what should I do with this girl? And she said have you tried encouraging her? Did you ever tell her she was smart? Have you ever been nice to her? And I thought, no, I have not. So the next day she came back to school, and I got her to do an in-class exercise, and I did not look at it. I put B plus on it without looking at it. I said you are doing good work, I think, and for 2 weeks I put B plus or B minus on every paper she did. And then I began to look at the papers and I would make suggestions about other things that we could do, and 1 day I heard in the teachers' lounge other teachers talking about the change that had occurred in this young woman. I think when you expect children to do well, they can do it.

Unfortunately, many school systems have fallen into the myth of the bell curve, that somehow there is only a small percentage of students that will excel and there will be a large middle of students that do a little bit better or a little bit worse than average, and there is a percentage that we should write off because they can fail. If we set a basic standard of excellence, if we compare students to this basic standard, instead of comparing them to one other, if we say there is a threshold that we believe all students can reach, then I believe that they can do that. If we begin with that, and the job of the school board is to measure outcomes by routine testing, to close schools that do not measure up, I think it will work. If teachers understand that no child leaves the third grade without a certain number of skills, and we are going to test for that, and they cannot go on, the system will change fundamentally.

We have to give teachers the resources and the freedom to do what it takes to get children to read. The other incredible shock of

my first year of teaching was meeting a 17-year old named Michael Ellison who could not read a word and I wondered what had happened in his first 10 years of school that no one else had noticed it or that they had not felt compelled to do anything about it.

I wish that the trustees were talking about closing the schools that do not work instead of spreading it out geographically around the city. My written testimony includes a lot of examples of the way in which some of these ideas could be implemented, but I basically believe that if the school board freed up the schools that are already good and opened up the potential educational entrepreneurs, that could be groups of parents, it could be teachers and principals who are already running good schools, it could be unions, it could be our cultural institutions, it could be religiously affiliated schools, if they would like to clone themselves and offer the same structure and discipline that works for so many to another group of children, if schools could hire and fire their own teachers, if salaries were set by the market, if we could give merit pay to teachers who succeed, if we could give hazard pay to teachers who take on challenges, then I think the experiment could work in D.C. and it could work in a relatively short period of time. There is no school district in the Nation that is really better suited than Washington to try this experiment.

We have a business community here that is ready to commit itself, the Committee on Public Education. Richard Thompson is exploring the possibility of a charter school development corporation. The Apple Seed Institute is interested in coming here. Friends of Choice in Urban Public Schools, they are all here, and I think that we should choose the alternative of making all of our schools charter schools. The trustees have 3 years. They can do two things. They can patch up the broken system. They can fire the worst teachers and principals. They can close a few schools. They can fix up the physical plants. They can import new technology to make the schools look a lot better or they can replace the system with a system of competitive, excellent public schools. I think these changes will not transform D.C. overnight, but they will begin to turn the public schools of this city into what its 78,000 students and all of its other citizens deserve. Thank you.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you very much, Ms. Sylvester. I appreciate that. You know all this seems so reminiscent to me in another context I used to be in as Secretary of Agriculture, which you may think is far afield from this, but I came into that in Kansas in the mid-1980's, and we were going broke raising wheat. This was the farm crisis or depression. And I came as Secretary of Agriculture, and I said, you know what? If we are going broke raising wheat, why do we not raise something else? Let us just do something different. And I look at all these numbers here. Whether it is the objective numbers, the SAT scores, the dropout rate, the number of students fleeing these schools, the violence that is taking place, the sex in schools by grade schoolers, and I am saying if this thing is so broke, why are we not doing something just different?

Why not go this other way? Now what I guess I am hearing all of you say is that you agree with that statement. And you do not see it happening even though we have authorized it to take place.

So that somewhere there is the huge inertia within the system or people fighting against that taking place. Now, one thing that a couple of you suggested, and Lamar Alexander has as well, is on just making all the schools in the District charter schools or an overall atmosphere. I am curious to follow up on that as a way or the way to push the charter school on forward. Just say these are all going to be charter schools. Are we going to fundamentally restructure on the top of this thing to force this to take place, or are there other ways that we need to do this to cause this to happen?

Ms. ALLEN. I think in essence, Senator Brownback, that is what we need to be doing, but I am afraid that just doing that now, letting a district go, releasing all the strings is not going to change the behavior of anybody in the system who has not brought it on themselves. I had a State board member in Michigan once come up to me after I made an impassioned plea for charter schools, and she said, well, you know, nothing you said is any different than what we can do now. We have waiver authority, and we have a 100 and some odd schools that have already asked us and we have waived everything, and she said they are not doing anything differently. And I said, well, why do you think that is? She said, well, because they have never acted any differently.

You see just giving a waiver to the principal or just giving a waiver to the superintendent from rules does not actually convince them. What is happening in the charter schools and what will make all D.C. schools charter schools eventually is that example, is when parents and teachers from a school—that may have been closed down or that is challenged or having all sorts of problems—get together, design a program, and have ownership. And then the people start coming in. And so it is easy to say. I mean it is something the school boards like to say in defense of their charter school position, which is very weak, well, let us make all schools charter schools, and you give them the mandates and they do not care if you release them from mandates. They are going to still do it the way they have done it because they are still in control. And so you have to change the playing field, I think, and you have to do it by starting out and getting D.C. to give those 20 charter schools out this year and make up for the 10 they lost last year.

Senator BROWNBACK. So putting demands in the system and performance goals, 20 by this time January 1, 1998, I think, is what you had said?

Ms. ALLEN. Yes.

Senator BROWNBACK. Ms. Sylvester, what is your response to that question?

Ms. SYLVESTER. I think that D.C. should take the approach that the city of Chicago took when the mayor took over the school system. They made a list, and they said these schools are doing fine; we will allow them to continue to operate the way they were. These schools are so bad, we must close them or take them over, and they began to sort of share the richness. We ought to be looking at bad schools in this city and say we are going to send in a SWAT team, and they are going to have freedom. We will let them be a charter school if they want, and if they begin to produce results, then we will let them run the school in a different way.

There are 30 applicants queued up to apply for charters. They ought to be not just allowed but invited. I did not hear anything this morning, any great enthusiasm for actually going out and announcing that we want people to come up with great schools.

Senator BROWNBAC. I did not either.

Ms. SYLVESTER. There are some great schools in Northwest Washington that are over-subscribed. If you ask those innovative educators if they would like to clone themselves, they would probably say, yes, we could create another school just like ours for other children in another part of the city. I think there are 15 principals—right now I learned last night—who are meeting secretly to talk about whether they would like to all become charter school principals because they could take the money they get and do a much better job for their students.

Senator BROWNBAC. What if we just went, though, completely to a voucher type of program immediately or as quickly as possible? Would that force the charter school movement on forward?

Ms. ALLEN. Well, Arizona credits its strongest charter law in the land, Senator, with having introduced a very strong voucher bill and everyone came running, and they created this wonderful charter bill. So that is one way to get it moving because you can bet that a lot of the inertia is a result of all of the different special interests that the District must because of its position be responsive to, sitting down every day questioning everything they do. And so before they can do anything, they have to respond. I mean there still has not been any, for example, ballyhoo and cry over KIDS I. You may have read in the papers it is nationally acclaimed private company that has been helping special ed kids in places like New Jersey for half the cost that it currently costs to educate in the public school. They were approved for a charter school. They sat here for 3 months paying bills and no one would give them the final go-ahead to get the building that they basically had a little shell office in. They are gone. They said, sorry, we cannot afford it anymore.

So why? Because someone was sort of mixing around with things that made sense. So, yes, I think that you should bring choice back in force. I think that your proposal from when you were in the House and Senator Lieberman's proposal and Senator Coats' proposal is tremendous. It had a lot of support, and I think that it did not get nearly enough of the hearings it needs to, and certainly there are those of us who do believe that that should be a companion to charters anyway.

Senator BROWNBAC. Dr. Greene—and I will let you go on that, Ms. Sylvester, then next—but you would welcome that from an academician and would help us design it so that we can see if this works and measure it with known time lines and objective results that we would come up with?

Dr. GREENE. I would be more than happy to. I mean I think that one of the most important things that could be achieved from a choice experiment here is not just helping the students in D.C., but providing an example to communities around the country that are considering various educational alternatives and part of the inertia is a wariness of what the effects of these programs might be, and if we could have a well-designed program here that would allow

communities to learn about the possible benefits of choice, in a well designed way, then other communities can make decisions about whether they wanted to imitate that, and, of course, it is the best way of disproving critics as well. If people believe that choice is effective, a well-designed study should show it. If it does not, then there may be problems with the concept and something else ought to be tried. But there is no way to know without the experiment.

What I find amazing is that we have good theoretical reasons and some good evidence to believe that choice is academically beneficial, and there are large numbers of people who aren't just opposed to the idea of choice, but are opposed to the idea of any experiment, no matter how small, no matter where in the country that would allow us to know whether the programs are beneficial.

Senator BROWNBAC. And we have a wholly failed system in Washington, D.C., in the District of Columbia, by our own people appraising it, saying this is a wholly failed system.

Dr. GREENE. Which would make it an ideal place to try something more radical.

Senator BROWNBAC. Ms. Sylvester, you had wanted to comment?

Ms. SYLVESTER. Wholesale choice could not work because we do not have enough good schools to send the children to. That is the problem with it. As Dr. Greene's study proved, putting children in a school with high standards and high expectations, a rich learning environment, works. But we need to create more good schools. I would certainly say that perhaps the school system ought to look and take kids out of the three worst schools in D.C. and scatter them into good public and private schools that are good across the city. We should say we cannot let those children wait until their schools turn around. But that would be a publicly-supervised voucher program.

Senator BROWNBAC. So you are saying I do not oppose vouchers, but this system is not ready because it does not have schools to be able to accept enough students for vouchers? I noted that we have a lot of requests for charter schools, but they are not in place yet. The Catholic diocese has said they are going to keep their schools open in the District of Columbia, which I applaud their effort, and I have made that known that they are staying here, and I think that is great that they are doing that. Would you propose then a transition time period to go to a fully vouchered program? Would I understand you to support that or not?

Ms. SYLVESTER. Well, if you moved toward a fully chartered district in which all schools are measured and held accountable and they operate on the condition of producing results, and you had open enrollment, which meant that children could go to any public school in the city, I think that would be the ideal situation.

In the short-term while we are trying to create enough more good public and publicly accountable schools, one solution for a large number of children would be to reassign them to better schools that are public or that are private or parochial.

Senator BROWNBAC. So you would set some base standard—and correct me if I am not saying this correctly—if they are going to a school that is wholly failed, and say we set some standard of violence or some standard of sexual incidents, or some standard of ob-

jective test scores, that has not worked out of this school, that those students are given the right to have voucher or choice, public or private? You would create it on a smaller scale in the worst area first? Is that how you would design it?

Ms. SYLVESTER. Right. The problem with the lottery system is that it is only taking some students and leaving others behind, and people will console themselves. You could see the political leaders in this city saying, well, we have vouchers so some kids, we are doing something, but it is not enough. We have 78,000 children. We cannot move them all instantly to good schools.

We should start trying to make all the schools better simultaneously by letting good schools clone themselves, and closing bad schools. But what do you do for children who came from bad schools? I would say do not give their parents the money and say they can go anywhere. I would say the school system should work with their parents and say, "Let us make another choice for this child. Would you like a parochial school because your child needs more structure and discipline? Would you like this kind of a private school that emphasizes the arts that might ignite your child's curiosity?"

Senator BROWNBACK. Ms. Allen, what do you think of that more phased-in approach rather than just saying, OK, we are doing 100 percent of vouchers in a year, phasing it in for the failed schools initially and over a period of several years?

Ms. ALLEN. Well, I am a real pragmatist and I like to see something happen immediately, and so whatever I can get, I would take. But I guess what I would say is two things. In places like Texas, the proposal pending there, for example, does just that. It takes kids in schools that are on the low performing list and if they cannot get into a public school of choice, they allow them to go to a private school. That is a proposal that has a lot of chance. I think that has got a lot of merit to it and I think it gets away from a lot of the arguments that you would naturally face, and it will be part of the media and the administration and everything else that you are creaming and that somehow we are not helping public education, while at the same time again pushing the charter school mode.

I think that the idea of supply that Kathleen Sylvester mentioned is an important one, but you also got to recognize that there are lots and lots of schools out there that could expand like this into buildings who have already closed down and have empty buildings if, in fact, they had people who wanted to come there. So the actual supply of open seats today is not a good reflection of what would happen if suddenly kids had scholarships.

Senator BROWNBACK. If we told everybody in a year there is going to be a massive voucher program?

Ms. ALLEN. Exactly. And I think the schools have to be accountable. I think they have to have a certain amount, either accreditation or pass some muster. I think you have to take care to make sure you do have solid working private schools that have been in existence for awhile, but I think the 2,000 voucher pilot project last year proposed was a wonderful suggestion and very much along the lines of Milwaukee, and I do not think people should get their feathers ruffled if you want to help the 2,000 worst off kids because

I think you will have the competition that everyone has talked about today.

Senator BROWNBACK. Good. I want to thank you all very much. We had very illuminating panel members and you folks have been amongst them. If you have other comments that you would like to provide to us, please feel free to submit those in for the record and we do hope you will help us as we structure and tackle a most intractable and most important problem. Thank you very much.

Our fourth panel will be D.C. Councilmember Kevin Chavous. He is Chairman of the Committee on Education, Libraries and Recreation. And Mark Roberts, parent of a student in the District of Columbia Public Schools, who I believe has done some writing also on some of the choice that he has previously experienced. We did have another member that had to cancel for health/family related problems that is not going to be able to join us on this fourth panel. Gentlemen, I do not know how long you have been waiting, but if it has been for any length of time, I appreciate your hanging in there with us. I hope you have gained as I have by this presentation.

So, Councilmember Chavous, thank you for joining us.

**TESTIMONY OF KEVIN CHAVOUS,<sup>1</sup> D.C. COUNCILMEMBER,  
CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, LIBRARIES  
AND RECREATION**

Mr. CHAVOUS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee. I am Kevin Chavous, Chairman of the D.C. Council's Committee on Education, Libraries and Recreation, which as you may know has jurisdiction over the District of Columbia Public Schools, the University of the District of Columbia, the District of Columbia Public Libraries, and in addition the Department of Recreation and Parks.

First of all, I would like to thank the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, Subcommittee on Oversight and Government Management, Restructuring and the District of Columbia, for giving me the opportunity to testify on opportunities for improvement in the public education in the District of Columbia. I have submitted prepared testimony, Mr. Chairman. I am just going to read portions of that and then hopefully we can engage in some constructive dialogue with respect to some of the issues that you have raised and that have been raised by Members of your Subcommittee today.

Believe it or not, Mr. Chairman, I think that these are exciting times for the District of Columbia, for it is during this time of budgetary chaos and constraints that we can begin to rebuild our entire educational infrastructure. We have no choice but to look for solutions to address the overwhelming under-achievement of our student population. My committee is in a unique position to foster and enhance collaboration among the educational entities under our purview, for the sole purpose of producing a well-rounded student, who not only achieves, but can compete on a national level.

To that end, our committee is working closely with D.C. Public School System to jump-start educational reform in the District of

<sup>1</sup>The prepared statement of Mr. Chavous appears in the Appendix on page 160.

Columbia. One of our most important goals is to make sure that the D.C. Public School System refines the recently developed school-based staffing model, which is the initial step in building a zero-based budget for our schools. Once all facets of the school-by-school based budget are honed, it is my committee's hope that the needs of the students will be adequately addressed on a school-by-school basis.

As you know, a major debate rages about educational funding in our city. All policymakers within the District of Columbia are faced with increased pressure to do more with less resources. There are those who say we can no longer throw money into a vacuum, yet on the other hand, there are others who clamor for substantial increases in the funding for our schools. It is my view that student achievement must serve as the foundation for whatever additional resources are allocated to our school system. And why I do not claim to have the panacea or the quick fix for the ills of the public school system, I am convinced that from my point of view, if we focus on four major areas we can spend our money wisely. And briefly I will relate those areas which are amplified in my prepared text.

First is student achievement. All the budgets in the world are for naught if "Johnny can't read." In Goals 2000, the residents of the District of Columbia have stressed that a performance-based education is tantamount to accomplishing educational reform. The schools have to create a more rigorous standard for student performance in every class. The method for student assessment has to change so the D.C. Public School System can measure not only what students know, but also what they are able to do with their knowledge. We have to ensure that students master reading, writing and arithmetic in their appropriate levels before they are moved on to the next grade.

Second, as I mentioned earlier, school-by-school based budgeting has to serve as the foundation for an equitable distribution of resources. However, some schools may receive augmented resources depending upon their particular needs. With any such budget in hand, any citizen in the District of Columbia can pick up the budget book and see how and where the funds are spent in any school. A parent would no longer have the need to question or decipher expenditures since they would be plainly and readily available. Additionally, the people who misspend money will be held accountable for their needs.

The third area where I think we really need to focus on in terms of reform has to do with principal and teacher training and evaluation. We must develop strategies that hold principals and teachers alike accountable for the performance of our children. There is no tradition of decision-making based upon setting priorities that are tied to accountability and teaching mechanisms that work. There should be, and I was pleased to hear Senator Alexander refer to this, there should be performance-based appraisal for all employees. Teachers and principals need to be assessed accurately, fairly and timely. Just as significantly, our system should be able to reward good teachers and principals and ferret out or terminate those who are not performing.

Specifically, as it relates to principals, more often than not, where we have good principals, our students excel. We must endeavor to place the very best principals in each school in our system.

The fourth area of priority is in the community-based school or community hub. Family and community participation, coordination and integration of social services, adult education and life-long learning, and substantive collaboration in partnerships with all segments of the community are listed as goal No. 7 in the Goals 2000 plan. It is in this spirit that my committee has embraced the community hub concept, which has been defined by the D.C. Education Licensure Commission as "a D.C. public school building used as a multipurpose center that provides the opportunity to integrate support services and enable intergenerational uses to meet the life-long learning needs of community residents. Family and community services could include before and after-care, counseling, tutoring, vocational and career training, art and sports program, housing assistance, family literacy, health and nutritional programs, parent education, employment assistance, adult education and access to technology."

During a hearing in January of this year, the first hearing my committee held, we were delighted to learn that the community hub concept does not require additional funding. Rather community hubs coordinate and utilize already existing resources. It is our fervent hope that the D.C. Public School System and other appropriate authorities will replicate the community hub concept as has been established at the Patricia Roberts Harris Educational Center in Ward 8. We hope it can be replicated in all wards of the city, and we have introduced legislation to that effect.

Finally, let me close by referring to the District of Columbia Public Schools Long-Range Facilities Master Plan. We received a draft of that plan from General Becton, who testified before you earlier. And we strongly felt that while the plan had a lot of potential, an essential element, the academic component, which should be the driving force behind any facilities plan, was absent. So our committee set in place a special task force to work with General Becton's office to develop the plan which we must submit to Congress by April 25, 1997 with respect to our long-range facilities plan.

We feel that it is vitally important when you talk about a facilities plan, when you talk about school closings, that you must have in place an educational plan that will aid in student achievement. We feel that this plan has the makings of doing that, and we hope that all future consideration given to the facilities plan that the school system implements as well as any school closing proposals are driven by student achievement and not just the need to close schools.

With respect to some of the priorities that I have just testified to, Mr. Chairman, just so you know that our committee intends to be aggressive and active in its oversight responsibility, we have scheduled hearings in the future on student achievement, on the charter school issue. We have a hearing set on May 15 to talk about charter schools. We are also going to have a hearing on the principal and teacher training and evaluation issue that I have referred to in June. And finally, in May, May 28, we are going to

have an oversight hearing to discuss truancy. I do not think that has really been mentioned in any great detail this morning, but it is my view that our school system needs to have a model truancy program that our committee will help shape and form. There is no secret that when children do not go to school and they eventually drop out of school, they end up becoming associated with gang activity or other negative or hostile activity that is counterproductive to the needs and wishes of society. So we really are going to focus on truancy as something that we need to address and develop a program that will make sense consistent with the needs of our children.

In conclusion, those are but a few of the efforts that our committee in the process of putting forth in our commitment to make the District of Columbia School System the pride of the District of Columbia. I know that there are a number of questions and a number of topics that have been raised previous to my testimony, and I am more than willing and able to comment on some of those, but that concludes my prepared remarks. Thank you very much.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you very much, Mr. Chavous. Sorry about mispronouncing your name to start off with. I apologize for that, but thank you for your testimony.

Mr. CHAVOUS. That is all right. I have been called worse.

Senator BROWNBACK. I have been called a lot of things, too. Mr. Roberts, thank you for joining the Subcommittee and happy to hear your testimony, and if you would like to just submit the written testimony and summarize, you are free to do that as well.

**TESTIMONY OF MARK ROBERTS,<sup>1</sup> PARENT OF STUDENTS IN  
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Mr. ROBERTS. OK. I have submitted written testimony so I will summarize. First of all, I should say that I have three children in the D.C. Public Schools, and on the basis of what we have heard today, you all must be wondering what is wrong with me, and I am here to tell you that I do not think there is anything wrong with me and why and what I think needs to be done to help improve the system where we are currently.

I also want to say that prior to coming to Washington, D.C., I was very active in New York, in New York City and the parent involvement movement there. I have been PTA president at a number of schools. I have one child who is now a junior in high school—for her entire academic career—and I also served as president of the President's Council in New York, and in that capacity basically was the parent representative for about 16,000 children.

What business are we in is how I like to look at this, and what I think what needs to be done I call change before choice. To me, the business of public education is knowledge, specifically the delivery of knowledge, and it is through this delivery system that we mold and ideally inspire our youth. When reviewing the report, "Children in Crisis," released in November by the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority, its devastating conclusion merits revisiting. "For each additional year that students stay in the D.C. Public School System,

<sup>1</sup>The prepared statement of Mr. Roberts appears in the Appendix on page 168.

the less likely they are to succeed, not because they are unable to succeed, but because the system does not prepare them to succeed.”

For too long it seems the business of public education in the District of Columbia has been jobs creation. The system has been designed not to serve children but rather to serve adults and their political ends and economic means. In our efforts to prescribe remedy, therefore, we must be careful not to do the same. The State of New York recently concluded an extensive study of its public schools in an effort to answer one important question: Why do some public schools outperform others?

After controlling for income and other demographic variables, New York concluded that four factors created success in public education, and this achievement was not limited to any one socioeconomic group or pattern. The four factors were: A strong principal with a clear vision; a well articulated curriculum; targeted staff development; and strong meaningful parent involvement. Clearly, far too many D.C. schools, public schools, have failed to address each of these critical areas.

What is needed now and what I believe can occur is a systematic approach to correct these deficiencies and reprioritize our efforts rather than a localized solution which liberates only a few from the prison of low expectation which is crippling with the system today. I was born and raised in Anacostia, here in Washington, D.C. I received a solid elementary school education at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, my neighborhood parochial school. Despite the small physical plant, relatively poor parish, overcrowded classrooms and well worn books, I was able to spring from that segregated platform all the way into the Ivy League. My wife, also a Washington native, received her firm educational foundation in her assigned neighborhood public school and also later entered the Ivy League.

Prior to 1995, when we relocated, my wife and I, back to Washington from New York, we remained confident that our children were also being well served by their neighborhood school. Like most urban children, ours attended public schools which were overwhelmingly populated by children of color. Too often this demographic reality alone has been used to justify massive failure or to explain away consistently poor testing results or even to legislate profound changes and takeovers as recently occurred in Hartford.

In fact, given the seemingly high per student expenditure rates in urban education today, one can presumably draw only one of two conclusions: Either these children cannot learn or our school systems are incapable of teaching them unless, of course, their numbers are artificially diluted via various busing, redistricting or ability tracking schemes. My experience as a public school parent tells me differently. In New York, all was not perfect. Our neighborhood school suffered from overcrowding, uneven performance, and sometimes uninspired leadership. The difference here, the answer here, lies in the remedies at hand. New York’s regulations regarding parental involvement gave us parents the ammunition we needed to effect change. If the principal failed to exhibit the strong clear leadership required for excellence, we were able to effectively agitate for removal.

If a vacancy in the local administration occurred, a parent-led committee interviewed and screened a worthy replacement. If a

teacher's performance as measured by yearly class-specific data indicated a deficiency in technique or institutional will, we were able to demand either extensive retraining or lateral placement out of the classroom. Mandatory consultation areas including budget, curriculum, resource allocation and staff development empowered by our local parent associations and our required school-based management teams. As an active member in both groups, I was able to work with the administration and teacher representative as an equal.

Together we worked to raise our collective level of expectation for students including those whose parents who were for whatever reason absent from our discussions. Similar to the Citizens Charter enacted in 1991 in Great Britain, we parents received annual reports on our individual schools including 3 year trends, parent outreach programs, school-based budgets and comparable performance data from similar schools.

In addition, grade specific descriptions of curricular goals, objectives and assessment tools gave us the information we needed to rally for change. In effect, change became our choice. Here in Washington, as I painfully discovered during a tortuous first year for one of my children at our assigned neighborhood school, these powers of parental change and influence do not exist. Schools operate as the private domains of principals and distant central administrators. The opinions of parents are neither sought nor welcomed. Parent associations operate outside of the D.C. School System in a quasi-private collection of PTAs with no regulatory power and no clear purpose.

When our child was confronted with a program replete with low expectations and inadequate instruction, everyone told me there was nothing to be done about it. I felt like a desperate mouse caught in an endless maze. After numerous conversations with the principal, the central administration, the local PTA, elected school board members and others, I called my saga "chasing it," as in "there is nothing I can do about it" or "I am not at liberty to discuss it." In June, my daughter's standardized test scores exhibited a 10 percentage point decline in a single year.

Here was physical evidence of the authority's far-reaching conclusions. Had strong meaningful parental involvement, one of the cornerstones of success in public education, been a legislated aspect of public education in D.C., we parents in concert with like-minded teachers and administrators could not only have discovered it but also turned it around. Instead, my wife and I transferred our children to another school outside our ward and joined the ranks of the fortunate few.

I now know that public education can work here in the District. At their new school, I have seen my children rediscover a joy for learning and challenging work. I have seen their prospects grow. And each day as I pass their old school, the neighborhood school, which should also be thriving, I look into the familiar faces of children who also deserve an equal chance, and I wonder how it is that two schools in the same city with the same pay scale and the same basic books could be so different in their approach to learning and their underlying expectations for achievement.

My children sorely miss their daily interaction with the neighborhood kids and the neighborhood school, but they relish their newfound confidence in themselves and their abilities. How then can this inequity be addressed? And I am going to conclude with this. How can we improve the prospects for all the children and not just a few? For me the answer is clear: Rewrite the rules of engagement; unleash parental influence through specific measures mandating parental input, approvals and organization; reclaim elected parent associations as central elements in the search for excellence, elements far too important to leave to the province of outside groups; elevate the District's Office of Parent Involvement beyond the Title I limits around which it now revolves; educate parents on their new rights and their new responsibilities; arm parents with specific data on local school and classroom performance, school budgets and measurable curricular targets, none of which they have now. Resist the urge to solve the problem from on high. Involve parents in all aspects of public education and watch the pockets of improvement bubble from within.

Do this and I am convinced that we can truly hail a new renaissance in public education in the District and save our remaining neighborhood schools, all of them. It is imperative that we act now and clearly the right choice is change. Thank you.

Senator BROWNBAC. Thank you, Mr. Roberts. I appreciate that. You are saying that the answer here is to reengage the parents, and I take it your overall model is not only New York but the British type of system that you cited earlier of parental rights? I forget the name you put with that. Are those the two models that you are saying we should look at and instill in the District of Columbia?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes.

Senator BROWNBAC. OK. So those are places we could look for requirements, legislation, things that have been put into place and through your experience or reading and study have worked?

Mr. ROBERTS. And I think it is important. If you look at the current documentation here in the District, the Goals 2000, the Children First Framework, parent involvement is not a key element of any of those programs, and I agree with Mr. Chavous and welcome all of his hearings, but I would suggest that there also be one to look at the policies regarding parent involvement because you cannot change, you cannot improve the system, if you do not involve parents in that process. You just cannot.

Senator BROWNBAC. Mr. Chavous and Mr. Roberts, this is a failed system currently by its internal judgment, by the objective numbers out, by anecdotal data that we have been seeing. This is a failed system. The General is saying give me till the year 2000 to correct this system. We have heard a number of ideas and suggestions today. I think, Mr. Roberts, you are saying do not walk away from the system, change it from within. Do we force those children to stay in this system today while we are changing this system? Is that the right thing for us to do for these children today?

Mr. CHAVOUS. Well, Senator, let me respond this way. First of all, I am pleased to hear Mr. Roberts' testimony about his experience because while our system is in many ways failing, it has far more successes than you would know just by reading the headlines

or watching the news reports. I am going to recount just a couple this past week. This week, you obviously have been inundated with reports about the sex incident at Winston, while at the same time, over 300 high school students were at the courts yesterday, last night, after having prepared for their moot court competition, and there was no news coverage there. If you could have seen the performance by some of those young people, they were frankly remarkable.

And Banneker High School is a high school that rates with any parochial or private high school in the area. It produces excellent students every year. H.D. Woodson High School, a school in my ward, they have a state-of-the-art real estate program where students buy and sell real estate during the course of 1 year. I say this not to parry with you with respect to the failures of our system. They are legendary, but they must be counterbalanced. And I think Mr. Roberts' experience speaks to that.

Part of the problem within our school system is that we have some schools that work, and they work very well. And the primary reasons why they work really dovetails into the four factors that Mr. Roberts alluded to, and during my testimony I think, and the first factor he mentioned is consistent with the first area we need to focus on, and that is in principal and teacher evaluation and training, where you have a good principal, you have a good school generally, and when I say a good principal, a good principal is, as I am sure you can appreciate, like a good politician. They know how to work with the community, they know how to work with central administration, they know how to work with a good curriculum, they know how to engage folks.

We have had some individuals who were good teachers, great assistant principals, but they were terrible principals because they did not have the full complement of skills necessary to make things work. I say all that because I think it is important when we look at some of these incidents that sort of stand out and grab headlines, if we can focus on our principal core, and during my committee hearings, I have urged General Becton, he needs to evaluate all 157 principals in the system, and evaluate them in a comprehensive manner, engage them, get parents involved in the evaluation process, and where he has deficient principals, they need to go.

Senator BROWNBACK. Mr. Chavous, with all due respect that you have accurate statements there, which I agreed with General Becton, there are successes, the objective numbers, and we can go back through the charts, say otherwise on a total system. They say this is a failed system. Their own documents.

Mr. CHAVOUS. Well, that is why General Becton is there. I mean he was put there because the system has had a lot of failures.

Senator BROWNBACK. So do we keep those students that are there now trapped while this system is changed? They are forced to stay there now within the public educational system unless they have economic wherewithal to go private or to move out of the District of Columbia, which does not seem fair to me.

Mr. CHAVOUS. Well, let me respond. I think it was Ms. Sylvester who said we have 78,000 students in our system. We cannot put them all in a charter school, and we

cannot put them all in a private school. The archdiocese has said we are doing fine, but we cannot absorb anywhere near 78,000 students in their system, and there are no private schools that can do that. Vouchers will not address that at the tuition rates that some of the private schools have. I think what has to happen is they have targeted assistance schools where they have looked at the 23 schools with the lowest test scores who arguably are the worst performing schools in the system. We have put in place a cadre of volunteers working with some college presidents, folks who can provide some additional resources in mentoring and tutoring after hours at these 23 assisted schools. I think that Americorps has been involved in this process as well.

The important thing is when we merge that into the community hub concept, we have a full complement of resources taking place at some of these schools beyond 3 o'clock because a lot of the problems, Senator, that we have with our schools is not just the fact that the schools are failing, frankly a lot of parents are failing. And I think Mr. Roberts is a testament to an active parent. But we have a lot of parents who because of their own lot in life are not as active in terms of their participation, and they really do not have the interest in the their children. The community hub concept helps develop that, helps get some parents involved, working with the volunteers so that we can help fill in that gap while there is complete reform in the system.

Senator BROWNBACk. We will get back to you, Mr. Roberts, but let us take these 23 schools then. And you are saying they are bad schools.

Mr. CHAVOUS. Yes, absolutely.

Senator BROWNBACk. Why not for them then at least allow those students the choice of either public or private and they could probably have the capacity to be able to accept those into either type of system rather than requiring that they stay there while we keep telling them we are going to get it fixed?

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Chairman, what I—

Senator BROWNBACk. I will get to you, Mr. Roberts, but I am really curious about how Mr. Chavous would respond to that on those most troubled schools?

Mr. CHAVOUS. When you say in terms of the charter school approach?

Senator BROWNBACk. Or saying that they can go to parochial schools—

Mr. CHAVOUS. Well, first of all—

Senator BROWNBACk. Or saying whatever option that they want to be able to go to, that they are not relegated to have to go to those schools.

Mr. CHAVOUS. Yes. Well, a couple things. First of all, I think that even with those 23 schools, and I do not know the dynamic that exists in terms of the leadership of all those schools off the top of my head, my sense is that if General Becton made some changes with the leadership at those schools, you would see almost immediate change. I have noticed that with a couple of schools in my ward where there was chaos in one particular school, gangs, people floating in and out of a class. As soon as you got a new principal in there, inside of a month, there was a radical change in the way that school was run. So I think that some of the turnaround that

needs to take place even at those 23 targeted schools can be virtually instantaneous. Now, you have to get additional resources in and to reform an entire system that takes some time.

On the charter school issue, the council passed charter legislation. I was glad to hear again, Mr. Alexander say that the legislation that was eventually adopted by Congress with the participation of our city council was one of the two best in the country. So there is from a legislative point of view some openness to the charter school concept here in the District of Columbia. And, indeed, I think the chartering entity, which is the elected board of education, through the new chairman that they have, Reverend Robert Chiles, has been working with different resources to create not a hostile environment for charter schools but a receptive environment. And I think that makes some sense.

On the voucher issue, Mr. Chairman, you know that——

Senator BROWNBACk. For those lowest 23 schools.

Mr. CHAVOUS. Yes.

Senator BROWNBACk. That have the most problems.

Mr. CHAVOUS. But for the voucher issue, citizens of the District have spoken out rather resoundingly against vouchers. There has been a referendum on it. In the Goals 2000, they have spoken out against it. That is something that a lot of citizens in the city feel would clearly run at cross-purposes with creating a strong vibrant public school system, and that is the way a lot of folks in this city feel.

Senator BROWNBACk. Well, then they would have the option to stay there, would they not, with a voucher? If they have a voucher, and they think the public school is the place to stay, they would have that option.

Mr. CHAVOUS. Well, certainly, and if this Subcommittee and this Congress would impose the voucher system on the citizens, I have heard earlier testimony about the fact that you all have that right to impose such a system, it would be imposed at cross-purposes with the desires and wishes of a lot of citizens in the District of Columbia.

Senator BROWNBACk. And then they would have the choice to stay in their public school.

Mr. CHAVOUS. Well, unfortunately we are in a situation where we do not have a choice to participate in your decisions. I mean we are disenfranchised to a large extent, and we do not have anyone who comes from the District of Columbia serving in the U.S. Senate, and, yes, if you and your colleagues would make that imposition, then of course we would have that choice, but I think with all due respect there should be some deference given to the homerule considerations that the citizens have spoken of before.

That being aside, I have the same ultimate goals, Senator, that I truly believe you have. I am concerned about our children, and I would like to see our children learn, and I would like to see our children learn free of some of the hostility and violence that exists and I think that a good approach is to look at those worst performing schools and come up with consensus approach to dealing with the problem. I think that even if you all impose vouchers, that is going to take a period of time to put in place just getting it through committee, voting or what have you. I think that we can do  
some

things in-house starting with evaluating these principals, getting parents involved, to start working with those children.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you very much. Mr. Roberts, you have been very patient, and I apologize for having a dialogue back and forth.

Mr. ROBERTS. That is quite all right. I just wanted to add a couple of points here. When you speak directly about the charter and also the voucher situation. But I want to say also the idea that parents, and when we say what has happened in the school system from 20 years ago when Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton and others attended the public schools and were able to do very well and today, and I think there are a lot of things. I mean the world has changed a lot in 20 years. But I know when I was in elementary school, my mother or my father never had to come into the school except for an annual event or a candy sale. They felt confident that the education was taking place, and that the professionals who stood up and said I can do the job, I can teach your child were, in fact, doing it.

The difference today is that we cannot make that assumption for a number of reasons and decisions that have nothing to do with the students who are trapped in these poor performing schools. And I think that the answer, therefore, is that you have to understand to fix it today parents do have to be involved. All of them do not have to be there because an informed parent is an involved parent. An informed parent is an involved parent, and in Washington, D.C.'s public school system parents do not have the information. Many of them do not know how poorly their schools are performing. They do not know what is going on in different schools. I have been in two different schools, and I can say I got this much work at one and that much at the other. But they do not know that. If they were talking to each other, if parents understood, then they could agitate for the internal change.

With respect to the voucher program, I was reading an article in the *Washington Post* last week, there are about 350 private schools in the Washington metropolitan area. Currently the enrollment rate, I believe, is one in seven, versus one in nine for the country as a whole. If we take that one in seven figure which shows a fairly robust private school activity already and we doubled it somehow, and again this article was describing the fact that there is no room and these places are overcrowded, there is pressure on them to expand, but they do not want to lose the intimate atmosphere of the private setting.

So let us say we could double it, which is a very high number, that would take us to two out of seven. That leaves five out of seven still in the system. The thing I never understand is what about those five? Either we are going to do seven out of seven or let us find a way that can handle everyone. Let us solve the problem for everyone, not the one. And so for me, the voucher question becomes what is your intent? Is it to liberate a few students from a bad situation, or is it to promote change throughout the entire system so that all seven children benefit? And that is what I want to see, all seven benefit. So when you look at that, I have a problem with that because of the numbers.

When you look at the charter program, I think there is a lot more possibility in terms of avenues for change that could affect everyone. And, in fact, here in Washington, there are sort of semi-charter situations already occurring. I know there is an excellent engineering program at Dunbar. Woodson has a program in business. In fact, my daughter's high school, School Without Walls, here in Washington, she does go to the zoo to do biology, she does her Shakespeare at the Folger, she goes to the Smithsonian. So these kind of programs exist, but they are not official charter type situations. So I think the program within a program, the school within a school options, and further exploration of charters will give an energetic boost to the public school system, but I still think that until we recognize parents, we have to keep them informed, involved, engaged, until we empower them, and stop solving it for them, we will not get lasting change.

Senator BROWNBACk. Good. Thank you very much. Thank you both. We do share the same objective. We may think that there are different ways to get at it, but clearly what this is about is to trying to get an educational system that is an improvement for all—

Mr. CHAVOUS. For all.

Senator BROWNBACk [continuing]. Involved in it. And we will keep having lively discussions. But soon we need to act because we have too many kids that it is just not working for. But I thank you both very much for your commitment and your work and I look forward to further dialogue and discussion.

Mr. CHAVOUS. Thank you.

Senator BROWNBACk. Thank you all very much for attending. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:50 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

## A P P E N D I X

STATEMENT OF JULIUS W. BECTON, JR.  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER-SUPERINTENDENT  
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF  
GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING,  
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,  
UNITED STATES SENATE

APRIL 17, 1997

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

I welcome the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss improvement opportunities for public education in the District of Columbia.

To understand where we are and where we are going, it is important to consider the tremendous change that has occurred within the last year in the governance and direction of the school system. As you know, I became Chief Executive Officer through an order of the DC Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority on November 15, 1996. As CEO, I serve both as superintendent and Chief State School Officer. This order also established the 9-member Emergency Transitional Education Board Of Trustees, of which I am a member. The Emergency Board's existence ends on June 30, 2000, unless extended by the Financial Authority. The Financial Authority took this action after concluding that "...in virtually every category and for every grade level, by virtually every measure of performance, the public school system has failed to provide a quality education for all children and a safe environment in which to learn..."

Six months before the Financial Authority's order--in April of 1996--Congress passed the District of Columbia School Reform Act Of 1995. This Act requires the development of a long-term education reform plan that describes how the DC Public Schools will become "...a world-class education system that prepares students for lifetime learning in the 21st century and which is on par with the best education systems of other cities, States, and nations." The School Reform Act of 1995 also requires the design and implementation of a comprehensive long-term program for the repair, improvement, maintenance, and management of public school facilities. In addition, the Act created a charter school law for the District of Columbia.

In September of 1996, as part of the Omnibus Appropriations Act for FY 1997, Congress transferred all authority over school facilities to the Financial Authority. This Act also privatized Connie Lee and Sallie Mae, with proceeds to be used for school facility repairs. Thus far in FY 1997, these actions have provided \$49.75 million in total potential funding for emergency capital improvements. In addition, the General Services Administration (GSA) was directed to provide program management services to assist in short-term management and repairs and capital improvements. The GSA continues to carry out this role.

Congress took these steps regarding school facilities after concluding that a breakdown in oversight and accountability had occurred at the expense of the children in this city, and that the DC Public School System had demonstrated that it was unable to effectively

manage school facility improvements. The order issued by the Financial Authority to restructure the DC Public Schools delegated to the Emergency Board of Trustees the powers and responsibilities provided to the Authority in the Omnibus Appropriations Act for FY 1997.

Having set the context in which we are operating--a context that provides tremendous opportunity for positive change--I will now turn to our goals for improving public education in the District.

### **GOALS FOR IMPROVING PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

To characterize our goals as simply as possible, I believe that by June 30, 2000, our success or failure will be judged on whether or not we achieve fundamental improvement in three core areas: (1) academics, (2) school facilities, and (3) personnel and financial management systems. What I mean by fundamental improvement is that these core areas will be on a firm foundation for continuous progress in future years. My guiding principle in this effort is Children First. All of our efforts must be weighed in terms of their impact on children.

#### **ACADEMICS**

Our goals for the core area of academics embrace the objectives specified in the School Reform Act of 1995 and the elaboration on those objectives in the Children First Framework developed by the Emergency Board of Trustees. The Children First Framework provides the blueprint for the Long Range Education Reform Plan currently being developed. I have included a copy of this document for the record (see attachment).

When completed this Spring, the Long Range Education Reform Plan will lay out an action agenda for achieving each objective and will include: (1) a statement of the action or performance objective, (2) measures to be used to determine progress toward the objective, (3) dates by which the objective shall be met, (4) resources required to meet the objective, and (5) who is responsible for the achievement of each objective and the title of that employee's immediate supervisor.

#### **GOAL I: IMPROVED STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

##### **World Class Standards**

Our first goal is to ensure that all students are taught to world-class academic standards to prepare them for productive work, further education, and responsible citizenship. To accomplish this goal, we must first adopt rigorous content and performance standards, with aligned curriculum, assessments, and professional development. The assessments we adopt must provide data that can be used to (1) measure the progress of individual students, each classroom, each school, and the entire district; and (2) provide information to teachers that is useful for adjusting classroom instruction. We must also integrate state-of-the-art technology into the instructional program.

### Meeting the Needs of Children Placed At Risk of School Failure

We must also pay special attention to our children placed at risk of school failure, and focus on creating a school environment conducive to learning by providing support systems that keep children performing at grade-level, to avoid the discouragement that leads to dropping-out. Steps that will help us accomplish this include:

- increasing parent participation in reinforcing educational goals;
- identifying students who fall below core curriculum standards to ensure that each student meets such standards prior to promotion and meets all standards prior to high school graduation;
- providing intensive after-school, weekend, and summer tutoring for students falling below grade-level standards;
- restructuring approaches to delivering Title I and special education services, as well as services to language minority students; and
- providing alternative learning settings for students who are not succeeding in conventional schools.

### Safety and Security

Another key objective related to improving student achievement is improving the safety and security of schools so that staff and students can focus on teaching and learning. We will take immediate steps in FY 1998 to improve safety and security through security personnel, metal detectors, and student ID badges.

### Career Preparation

To improve student achievement, we must also expand career preparation opportunities within the academic program to build a bridge toward future employment and further education. We must ensure that all graduating seniors have the reading, math, communication and computer skills necessary for employment and/or further education, including guidance toward the development of individual career paths.

### GOAL II: QUALITY SCHOOL STAFF

Our second goal in the core area of academics is to provide an academically competent, well trained and caring staff and hold them accountable for results. To accomplish this we must adopt clear standards of competency for hiring and evaluating principals, teachers, and other professional staff. We will implement policies requiring competitive appointments for all public school positions.

We must also improve teacher and principal compensation and recognition. Teacher and principal compensation should be brought to the levels of surrounding communities with differing salary ranges for subject areas or other positions that are difficult to fill.

**GOAL III: GOVERNANCE, SCHOOL  
AUTONOMY, AND PARENTAL CHOICE**

Our third goal in the core area of academics is to promote school autonomy and accountability through decentralization and greater parental choice. To accomplish this, we will foster a variety of school restructuring efforts and facilitate the development of high quality charter schools.

**School Restructuring**

With respect to school restructuring, we will continue and accelerate the move toward school-based management and budgeting. We will also support schools pursuing their own restructuring efforts so long as they meet the academic standards we adopt. For schools needing help with restructuring, we intend to provide choice among total school restructuring models that have proven results for urban schools. Lastly, we plan to identify schools in need of outside help, but not ready to take on the task themselves, and provide targeted assistance (including changes of personnel) to help them move toward a proven restructuring model appropriate to that school.

Restructuring must also include the role of central administration. We will determine what functions and support services are best maintained by central administration for efficiency. Then we will set goals to move funding and personnel away from central administration and into the schools.

**Charter Schools**

Concerning public charter schools, we intend to facilitate the development of high quality charter schools that will serve as laboratories of change for the entire school system. As state educational agency of the District of Columbia, the Emergency Board of Trustees has responsibility for all public schools, including public charter schools. The School Reform Act of 1995 permits the establishment of up to 100 public charter schools over the next five years, including the conversion of existing public schools, now operated and managed by the Board of Trustees and the CEO. Funding for charter schools is transferred from accounts otherwise controlled by the Board of Trustees and CEO.

The Board of Trustees believes that charter schools with high quality educational programs and sound business management hold great potential to improve the choices and quality of public education available in the District. However, charter schools without such attributes both threaten the District's financial viability and undermine the Emergency Board of Trustees' ability to improve quality and choice in the District's public schools.

To ensure the development of high quality charter schools, the Board of Trustees has endorsed a proposal from me that articulates the roles and responsibilities of the state educational agency of the District of Columbia regarding public charter schools; specifically, the proposal:

- Directs the CEO, as the Chief State School Officer, to ensure development of procedures and criteria, in consultation with the eligible chartering authorities, for the review of charter petitions, the oversight of charter school performance, and the review, revocation and renewal of charters.

- Establishes that the Board of Trustees shall, as the state educational agency of the District of Columbia, review all charters entered into by an eligible chartering authority.
- Designates the Board of Trustees, in its capacity as state educational agency, as the third eligible chartering authority referred to in the School Reform Act of 1995 and enable it to take appeals from eligible applicants whose petitions were rejected.

The second and third of these proposals will require action by the Congress, Council, and/or the Financial Authority. In no way are these steps intended to diminish the authority of the School Board or Public Charter School Board as eligible chartering authorities. Rather, our goal is to ensure a role for the state educational agency in the establishment and operation of charter schools that provides adequate oversight, evaluation, and technical assistance for this important reform.

#### Comment on Vouchers

One form of school choice that we expect will be a topic of much debate, as it has before in this city, is vouchers for parents to pay tuition at private schools. While the Emergency Board of Trustees does not have an official position in support of, or in opposition to, tuition vouchers, we do have several concerns. Our first concern pertains to challenges related to accountability. While charter schools are privately operated, independent schools that operate under performance contracts with public bodies, can similar accountability for student outcomes be built into a voucher arrangement? Would private schools receiving tuition vouchers agree to meet certain standards? If so, how would such schools differ from charter schools? Our second concern pertains to the impact a protracted debate over tuition vouchers, or an effort to implement them, could have on our progress in achieving the fundamental reforms just underway, including implementation of the charter school legislation. As you consider potential legislation in the area of tuition vouchers, we ask that you consider these areas of concern.

#### **SCHOOL FACILITIES**

In the core area of school facilities, we have developed a Long Range Facilities Master Plan which we believe will allow us to return our school facility inventory to a safe environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. We intend to submit this plan to Congress by April 25, 1997, as required by the School Reform Act.

The Long Range Facilities Master Plan has three implementation phases. The first phase is contained in the FY 1997 Emergency Capital Improvement Program. Without these critical, envelope-type repairs, we cannot assure that schools will open and stay open during school year 1997-98. This plan requires the obligation of \$86.6 million in fiscal year 1997. Within these requirements, GSA is currently executing \$11.5 million in contracts, and the \$18.25 million in proceeds from the Connie Lee privatization is being obligated and work is commencing. Another \$20 million in funds from a forthcoming bond sale for the District of Columbia will be obligated by July. This leaves a shortfall of \$36.85 million for FY 1997, which is the basis for the supplemental appropriation we are seeking from Congress.

The second phase of the plan, pertaining to immediate needs, is encompassed in the Capital Improvement Program for fiscal years 1998 and 1999. During this period, needed

repairs, replacements and improvements will be accomplished, and planning will begin for the modernization of existing schools and some new school construction. By this time, significant progress will have been made on the disposition of the school system's portfolio of excess space, which now totals more than 4 million square feet. Decisions as to school closings, swing space, modernizations and new construction will be accomplished and planning will begin in earnest for the full revitalization program. The capital budget request for FY 1998 school facilities improvements totals \$182.6 million.

The third phase, slated for fiscal years 2000-2007, is when we intend to undertake the full modernization and revitalization of our school facilities. Current estimates for the complete repair and modernization of school facilities in the District of Columbia are in the \$1.5 to \$2 billion range.

To execute this plan, we have developed an organization and a management approach to ensure quality control. The hallmark of our new organization is the quality of staff and management focus for "fast track" work using the design/build method of delivery on most projects. Since procurement and management information systems functions are part of the Chief Operating Officer's responsibilities, the DC Public Schools is now in a superb posture to effectively administer the comprehensive long-term program for the repair, improvement, maintenance, and management of public school facilities required by the School Reform Act.

#### **PERSONNEL AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**

Our goals for the third core area, personnel and financial management systems, involve rebuilding broken systems and implementing new ones. We must restructure the ways that we develop, evaluate, and track personnel. Our first goal must be to know exactly how many employees we have, what they are doing, and how they are funded. We will have that effort completed in May. Then we must determine whether their jobs are consistent with our goals.

In improving our systems that develop, evaluate, and track personnel, we will implement a performance appraisal system for teachers and principals that holds them accountable for student achievement and school performance. We will also set performance standards for teachers and administrators and terminate personnel where necessary.

Our goals for improving financial management include presenting a budget for fiscal year 1998 that is built from scratch and from the bottom-up, based on a school staffing model and activity-based costing. As part of this effort, we will develop school-based budgets based on a funding formula as mandated by the School Reform Act of 1995. In addition, we will implement adequate controls so that funds from Federal grants are managed in compliance with the law.

#### **CONCLUSION**

To conclude my statement, I feel compelled to restate my guiding principle: Children First. The pledge I make today, and the pledge I will continue to make, is that all of our efforts in achieving fundamental improvement in the three core areas of academics, school facilities, and personnel and financial management systems must be weighed in terms of their impact on children. Failure to meet the needs of the children in this city is not an option.

## CHILDREN FIRST

(D R A F T - March 17, 1997)

### FRAMEWORK FOR THE LONG-RANGE EDUCATION REFORM PLAN FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

---

#### Introduction

This document sets forth a framework for the Long-Range Education Reform Plan for the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), including a Vision Statement, a Mission Statement, and a list of measurable indicators of success.

The Long-Range Education Reform Plan will be part of an overall strategic plan for the school system. By June 30, 2000, fundamental improvement must be achieved in the three core areas of: 1) academics, 2) school facilities, and 3) personnel and financial management systems. The strategic plan will chart a course for achieving fundamental improvement in these three core areas, placing them on a firm foundation for continuous improvement in future years.

The Long-Range Education Reform Plan will focus on the core area of academics, as reflected in this framework. *Because the Trustees must address questions of school facilities (to meet an Authority mandate to close at least six schools by September, 1997) before they have had time to complete an academic plan that has been under development since their inception four months ago in November, 1996, they are releasing this framework to assure the public that the question of academics has been and will continue to be considered in the development of long-range school facilities planning.*

This academic framework embraces the goals and objectives specified in the School Reform Act of 1995 and in the DC Goals 2000 Plan for Educational Improvement. In other words, the DC Goals 2000 Community Plan for Educational Improvement will continue to be the foundation for the Children First Long-Range Education Reform Plan. When completed, that plan will lay out an action agenda for achieving each objective and will include 1) a statement of the action or performance objective, 2) measures to be used to determine progress toward the objective, 3) dates by which the objective shall be met, 4) resources required to meet the objective, and 5) who is responsible for the achievement of each objective and the title of that employee's immediate supervisor.

In considering their vision for greatly improving the academic portion of the DC Public Schools, the Trustees were confronted with important questions that would affect their decisions on facilities. For example: what if plans to improve the DC schools are so successful that District-resident school-age children who currently attend private schools begin to return to public schools; or if suburban families with school-age children begin to move back into the District; or if the drop-out rate is substantially decreased? The public deserves to know that even though the Children First Long-Range Education Reform Plan is not yet fully fleshed out, such questions have been raised and considered with the following conclusion: *even if we are more successful than any other reform-minded urban school system, it is highly unlikely that we will face such an influx of students from private or suburban schools that we will be unable to accommodate them within remaining school facilities and in non-*

*traditional school settings. What we may find is that parents will again begin to look to District public schools and/or public charter schools as attractive alternatives for younger siblings.*

*Meanwhile, we cannot afford to "mothball" old buildings in need of substantial repair, or even parts of underutilized buildings that are immensely expensive to maintain, while we await such success. We will meet the needs of the future by establishing schools in community-based settings such as museums or private business buildings or with new construction, all incorporating the latest technological and pedagogical innovations available at the time established. If the school programs improve as we hope they will, and if future school administrations are able to maintain the improvements we plan to initiate, we are confident that the community and the Congress will help us find the funding to build when lack of space becomes a problem.*

It is important to keep in mind that while we may have to close school *buildings*, quality school *programs* will not end -- in fact, we foresee that the savings achieved through our facility efforts will result in programming that is greatly improved. It is important to emphasize that *all monies acquired from the sale of property and all savings achieved from the closing of schools will be used for technological, safety, and physical improvements of the remaining schools.*

### **21st Century Schools -- A Vision**

The children of the District of Columbia are our most precious human resource. We envision schools of the future that are collegial communities of professional and intellectually-prepared teachers and administrators who teach to world-class standards in a safe and caring environment in which children master the academic, technological, and social competencies that give them real choices in life and provide bridges to further education, productive work, and responsible citizenship.

### **21st Century Schools -- Our Mission**

1. To raise student achievement in the skills and knowledge necessary for productive work and further education.
2. To instill in students an ethic of civility, purpose, responsibility, and the resolution of conflict through reason and understanding.
3. To equip students for responsible citizenship through respect for diversity and commitment to the common good.
4. To provide a safe and caring environment in which students are motivated to learn.

### **Some Measurable Indicators of Success\*\***

1. Increase the academic performance of all schools.

\*\* Specific baselines and targets are being developed on a school-by-school basis and will be completed no later than June 30, 1997.

2. Increase the percent of students scoring at or above the national norms on standardized tests.
3. Increase the number of students reading at grade level by age 9.
4. Increase daily student attendance.
5. Decrease the drop-out rate.
6. Increase the high school graduation rate.
7. Increase the number of students pursuing higher education and the number employed following graduation.
8. Increase parental and community involvement in the schools.
9. Decrease the incidence of violent conflict and crimes affecting student and staff safety.
10. Redirect resources from central administration to the schools.

## **CHILDREN FIRST: GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

---

**GOAL I: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT:** Ensure that all students are taught to world-class academic standards to prepare them for productive work, further education, and responsible citizenship.

---

- A. Adopt rigorous content and performance standards, with aligned curriculum, aligned assessments, and aligned professional development.
1. Adopt world-class, district-wide content and performance standards in core curriculum subjects.
  2. Establish curriculum frameworks and curricula aligned with content and performance standards.
  3. Integrate state-of-the-art technology into the instructional program.
  4. Adopt assessments aligned with both curriculum and standards that provide data that can be used to 1) measure the progress of individual students, each classroom, each school, and the entire district; and 2) provide information to teachers that is useful for adjusting classroom instruction.
  5. Adopt secured standardized assessments to measure effectively the standing of DC schools nationally and internationally.
  6. Provide aligned professional development opportunities for school teaching staff to ensure they have the knowledge and skills necessary for their students to reach high

standards, including the ability to utilize state-of-the-art technology for instructional purposes.

7. Design and implement a public engagement campaign to ensure community understanding and support of new school standards and other academic goals.

B. Create a home and community environment conducive to learning, with special attention to needs of children placed at risk of school failure.

1. Improve parent involvement in the education and development of their children by creating or augmenting parent education programs that emphasize the importance of infant stimulation, toddler development, and other interventions that address the developmental needs of children. Such programs must be easily accessible to parents around the city.

2. Work with government agencies, corporations, collaborations of neighborhood small businesses, and non-profit organizations to provide quality day-care programs near or at work sites for working mothers and children placed at risk of school failure.

3. Improve school readiness by offering all 3-4 year old children, at risk of school failure, quality, content-specific pre-school programs. Work with corporations and collaborations of neighborhood small businesses to provide such programs for their employees.

4. Improve parent involvement in the education of their children and their ability to reinforce school learning at home through school-based family resource centers and through parent training in English as a second language, reading, computer literacy, and math in sites easily accessible for parents.

5. Create community-based centers offering comprehensive school-linked social services to improve student health and safety, and provide an environment conducive to tutoring, mentoring, and other parent and community involvement with schools.

6. Conduct a community-wide public relations campaign with help from corporations, foundations, and community-based organizations to promote high academic achievement as the desired goal for students from any and all cultural backgrounds.

7. Increase community participation through school partnerships with corporations, universities, cultural institutions, non-profit organizations, and government agencies.

C. Create a school environment conducive to learning by providing support systems that keep children performing at grade level, to avoid the discouragement that leads to dropping-out.

1. Keep class size and school size small enough to foster an atmosphere where all students are known by the faculty and administrators. Within larger school buildings, this can be achieved with "schools-within-schools" or "academies."

2. Increase parent participation in reinforcing educational goals by developing a frequent and systematic method of communication between parent and teacher.

3. Identify students who fall below core curriculum standards to ensure 1) that each student meets such standards prior to promotion, and 2) that students meet all standards prior to high school graduation.

4. Provide intensive after-school, weekend, and summer tutoring for students falling below grade-level standards with the help of trained volunteers from universities and community service organizations.
  5. Expand after-school, weekend, and summer enrichment programs, including tutoring, mentoring, arts, athletics, and other activities focused on youth development and education. Invite participation from community health, recreation, library, social services, and other programs.
  6. Restructure approaches to delivering Title I and special education services, as well as services to language minority students, maximizing federal and foundation funding for these and other programs.
  7. Provide alternative learning settings for students who are not succeeding in conventional schools to ensure that all children, whatever their needs, have a place in the District of Columbia Public Schools.
- D. Create a school environment conducive to learning by improving the safety and security of schools so that staff and students can focus on teaching and learning.
1. Strengthen discipline policies to ensure a safe, disciplined environment conducive to learning, including monitored "set-aside" rooms for disruptive students within D.C. public schools.
  2. Develop alternatives to violence through such strategies as peer mediation and conflict resolution.
  3. Develop a school-based dress code that minimizes distractions from academic performance.
  4. Improve safety and security through security personnel, metal detectors, and student ID badges.
  5. Establish additional alternative programs for disruptive students.
- E. Expand career preparation opportunities within the academic program to build a bridge toward future employment and further education.
1. Ensure that all graduating seniors have the reading, math, communication and computer skills necessary for employment and/or further education, including guidance toward the development of individual career paths.
  2. Establish a career preparation resource center to promote partnerships between schools and businesses and public and private agencies.
  3. Increase the number of students successfully completing higher level math and science courses to encourage careers in math, science, technology, and engineering.
- F. Create and expand programs for citizenship training that build a bridge toward responsible citizenship as an adult.
1. Adopt curricula that foster civic responsibility, civility, community service, and respect

for the law in a free democratic society.

2. Sensitize students to the contributions of varying cultures in society, and show how diversity offers strength and potential for the common good.
3. Establish after-school programs that promote self-confidence, discipline, respect for self and others, and good citizenship.

---

**GOAL II: A QUALITY SCHOOL STAFF: Provide an academically competent, well trained and caring staff and hold them accountable for results.**

---

- A. Adopt clear standards of competency for hiring and evaluating principals, teachers, and other professional staff.
  1. Implement policies requiring competitive appointments for all public school positions.
  2. Implement policies to evaluate and hold principals accountable for 1) management skills, 2) budgetary accountability, 3) teacher morale and development, 4) school discipline, 5) personal integrity of all staff, and 6) relations with parents and community.
  3. Establish a principal leadership development program.
  4. Implement policies regarding testing requirements for teacher certification and recertification.
  5. Implement policies regarding alternative teacher certification requirements.
  6. Evaluate teachers as teams within a school, holding them accountable for 1) individual student progress, 2) competency in subject matter to be taught, and 3) keeping parents informed and engaged.
  7. Establish professional development for teachers that is aligned with the standards and curriculum being taught. Create incentives for teachers to work toward higher professional certification.
  8. Provide special mentoring programs for teachers new to the profession.
- B. Improve Teacher/Principal Compensation and Recognition.
  1. Bring teacher/principal compensation to levels of surrounding communities with differing salary ranges for subject areas or other positions that are difficult to fill.
  2. Recognize outstanding teachers, principals, and schools through an equitable and objective evaluation that has true meaning for the entire community.
  3. Evaluate the pros and cons of pay for teacher performance and develop policy recommendations.

---

**Goal III: GOVERNANCE AND SCHOOL AUTONOMY**

---

- A. Promote school autonomy and accountability through decentralization and greater parental choice.
1. Continue and accelerate the move toward school-based management and budgeting, working through LSRTs and building on experience with enterprise schools and school-within-school charters. Encourage and support schools independently pursuing restructuring so long as they meet the standards set by DCPS.
  2. For schools needing help with restructuring, provide choice among proven total school restructuring models that are designed for urban schools and can meet the standards set by DCPS.
  3. Identify schools in need of outside help but not ready to take on the task themselves, and provide targeted assistance (including changes of personnel) to help them move toward a proven restructuring model appropriate to that school.
  4. Facilitate the development of high-quality charter schools that will serve as laboratories of change for the entire school system.
- B: Role of Central Administration
1. Determine what functions and support services are best maintained by Central Administration for efficiency.
  2. Set goals to move funding and personnel away from Central Administration and into the schools as Management Information Systems permit accountability.
  3. Establish evaluation processes for accountability for both school units and Central Administration.
  4. Review central office budget and staffing reductions for each fiscal year compared to fiscal year 1995.

**STATEMENT  
OF  
BRUCE K. MACLAURY**

**CHAIRMAN OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA EMERGENCY  
TRANSITIONAL EDUCATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT  
MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING AND  
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**APRIL 17, 1997**

GOOD MORNING, SENATOR BROWNBACK AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE. I AM BRUCE MACLAURY, CHAIRMAN OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA EMERGENCY TRANSITIONAL EDUCATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES. IT IS MY PLEASURE TO COME BEFORE YOU TODAY TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

THE NINE-MEMBER BOARD OF TRUSTEES WAS ESTABLISHED BY THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE AUTHORITY TO ACT AS AGENTS OF THE AUTHORITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOLS. FIVE OF THE TRUSTEES, ALL OF WHOM RESIDE IN THE DISTRICT AND HAVE "KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE IN EDUCATION, FINANCE MANAGEMENT, BUSINESS, LAW OR GOVERNMENT," WERE APPOINTED BY THE AUTHORITY. ONE MEMBER WAS SELECTED BY THE AUTHORITY FROM A LIST OF THREE PARENTS OF D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS SUBMITTED BY THE MAYOR, AND ONE WAS CHOSEN BY THE AUTHORITY FROM A LIST OF THREE

D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS PROVIDED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER-SUPERINTENDENT OF THE D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE D.C. BOARD OF EDUCATION ARE ALSO MEMBERS OF THE TRUSTEES.

THE FINANCIAL AUTHORITY ESTABLISHED THE TRUSTEES AFTER DECLARING A STATE OF EMERGENCY IN THE DISTRICT'S PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM. THIS DRASTIC ACTION WAS PRECIPITATED BY ITS FINDING "THAT, IN VIRTUALLY EVERY CATEGORY AND FOR EVERY GRADE LEVEL, BY VIRTUALLY EVERY MEASURE OF PERFORMANCE, THE DISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM HAS FAILED TO PROVIDE A QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN AND A SAFE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO LEARN." MORE SPECIFICALLY, THE AUTHORITY CONCLUDED THAT, DESPITE PER PUPIL EXPENDITURES THAT EXCEED THE NATIONAL AVERAGE, THE D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

- HAD STUDENT TEST SCORES THAT WERE CONSISTENTLY BELOW THE NATIONAL AVERAGES AND HAD DECLINED SUBSTANTIALLY OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS;
- WERE UNACCEPTABLY VIOLENT;
- LACKED SUCH VITAL MATERIALS AND SERVICES AS TEXTBOOKS AND TEACHER TRAINING ; AND

- DISPLAYED GROSS MISMANAGEMENT IN THE AREAS OF PERSONNEL, FACILITIES, PROCUREMENT, BUDGET AND FINANCE.

BASED ON THESE FINDINGS, THE AUTHORITY "DIRECTED, AUTHORIZED AND EMPOWERED" THE TRUSTEES AND THE CEO-SUPERINTENDENT TO:

- IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION SERVICES PROVIDED TO D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS, SO AS TO ENSURE THAT EVERY STUDENT ACHIEVES BASIC LITERACY SKILLS AND LEARNS TO THINK CRITICALLY AND COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY;
- STRENGTHEN D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOL MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING IMPLEMENTATION OF A SCHOOL-BASED BUDGETING PROCESS;
- REDUCE THE COST OF NON-EDUCATIONAL SERVICES;
- DEVELOP THE LONG-TERM EDUCATION REFORM PLAN REQUIRED BY THE D.C. SCHOOL REFORM ACT OF 1995;
- DEVELOP DISTRICT-WIDE ASSESSMENTS AND ESTABLISH PROCEDURES TO ENSURE THAT TEACHERS ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE;

- MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY, PARENT AND BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT IN THE D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOLS;
  
- ASSESS D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS' OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH ACTIVITIES AS ARTS OR ATHLETICS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO HOW TO INCREASE SUCH INVOLVEMENT;
  
- ESTABLISH PROCEDURES THAT ENSURE THAT D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS ACQUIRE SKILLS NECESSARY FOR EMPLOYMENT; AND
  
- ENACT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES THAT ENSURE THAT THE SCHOOL SYSTEM RUNS ETHICALLY AND EFFECTIVELY.

TOWARDS THESE ENDS, THE TRUSTEES HAVE, TO DATE, APPROVED A DRAFT EDUCATION FRAMEWORK FOR THE D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOL LONG-RANGE EDUCATION REFORM PLAN, A COPY OF WHICH HAS BEEN SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD. WE HAVE ALSO DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE TIME AND ENERGY TO ASSESSING VARIOUS ACADEMIC STANDARDS, AS WELL AS ALIGNED ASSESSMENTS AND TEACHER TRAINING. IT IS OUR INTENT TO HAVE SUCH STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS IN PLACE BY THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT SCHOOL YEAR.

IN A PARALLEL EFFORT TO IMPROVE SCHOOL SYSTEM MANAGEMENT, WE HAVE APPROVED A PROPOSED FY 1998 BUDGET FOR THE D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT IS SCHOOL-BASED AND PREMISED ON THE REDUCTION OF NON-INSTRUCTIONAL POSITIONS. WE HAVE ALSO BEGUN THE ARDUOUS TASK OF CLOSING SCHOOLS AND WILL VOTE TO CLOSE A NUMBER OF OUR BUILDINGS BY THE END OF THIS MONTH.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF THE TRUSTEES IS SET OUT IN THE VISION STATEMENT THAT WE ADOPTED AS PART OF OUR DRAFT EDUCATION FRAMEWORK: TO EDUCATE ALL D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS IN "SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE THAT ARE COLLEGIAL COMMUNITIES OF PROFESSIONAL AND INTELLECTUALLY-PREPARED TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS WHO TEACH TO WORLD-CLASS STANDARDS IN A SAFE AND CARING ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH CHILDREN MASTER THE ACADEMIC, TECHNOLOGICAL, AND SOCIAL COMPETENCIES THAT GIVE THEM REAL CHOICES IN LIFE AND PROVIDE BRIDGES TO FURTHER EDUCATION, PRODUCTIVE WORK, AND RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP." ALL THAT WE DO IN THE THREE YEARS THAT WE ARE TO BE IN EXISTENCE WILL BE DESIGNED TO BRING US CLOSER TO TURNING THIS VISION INTO REALITY.

I WISH TO THANK YOU, CHAIRMAN BROWNBACK, FOR ALLOWING ME TO TESTIFY THIS MORNING. I WOULD BE HAPPY TO ADDRESS MY QUESTIONS THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE.

**Creating the Best Schools in the World for DC's Children**  
Testimony of Lamar Alexander  
Former Governor of Tennessee and U.S. Secretary of Education  
Senate Government Affairs Committee--Senate Subcommittee on Oversight  
April 17, 1997

This committee has before it difficult issues of pensions, prisons and financial management. But today I want to discuss the one thing that more than any other would create confidence in the District of Columbia and restore its luster--and that is to give every child in the District the opportunity to attend one of the best schools in the world.

This is a bold goal--but one that can be undertaken and reached fairly quickly, over five to ten years.

I was reminded both of how important this is and how possible this is ten days ago when I spent an evening here in Washington with several hundred District citizens. It was the 10th anniversary of the "Best Friends" Program, a program for inner city girls that stresses abstinence from sex and drugs and alcohol and encourages positive role models and self respect. At this event were Elayne Bennett and Alma Powell, two energetic women who have made this program a national success.

"Best Friends" started right here in Washington, at the Amidon Public School. At that celebration ten days ago it was my privilege to escort a high school senior who has won a scholarship to attend Spellman College. I remembered meeting her father five years ago when I was Secretary of Education and he was president of the PTA at Amidon School. The point is, at this single event there were hundreds of District citizens--teachers, parents, school principals, community leaders--all of whom want their children to attend the very best schools, world class schools, and who are as capable--in fact are more capable--than most citizens in most communities in America of making that happen.

I thought to myself in this city of so much wealth and talent, with so many institutions of higher learning, with such great museums and cultural centers, with the most creative leaders and so many well educated parents--how could it be that our public school system is in such disarray, with many of its schools failing to provide students with a safe and disciplined environment and the opportunity for a world class education?

There is absolutely no reason a national movement to give every American child the opportunity to attend the best schools in the world cannot begin right here in the District.

There is absolutely no excuse for it not starting here.

The solution lies in four basic, All-American ideas. Choice. Freedom. Excellence. Accountability.

In fact, the steps it will take are mostly in place or already have been proposed by the District leadership or by the Congress or by President Clinton.

Let me be very specific about what needs to be done.

*First: Choice.* So that no child is made to go to a bad public school and every child has the opportunity to attend a great one, every family should be permitted to choose the school that its child attends. Last year Speaker Gingrich led the House in passing a bill that would have given low income parents in the District who are forced to send their child to an educationally bankrupt school a scholarship to send their child to a better school of their choice—public, private or parochial. Wealthy District parents of course already have this privilege. Lower income parents should, too. The Congress should immediately enact Speaker Gingrich's bill.

*Second: Freedom.* So that families have the maximum number of choices of great schools, every District of Columbia school should become a charter school. Diane Ravitch defines charter schools this way: "Think of a charter school as a public school district with only one school. It receives public funds, agrees to meet clear academic standards and accepts all students who apply. Unlike existing public schools, it has a contract that can be revoked if the school fails to make good on its commitments."

Twenty five states now have charter school laws, and the District has one of the best. Over time, the district should unleash the enormous creative power of this community to create the best schools: schools with high standards; schools that meet the needs of children whose families have just arrived in America, or who are gifted, or who have disabilities, or who are unruly; schools with hours that fit the needs of today's working families; schools located at the workplace to help strengthen families. Why does the National Geographic or The Learning Channel not have a charter school, or the Smithsonian, or Georgetown or George Washington Universities, or the Library of Congress, or the National Education Association or the American Federation of Teachers? Can you imagine what \$8,000 per child would buy if these organizations were in charge of using that money to create one of the best schools in the world?

Not every charter school will work. The Marcus Garvey charter school seems to have already proved that. But it is the school board's job to take care of that. Instead of inventing things for teachers and schools to do and telling families and children which school they must attend, the school board should devote its energies to making sure an ever increasing number of

magnificent charter schools exist, that every child has one of them to attend, that these schools are safe, that children are learning to high academic standards, and that each school meets some common sense standard of reasonableness. The District's school board already has the power to make every district school a charter school. It should exercise that power.

*Third: Excellence.* On this issue, President Clinton is right. He has suggested making available the reading and math tests from the Nation's Report Card so that local school boards, families, and other citizens can tell whether children are learning what they need to know and be able to do. The Congress should enact the President's proposal and the District board should use the tests. Today, the district results are a national embarrassment. Eighty per cent of the children score below a basic level of knowledge even though only two states spend more than the district does per student and only three states have a lower pupil /teacher ratio.

*Fourth: Accountability.* There is fourth step that the President has not recommended that the district board should take. This step has to do with accountability. New choices won't be real, new charter schools won't succeed, and children's tests scores won't change until principals are expected to lead and teachers are expected to teach in a way that achieves results. All of us know that parents are each child's first teachers, that many children today come from troubled homes, and that schools can't be a substitute for good parents. Nevertheless, if a child--any child--goes to school with no visible positive result, there is no need for the school to exist. It should be closed.

Therefore, the district Board should abolish tenure for teachers and make it possible for principals to be able to organize their faculties in a way that produces a result--children learning--and be able to reward or dismiss teachers based upon their performance and the performance of their students. This means that some district teachers should be paid as much as \$100,000 a year and some should be invited to find another job.

In sum, the recipe for restoring the District of Columbia begins with creating the best schools in the world for its children. The ingredients--choice, freedom, excellence, accountability--are all sitting right there on the table waiting for someone to start cooking. First, the Congress should enact the Speaker's proposal to give all students choices. Second, the District should use its existing law to make every school a charter school. Third, the Congress should enact the President's request to make National Report Card tests with high standards available to the District Board and the District Board should use those tests. And fourth, the District should end teacher tenure and begin to pay good teachers more--a lot more--based upon their ability and the academic success of their students.

Thank you for your attention.

EDWARD I. KOCH REMARKS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF  
GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING AND THE  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
APRIL 17, 1997

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for inviting me to appear before the committee this morning. Having served in public office as Member of the New York City Council, Member of Congress and Mayor of New York City for a total of 23 years, I have been very involved with the education of New York City's 1,075,605 public school children and 265,074 non-public school children: 118,682 private and 146,392 parochial. No one disputes that our country will succeed or fail based on the education of our children.

Of course, Mr. Chairman, before any academic initiative is proposed, there must be a physically safe environment. In 1966, when I was a member of the City Council, the late teacher and union leader Al Shanker told me that of the one million students in our public schools, 5 percent who were violent or otherwise disruptive had to be removed from

regular classrooms for others to learn. Shanker was a visionary. Now, about 30 years later, New York's current School Chancellor Rudy Crew is taking stronger measures than his predecessors to permanently remove violent students who use weapons from our schools. More of the disruptive students have been and are being placed in alternative schools. I'm told it is very difficult to remove special ed students who are violent, disruptive or who bring a weapon to school.

As Mayor of New York City from 1978 to 1989, I proposed and implemented a number of new educational initiatives which had some degree of success. Some might have relevance to the D.C. public school system. Congress should see experimenting with the D.C. schools as an opportunity not just for Washington and its children, but for the entire nation's children. Now to my suggestions:

The most important proposal, in my judgment,

is providing school vouchers. In 1966, when I ran for the New York City Council, I supported what were then referred to as tuition tax credits. I concluded at the time that helping poor and moderate-income parents send their children to parochial and private schools was in the best interest of those children and of the country. Many wealthy parents were then--and are today--opposed to the concept of school vouchers as a violation of the doctrine of separation of church and state. While I believe in the separation of church and state, I do not think the principle is breached if vouchers are given to parents to make the choice for their children. Those of us who support vouchers believe they will create competition among schools, causing public schools to improve the product they deliver. Currently, the Feds pay for Headstart students at religious schools. The wall of separation between church and state has not crumbled because of that. And, of course, the WWII GI Bill allowed entry to religious colleges and universities. In my

judgment, there is no constitutional bar to providing vouchers for students attending parochial schools.

A second proposal is charter schools. In such schools, education experts are permitted to manage new public schools with public funds, or existing public schools that opt out. They report to a separate public agency, usually at the state level. Those schools are, to a large degree, independent of the existing board of education and its regulations. The schools are required to meet certain state standards and if they do not, they are closed. But they are given a large degree of freedom in the selection of curriculum and teachers. Charter schools select their populations and many concentrate on accepting students who have not done well in the regular public school, have been disruptive there or are drop-outs. Charter schools provide choice, competition and accountability.

A third proposal came about when I was Mayor and visited the Board of Education headquarters and spoke with

the Chancellor's top 25 administrators. After being advised that the students' "reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic," as we used to say, weren't so terrific, I made a suggestion to the Chancellor which became known as the Adopt-A-Class program. I suggested that professionals teach a public school class twice a month. While many of the Board of Education staff objected to the proposal, they had no choice but to go along since I told them I would teach a class even if no one else joined me. It was decided that we would teach seventh grade classes, serve as role models for the children, and provide them with new experiences. I suggested to others who volunteered that one of those two classes per month be devoted to taking the children on field trips to various places around the city -- the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, and for me, Gracie Mansion and City Hall. Each of these unique teachers would bring a class to their place of work on at least one occasion. The Adopt-A-Class program would be an opportunity to introduce children to a

larger world. I ultimately brought close to 400 professionals to the Adopt-A-Class program. They were lawyers, doctors, accountants and commissioners who I enlisted in the program.

I taught a public school class twice a month for two semesters. My first class was in Bedford-Stuyvesant, a black community in Brooklyn, and the second was a class of Hispanic youngsters in the South Bronx. One of the successes I am most proud of is that upon ascertaining on the first day of school that every child in both classes had difficulty properly saying the word "ask"-- pronouncing it instead as "ax"--I concentrated on teaching them to pronounce the word properly. By the end of the semester, every child in both classes said the word "ask" properly and was proud of it. A small victory, but an important one.

My fourth proposal to the Chancellor was providing uniforms to the students in some schools. My thought was that uniforms could give public schools a cache, school

spirit and sense of identification among the students similar to that of private and parochial schools and eliminate competitiveness in dressing and muggings of children for their jewelry, jackets and expensive running shoes.

When I mentioned the proposal there were cat calls in the press. It was not easy to secure the uniforms for these children. The two schools that were selected were in poor black and Hispanic neighborhoods. When I asked some prominent clothing designers, whose names I will not mention here but did in my book, they declined, saying that they had exhausted their charitable funds. So I turned to Moe Ginsburg, a well-known New York City discount clothier. He and a friend willingly provided the uniforms, and a national shoe chain provided the shoes. Their cost was about \$25,000.

A fifth initiative I created was a summer school program for public school students in which they attended the best private boarding schools in the region for seven

weeks with their tuition, room and board paid for by the city. Several hundred students, most below grade average, were chosen to participate. The follow-up reports indicated that those students' subsequent grades improved and their drop-out rates decreased.

A sixth initiative I attempted was instituting a program of teachers' merit bonuses for one year. The idea was to measure the reading and math scores of a class at the beginning of the semester and again at the end. Where the class's scores improved during the course of the semester-- the ultimate success being to bring them to grade level-- I proposed that the teacher be awarded a cash bonus of up to \$10,000. The amount of the bonus would depend on the percentage of students that reached grade reading level during the semester. My proposal was rejected by the Union of Federated Teachers whose president advised me that the UFT would be happy to support a bonus for teachers, but it could not depend on the teachers success in bringing class

performance to grade level. The union wanted every teacher in the system to receive the same bonus and have it be a permanent part of their salary. I replied, "That's not a bonus, it's a salary increase." We could not come to terms, so the teacher bonus program was not implemented. I believe that teachers would love to compete for a one-time bonus predicated on achieving the desired goal within the semester. Those successes and bonuses could be re-earned each year for those willing to achieve new goals.

A seventh proposal is providing rewards to the students for the attainment of certain goals. The rewards that I have in mind for reaching goals are bikes, sporting equipment, skates and skis.

An eighth initiative is forging ties between major corporations and our schools. The corporations would become involved in planning a school's curriculum, providing services and equipment, and would agree to give students jobs, both part-time and upon graduation from high school,

provided the students maintain grades of "B" or better. I believe this concept was implemented to a limited degree. Companies' involvement should stress mentors for kids, summer jobs and financial management.

A ninth proposal is having private secondary schools and colleges adopt a local public school to establish ties between the two, giving them the opportunity to swap ideas and, perhaps even on occasion, teachers. This too had some implementation. These institutions should be encouraged to create charter schools.

After I left the mayoralty, I suggested another proposal resulting from my concern for special education in New York City. Many youngsters who end up in special education never leave it. The cost of special education is about \$18,000 per child per year as opposed to \$7,000 per child per year in a regular class. So several years ago I proposed that, except for those children who are profoundly disabled, mentally or physically, all special ed children be

mainstreamed every two years. If a child failed on the first attempt at mainstreaming and was returned to special education, he or she would be given another opportunity for mainstreaming two years later. I believe that given the opportunity to sink or swim, many children would swim. The proposal was endorsed by then Chancellor Cortines and a commission of educators to whom he assigned the proposal for evaluation. It is my understanding that the Board of Education and the current chancellor intend to implement the program.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I believe that bilingual programs tend to become institutionalized not so much for learning but rather for cultural and ethnic pride reasons. Instead, I urge expanding and ultimately the substituting of English immersion classes for bilingual classes. Often bilingual programs are supported simply as jobs programs and not because of their benefit to children. Many children get trapped in them for years and their education suffers.

Mr. Chairman, I have given you some ideas for improving the delivery of education to our children in the public school system. Some of them are well-known, have been implemented in various school systems, and are working. Some are new and untried. I urge you to consider them. Finally, I urge your consideration of another proposal: Creating a national academy that starts at high school and continues through university level. Those selected through testing would attend tuition-free with room and board included. Many of these best and brightest would ultimately enter public service. Surely the nation could use them.

**Testimony Presented by Jay P. Greene**

An analysis of test scores from the school choice experiment in Milwaukee suggests that offering additional educational opportunities to low-income, minority families can significantly improve academic performance. If a similar program were adopted in Washington, D.C., with a design that was improved based on what was learned in Milwaukee and other cities with choice programs, we could obtain a very clear picture of the benefits of school choice for education reform. The lessons from an improved voucher experiment in Washington, D.C. could provide useful information to communities around the country that are considering ways of improving their educational systems. An experiment could also provide valuable information to the U.S. Congress if it considered offering tuition tax credits for private school expenses as a way of expanding choice in education on the national level.

**The Evidence from Milwaukee**

In 1990 Milwaukee became the site of the first publicly funded school choice program providing low-income, predominantly minority, parents with vouchers to send their children to secular, private schools. The legislation establishing the program required that students be accepted by lottery when the number of applications exceeded the spaces available. This requirement for random admission made it possible to conduct a high quality study of the program's effects on academic achievement by creating randomly assigned treatment and control groups, like those found in medical experiments. Some students received the treatment, the opportunity to attend a private school, while others received the placebo, remaining in the Milwaukee Public Schools. Because these randomly assigned groups should, on average, be alike in all respects, any differences in test scores can reasonably be attributed to the effect of receiving the voucher to attend private school.

With Paul Peterson and Jiangtao Du of Harvard University, I have conducted an analysis of the test scores of the 1,271 black and hispanic students who applied to receive a voucher between 1990 and 1993. The students who won the lottery to attend a private school received significantly higher scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills than those who did not win the opportunity to attend a private school. After three years of attending a private school, the voucher students performed 5 points higher on the math test and almost 3 points higher on the reading than their public school counterparts who did not receive a voucher in the lotteries. By the end of their fourth year in a private school, the students who received vouchers scored more than 10 points higher on math and almost 6 points higher on reading. While the voucher students showed higher test scores even after one and two years of attendance at a private school, the benefits of receiving the voucher reached statistical significance by the third and fourth years.

The academic gains produced by the voucher program are of a magnitude considered large by education researchers. To put the test score improvements in perspective, the national difference between minority and white scores on standardized tests is about one standard deviation, which is a little more than 20 points on the test used in Milwaukee. If the experience of the Milwaukee voucher program could be reproduced for black and hispanic students nationwide, we could close the gap between minority and white student test scores by almost  $\frac{1}{2}$  for math and more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  for reading.

And the benefits produced in Milwaukee occurred after only a few years with a limited choice program. Vouchers were only available to several hundred low income families. They were able to choose among a limited number of secular, private schools, while over 90% of the private school capacity in Milwaukee, including some of the most respected schools, are

parochial. Only schools that were willing to accept as payment in full vouchers good for less than half of the per capita cost of a Milwaukee public education could participate. The students who enrolled in the program were among the most disadvantaged in the city. On average their family income was under \$11,000, less than half the average for the Milwaukee Public Schools. Fewer than 1/4 of the voucher students lived with married parents, about half the rate found in the Milwaukee Public Schools. Students who used the vouchers began with significantly lower test scores and showed evidence of more behavior problems than the average Milwaukee Public School student. If choice could produce sizable gains in test scores under such difficult circumstances, it is possible that a less restrictive voucher program, over a longer period of time, could produce even larger benefits.

The confidence with which we can extrapolate from the Milwaukee experiment, however, is limited by the considerable amount of data that was missing, never collected, or never publicly released. We conducted a number of analyses, however, to confirm that our findings were not simply an artifact of bias produced by missing data. We introduced controls for student background and prior test scores to ensure that missing data did not bias results. We also altered our definition of the treatment group to include students who were offered a voucher but failed to attend a private school or chose to leave the private school prior to the end of the experiment. Even with this higher standard, the academic benefits of the voucher program remained large and statistically significant. In short, the best analysis of the available evidence from Milwaukee shows that school choice helps low-income minority students make considerable academic gains.

Even if the results from Milwaukee are not definitive, they are suggestive. If this were a medical experiment in which a limited test showed this type of progress against cancer or

diabetes, there would be immediate demands for additional experiments. Washington, D.C., which faces problems comparable to those found in Milwaukee and other large, urban school districts, would make an ideal candidate for an additional school choice experiment.

#### **Lessons for Designing a New Choice Experiment**

Learning from some of the difficulties in evaluating the Milwaukee program, there are some features of a new experiment that I can suggest. First, the evaluation team should be selected well in advance of the implementation of the program to help refine the design of the voucher program to make it amenable to investigation. Second, all families should complete a survey and all students should be tested as a condition of applying for a voucher. Third, students should be allowed to choose among the largest possible set of private schools, which means including parochial schools, to ensure that families have real alternatives available to them. Fourth, students should receive vouchers by lottery to ensure fairness and to make possible a comparison of similar treatment and control groups. Fifth, resources need to be provided to track, re-survey, and re-test over several years those students who receive a voucher and those who apply but do not receive a voucher. Sixth, the data collected by the evaluation team should be made available to other scholars for verification and replication. A school voucher program in Washington, D.C. designed along these lines would tell us, with a high level of confidence, the academic benefits of school choice. Local school districts around the country could use the information provided by such an experiment to make decisions about their own educational systems.

It should be noted that increasing educational opportunities by providing support for parental choice is starting to happen in a number of places. This fall Cleveland began the second

publicly funded voucher program and the first to include parochial schools. Next fall New York City is scheduled to begin a large, well-designed privately funded voucher program. Smaller privately funded programs have been in operation in a number of cities for a few years. In addition to offering vouchers, school choice is being supported by offering tax credits for families' private school expenses, like in a program just adopted in Arizona. A tax credit program would also be a way in which the national government could most easily offer expanded parental choice to families throughout the country.

The evidence from Milwaukee suggests that such a program would help improve the quality of education. Similar results from a new, well-designed experiment, conducted in Washington, D.C. would lend even greater strength to the idea of using tax credits or vouchers to support parental choice in education.

**Effectiveness of School Choice: The Milwaukee Experiment**

by

Jay P. Greene

Center for Public Policy

University of Houston

and

Paul E. Peterson

Program on Education Policy and Governance

John F. Kennedy School of Government and Department of Government

Harvard University

and

Jiangtao Du

Department of Statistics

Harvard University

Center for Public Policy

University of Houston

March 1997

Program in Education Policy and Governance

Center for American Political Studies

Department of Government

Harvard University

225 Littauer Center

Cambridge, MA 02138

Ph: (617) 495-7976

Fax: (617) 496-4428

E-mail: CAPS@hdc.harvard.edu

<http://hdc-www.harvard.edu/PEPG/>

**Effectiveness of School Choice: The Milwaukee Experiment****Abstract**

Declining trust in government has been well-documented, perhaps because efficiency gains lag those in the more competitive private sector. If so, trust in government might be enhanced by privatizing the delivery of such government-financed services as education, the most costly public service.

Evidence from the Milwaukee school choice program suggests that privatization may result in efficiency gains. Though costs per pupil are lower in private schools, students score higher on math and reading achievement tests. These findings are based upon a randomized experiment less likely to suffer from selection bias than studies that depend on non-experimental data. Results reported are statistically significant for students remaining in the program for three to four years, when these are jointly estimated. The size of the effects of private school attendance ranges from .1 to .5 of a standard deviation, magnitudes that educational researchers have regarded as moderately large.

**Effectiveness of School Choice: The Milwaukee Experiment**

Declining trust in government in recent decades has been well documented; less is known about its causes (Blendon et al. 1997, Nye and Zelikow 1997, Putnam 1995, Putnam 1996).<sup>1</sup> One possibility is that gains in government productivity have not kept pace with public expectations (Mansbridge 1977), perhaps because efficiency gains lag those in the more competitive private sector (Brandl forthcoming). If so, trust in government might be enhanced by privatizing some government-financed services.

Privatization may enhance efficiency in three different ways. First, competition among providers may reduce the cost and improve the quality of services (Arrow 1951, Schmookler 1966, Dearden, Ickes and Samuelson 1990). Second, government-financed services may more closely match consumer preferences, if the latter are given opportunities to sort themselves among an array of options (Tiebout 1956, Bish 1971). Third, private producers may more easily enlist the participation of consumers in the co-production of the services, thereby enhancing service quality and effectiveness (Ostrom, Parks, and Whitaker 1978).

Education is among the government services for which efficiency gains might be anticipated (Friedman 1955). If so, the political and social benefits would be more than trivial. Apart from cash-transfer programs, education is the largest publicly provided service.<sup>2</sup> In 1990 the cost of publicly financed education services constituted \$305.6 billion, or 5.6 percent of GNP (Peterson 1995). And public confidence in public schools remains very low. In 1993, only 19

percent of the population was willing to give schools a grade of A or B, a fall of 8 percentage points since a decade earlier (Public Perspective 1993, p. 13).

Weak confidence in public schools may be due to their failure to keep pace with rising public expectations. Estimated real costs adjusted for inflation within the educational sector rose by 29 percent or at an annual rate of 1.5 percent between 1974 and 1991.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, student test score performance, an important educational outcome, remained fairly constant (Ladd 1996, p. 3, Rothstein and Miles 1995, p. 7). Between 1970 and 1992 the elementary and secondary students averaged no more than a gain of .1 of a standard deviation in mathematics and reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, generally thought to be the best available measure of student achievement. Meanwhile, their scores in science fell by .24 standard deviations (Hedges and Greenwald 1996, p. 78). Increasing costs with at best slight gains in student achievement suggest that the public school system has become less efficient.

Opportunities for efficiency gains are particularly large in central cities. Whereas competition among small school districts exists in suburban parts of many metropolitan areas (Tiebout 1957, Peterson 1995, Minter-Hoxby forthcoming), most city schools are governed by a single school board that does not ordinarily allow schools to compete for students (Peterson 1990). Schools in rural areas often function as community institutions, facilitating co-production, but city schools have more limited ties to their immediate neighborhoods. Perhaps for these reasons, educational

outcomes lag those outside the central city (Belluck 1997, p. 17, Mitchell 1992, Peterson 1993).

Yet it has been argued that any efficiency gains are unlikely to result in higher student achievement, because cognitive skills are either inherited or set in place at an early age, making them hardly susceptible to manipulation by educational processes (Herrnstein and Murray 1994). But the weight of the evidence is in the opposite direction; numerous studies have found that school characteristics affect student achievement (Card and Krueger 1992, Hedges and Greenwald 1996, Mosteller forthcoming; Jencks and Phillips forthcoming, Girotto and Peterson forthcoming, Mayer and Knutson forthcoming, Meyer forthcoming).

If these findings are correct, then it may be hypothesized that if government grants are made available to families so they can purchase educational services for their children, efficiency gains accompanying privatization will result in enhanced student achievement (Chubb and Moe 1990). Under such an arrangement, competition among producers increases. Inasmuch as consumer educational preferences vary, and entry into the educational market is not prohibitively large, many producers will attempt to meet a demand for a range and variety of services. Co-production by consumer and provider (the family and the school) is more likely if the family has a choice of school (Bryk, Lee, and Holland 1993).

Yet efficiency gains that facilitate academic achievement may not be as great as these considerations suggest. Consumers may not have the necessary information to discern a school's academic quality (Smith and Meier 1995, p.126; but see Minter-Hoxby forthcoming). Or

consumers may choose schools on the basis of a school's non-academic characteristics, such as proximity, religiosity, sports facilities or social segregation (Elmore 1990, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching 1992, Gutmann 1987).

Potential gains in student achievement as a result of privatization are much disputed in part because empirical research has left the question unresolved. Although two different research traditions have sought to estimate the comparative efficiency of private and public schools, neither has provided a definitive answer.

The first research tradition has relied on data from national samples (High School and Beyond, National Longitudinal Study of Youth, and the National Education Longitudinal Study) to estimate the achievement effects of attending public and private schools. Most of these studies find that students who attend private schools score higher on achievement tests or are more likely to attend college (Coleman, Hoffer and Kilgore 1982, Coleman and Hoffer 1987, Chubb and Moe 1990, Bryk, Lee and Holland 1993, Evans and Schwab 1993, Jencks 1985, Plank et al. 1993; but for different results, see Wilms 1984, Wilms 1985, Gamoran forthcoming, Goldhaber forthcoming).

Because private schools are generally less expensive than public schools, these studies suggest greater efficiency in the private sector. But these findings may be contaminated by selection bias: Students in private schools, who came from tuition-paying families, may have unobserved characteristics that increase the likelihood of their scoring higher on achievement tests, regardless of the school they attend (Goldberger and Cain 1982, Cookson 1994, Witte 1990, Witte 1992).

The second research tradition consists of studies that evaluate the test performance of students from low-income or at-risk backgrounds who have received scholarships that give them the opportunity to move from public to private schools (Moe 1995, Martinez, Godwin and Kemerer 1995, Beales and Wahl 1995). Although these evaluations also report that private schools produce higher levels of student achievement with lower expenditures per pupil, their findings may also be contaminated by unobserved background characteristics of scholarship recipients. In almost all the programs studied, scholarships have been distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. They also require additional tuition payments by families, increasing the likelihood that scholarship recipients have unobserved characteristics (such as motivation) correlated with higher test scores.

A previous evaluation of the Milwaukee choice program reports no systematic achievement effects of enrollment in a private school (Witte 1991, Witte, Bailey and Thorn 1992, Witte, Bailey and Thorn 1993, Witte, Thorn, Pritchard, and Claiborn 1994, Witte, Sterr, and Thorn 1995, Witte 1997). But this evaluation compared students from low-income families with public school students from more advantaged backgrounds, leaving open the possibility that unobserved background characteristics could account for these negative findings (Peterson 1995, Greene et al. 1996).

In sum, with the exception of the Milwaukee evaluation, most studies find efficiency gains from the privatization of educational services. Yet all studies suffer from potential selection bias, because they rely on non-experimental data that include unobserved

but possibly relevant background characteristics that could account for reported findings.

One way to improve on previous research is to conduct an experiment that avoids selection bias by randomly assigning students to treatment and control groups. With random assignment, members of the two groups can be assumed to be similar, on average, in all respects other than the treatment they receive. Differences in average outcomes can be reasonably attributed to the experimental condition.

Only a few studies of school effectiveness have been able to draw upon data from randomized experiments, probably because it is difficult to justify random denial of access to apparently desirable educational conditions.<sup>4</sup> The results from the Milwaukee choice program reported here are, to the best of our knowledge, the first to estimate from a randomized experiment the comparative achievement effects of public and private schools.<sup>5</sup>

#### A Hard Case

The Milwaukee choice program, initiated in 1990, provided a voucher to a limited number of students from low income families, to be used to pay tuition at their choice of secular, private school in Milwaukee. It is a "hard case" for testing the hypothesis that efficiency gains can be achieved through privatization because it allowed only a very limited amount of competition among producers. It also limited the choices of consumers as well as the degree to which co-production could occur.<sup>6</sup>

The number of producers was restricted by the requirement that no more than half of a school's enrollment could receive vouchers. Because this rule discouraged the formation of new schools, no new elementary school came into being in response to the establishment of the voucher program. Consumer choice was further limited by excluding the participation of religious schools (thereby precluding use of approximately 90 percent of the private school capacity within the city of Milwaukee). Co-production was discouraged by prohibiting families from supplementing the voucher with tuition payments of their own. (But schools did ask families to pay school fees and make voluntary contributions.) Other restrictions also limited program size. Only one percent of the Milwaukee public schools could participate, and students could not receive a voucher unless they had been attending a public school or were not of school age at the time of application.

These restrictions significantly limited the amount of school choice that was made available. Most choice students attended fiscally constrained institutions with limited facilities and poorly paid teachers.<sup>7</sup>

One school, Juanita Virgil Academy, closed a few months after the program began.<sup>8</sup> Although the school had existed as a private school for a number of years, Juanita Academy was eager to admit sixty-three choice students in order to alleviate its enrollment and financial difficulties. Even with the addition of the choice students, the school's problems persisted. To comply with the requirement that schools offer a secular curriculum, the school had to drop its Bible classes. Parents complained about food service,

overcrowded classrooms, a shortage of books and materials, and a lack of cleanliness and discipline. The executive director had hired a new principal away from the public schools, but she had to be relieved of her responsibilities two months into the school year. The school withdrew from the choice program the next semester, giving as its reason the desire to "reinstate religious training in the school." A few weeks later the school closed altogether (Witte 1991).

Given the design of the Milwaukee choice program, more school failures might have been expected. The three schools that together with Juanita Virgil Academy admitted 84 percent of the choice students in 1990 had modest facilities and low teacher salaries.

Bruce Guadalupe Community School was in particular difficulty. Established in 1969, it sought to preserve Latino culture and teach children respect for both the English and Spanish tongues. Many teachers had once taught in Central American schools. Instruction was bilingual, often more in Spanish than English. Despite its distinctive educational mission, the school had difficulty making ends meet. Even finding an adequate school building seemed a never-ending problem; the school moved from one location to another on several occasions during its first two decades. By January 1990 things had become so desperate that the school was on "the verge of closing." But enactment of the choice program gave the school "new hope for the future," a hope that "otherwise had been snuffed out" (Wells 1990). A tuition voucher of more than \$2,500 was a boon to a school that had had trouble collecting \$650 from participating families.

Despite the arrival of choice students in the fall of 1990, the school, still in financial distress, was forced to cut its teaching staff by a third. The school's difficulties were fully reported in the Milwaukee Journal:

Two staff aides were fired, the seventh and eighth grades were combined, the second grade was eliminated with children put into the first or third grade, and the bilingual Spanish program was cut. . . . Two teachers were transferred . . . the former eighth grade teacher is now teaching fourth grade. . . . Overall, the teaching staff was reduced from 14 to 9 (Miner 1990).

The school's principal described staff morale as "low".

The two other community schools with large choice enrollments, Harambee Community School and Urban Day School, had better reputations but still suffered from serious financial difficulties.<sup>9</sup> Like Bruce Guadalupe, they catered almost exclusively to a low-income, minority population. Established in the sixties in former Catholic parish schools, they tried to survive as secular institutions after the archdiocese had closed the parochial schools. Named for the Swahili word meaning "pulling together", Harambee presented itself as "an African American-owned school emphasizing the basics through creative instructional programs, coupled with a strong cultural foundation (Milwaukee Community Journal 1994). Urban Day was said to place "a heavy emphasis on African history and culture" (Taylor 1991).

Like Bruce Guadalupe, these schools could ask families to pay only a very modest tuition. Though they set their annual rates at

somewhere between \$650 and \$800, only a few families attending the school actually paid full tuition. Tuition scholarships were the norm, not an exceptional privilege. But parents were expected to participate in fund-raising activities.

Teacher salaries were much lower than those paid by the Milwaukee public schools. As one principal observed, "The teachers who stay here for a long time are either very dedicated or can afford to stay on what we pay" (Witte 1991, p. 12). The quality of the physical plant provided a visible sign of the school's modest financial resources:

Recess and physical education facilities were relatively poor in the schools. One school had easy access to a city park for recess, one relied on a blocked off street, two others asphalt playgrounds with some wood chips and playground equipment. All the schools had some indoor space for physical education, but it often served multiple purposes (Witte 1991, p. 13)."

One of its hardest working supporters was asked what she would most wish for the school. "I'd like to see the school financially self-sufficient," she said (Milwaukee Community Journal 1994).

To repeat, the Milwaukee choice program is a hard case to test the hypothesis that privatization can result in efficiency gains. If one finds efficiency gains under considerably less than ideal circumstances, one is likely to find gains under more opportune conditions.

#### School Costs

The relative cost of the public and private schools in Milwaukee remained approximately the same throughout the four years of the

experiment. In the 1991-92 school year, payments per pupil to schools participating in the choice program schools were \$2,729. Based on interviews with school administrators, it is estimated that schools received an additional \$500 through fees and fund-raising activities. Total costs per pupil are thus estimated to be \$3,229. Per pupil costs for the Milwaukee public schools at this time averaged \$6,656 (Mitchell 1992, p. 12), somewhat higher than the \$5,748 cost of educating the average public school student in the United States as a whole (U. S. Department of Education 1991, Table 158).

Although it appears that the cost of educating a pupil in a choice school was only 48 percent of the cost of the Milwaukee public schools, the actual difference was not this large. Choice school students were provided transportation by the Milwaukee public school system, if they needed it. In addition, the reported per pupil expenditures for Milwaukee public schools include the costs of educating secondary school students (which may be more expensive than elementary education) as well as the cost of students receiving special services. But even after taking these considerations into account, the per pupil cost of the private schools was less.

#### **The Milwaukee Randomized Experiment**

The Milwaukee school choice program was a randomized experiment. To ensure equal access to the choice program among eligible applicants, the legislature required choice schools, if oversubscribed, to admit applicants at random. In the words of the original evaluation team,

Students not selected into the Choice Program in the random selection process represent a unique research opportunity. . . . If there are any unmeasured characteristics of families seeking private education, they should on average be similar between those in and not in the program (Witte, Thorn, Pritchard, and Claibourn 1994, p. 24).

The legislature asked the state Department of Public Instruction to evaluate the Milwaukee choice experiment. Data were collected on family background characteristics and student performance on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in reading and mathematics. These data were made available on the World Wide Web in February 1996.

Students did not apply to the choice program as a whole; instead, they applied each year for a seat in a specific grade in a particular school. They were selected or not selected randomly by school and by grade. Because the random assignment policy was implemented in this way, our analysis uses a fixed effects model that takes into account the grade to which the student applied and the year of application.<sup>10</sup>

This analysis is unable to ascertain the particular school to which a student applied,<sup>11</sup> but it takes this factor partially into account by adjusting for the ethnicity of the applicant. More than 80 percent of the choice students attended one of three schools, and, of these three schools, virtually all students applying to one school were Hispanic, and almost all students applying to the two others were African American. Though the analysis takes the two predominantly African American schools as a block, it otherwise

distinguishes among schools by adjusting for whom the applicant was Hispanic or African American. Because the number of white students and other minority students for which information was available was so sparse that no reliable results could be obtained, these students were removed from the analysis.

By using a fixed effects model that took into account each point at which randomization occurred, together with a control for gender, it was possible to estimate the effects of enrollment in choice schools on test scores (Cochran 1965, Rubin 1984).<sup>12</sup> This procedure treats each point at which randomization occurred as a dummy variable.

The measures of test score performance are the students' normal curve equivalent (NCE) scores for math and reading on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. The NCE is a transformation of the national percentile rankings that arranges the scores around the fiftieth percentile in a manner that can be described by a normal curve. A standard deviation for NCEs near the mean score is 21 percentile points.

The data are limited by the fact that test data were available for only 78 percent of those assigned to the treatment group and 72 percent assigned to the control group. The percentage of available test scores decreases to 40 percent of the treatment group and 48 percent of the control group by the third and/or fourth year following application to the program (see table 1).

---

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

---

The results depend on the assumption that the missing cases do not differ appreciably from those remaining in the sample.<sup>13</sup> One way of estimating whether this assumption is reasonable is to examine the observed characteristics of students in the treatment and control groups. As can be seen in table 2, the background characteristics of the two groups do not differ in important respects. In the words of the original evaluation team, "In terms of demographic characteristics, non-selected . . . students came from very similar homes as choice [students did]. They were also similar in terms of prior achievement scores and parental involvement (Witte, Thorn, Pritchard, and Claibourn 1994, p. 26)."

---

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

---

**Results**

Using the analytical procedures discussed above, we estimated the effects of choice schools on student performance after one, two, three and four years of attendance in a choice school.<sup>14</sup> Table 3 reports the results of our main analysis, which estimates the difference in test scores between those students attending choice schools and those in the control group, after controlling for gender, using a fixed effects model that takes into account the points of randomization in the experiment.

---

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

---

Estimated effects of choice schools on mathematics achievement were slight for the first two years students were in the program. But after three years of enrollment, students scored 5 percentile points higher; after four, they scored 10.7 points higher than the control group. These differences between the two groups three and four years after their application to choice schools are .24 and .51 standard deviations of the national distribution of math test scores, respectively. They are statistically significant at accepted confidence levels.<sup>15</sup>

Differences on the reading test were between 2 and 3 percentile points for the first three years and increased to 5.8 percentile points in the fourth. Results for the third and fourth year are statistically significant, when the two are jointly estimated.<sup>16</sup>

#### Controlling for Family Background

The results in the main analysis in table 3 provide the best estimate of the achievement effects of attendance in private schools, because this analysis has the fewest number of missing cases. But because these results do not take into account family background characteristics, they depend upon the assumption that students have been assigned at random to the test and control groups. Inasmuch as even the main analysis has many missing cases, it is possible that the two groups are no longer similar in relevant respects, despite their similar demographics (see table 2). To explore whether this possibility contaminates our results, table 4 reports the results of a fixed effects analysis that takes into

account gender, mother's education, parent's marital status, income, education expectations and time spent with the child.

---

**TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE**

---

This analysis depends upon information provided in response to a written questionnaire, which, unfortunately, many parents did not complete. Background information is available for only 47 percent of the selected students and 36 percent of the control group. The number of cases available for analysis is therefore considerably reduced and the point estimates are less reliable. Nevertheless, all point estimates are positive and six of the eight are actually larger than those reported in the main analysis.

**Controlling for Prior Test Scores**

The main analysis does not control for student test scores prior to entry into the choice program. It is not necessary to control for pre-experimental test scores when comparing a treatment and control group in an experimental situation, because the two groups, if randomly assigned to each category, can be assumed to be similar. But because of the sizable number of missing cases, it is possible that the two groups had different pretest scores before the experiment began.

This potential source of bias did not appear, however. The average pretest scores at the time of application for the two groups were essentially the same. The average math and reading pretest scores for those selected into choice were the NCE equivalent of a 39

and 38 percentile ranking, respectively; for those not selected they were at the 39 percentile for reading and 40th for math (see table 2).

Inasmuch as the pretest scores at the time of application were essentially the same, it is unlikely that controls for this variable would alter the result. We nonetheless tested for the possibility and the results are reported in table 5. Because pretest scores at the time of application were available for only 29 percent of the selected students and 49 percent of the control group, the sample size for this analysis is smaller and the results are not statistically significant. Yet five of the eight point estimates are larger than those in the main analysis and all but one have a positive sign.

---

**TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE**

---

**Effects on All Those Accepted into Choice Program**

The results reported so far compare students who attended private schools with students who had applied for choice but were assigned to the control group. Some students, however, were accepted into the program but chose not to participate for the full four years. Some students immediately turned down the opportunity, while others left sometime during the four-year period.

To see the effect of the choice program on all those admitted, regardless of their subsequent enrollment decisions, we conducted an analysis identical to the main analysis, except that the analysis compared all those initially assigned to treatment and control

groups, regardless of the school they chose to attend. This type of analysis is known in medical research as an "intention-to-treat analysis." In many medical experiments, subjects may be more or less faithful in complying with the treatment. For example, some forget to take their pill three times a day, as instructed. Intention-to-treat analyses answer the question: Is the treatment effective, even when compliance is less than one hundred percent? Those who refuse enrollment in the private schools or leave before the end of the experiment can be thought of as not having complied with the treatment.

This approach has the important disadvantage of including in the treatment group many cases where a student either did not attend the private school or attended the private school for less than the full period under study. But it has two advantages. First, departure from an ideal randomized experiment is less in this case than in the main analysis. All cases are preserved except instances when test data were not collected. The percentage of intention-to-treat cases in the analysis is 89 percent; sixty-three percent of intention-to-treat cases three and/or four years after application remain in this analysis (see table 6).<sup>17</sup> (There are fewer missing cases, because the students who left private schools but were tested in the Milwaukee public schools are not excluded from the intention-to-treat analysis.) Second, this analysis may better capture what might happen if choice between public and private schools were generalized; students can be expected to migrate back and forth between the two systems.

---

**TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE**

---

Are there efficiency gains, when comparisons are made between all those randomly assigned to the "intention to treat" group and the control group? The answer to this question is given in table 7. The effects do not differ in any significant way from those reported in the main analysis. Slight, positive effects are found for the first three years after application to the program, and moderately large effects are found after four years. Students who were given a choice of school performed better than did the control group, regardless of the public or private school they attended. All results but one are statistically significant at the .1 level; fourth-year results are significant at the .05 level.

---

**TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE**

---

These results suggest that when families are given a choice between public and private schools, they choose the option best suited to their child. Perhaps public schools induced some families with students in the treatment group to return to the public school by providing them with better public-school alternatives. The Milwaukee public school system had the ability to respond, because it had a number of magnet schools. It also had the incentive to react, because the system could regain funds equivalent to the size of the voucher if the student returned to the public schools. At least some

of the achievement effects produced by choice may be due to a closer match between school qualities and student needs.

#### Conclusions

The Milwaukee choice experiment suggests that privatization in education may result in efficiency gains. This finding emerges from a randomized experiment less likely to suffer from selection bias than studies dependent upon non-randomized data. The consistency of the results is noteworthy. Positive results are found for all years and for all comparisons except one. The results reported in the main analysis for both math and reading are statistically significant for students remaining in the program for three to four years, when these are jointly estimated.

These results after three and four years are moderately large, ranging from .1 of a standard deviation to as much as .5 of a standard deviation. Studies of educational effects interpret effects of .1 standard deviations as slight, effects of .2 and .3 standard deviation as moderate, and effects of .5 standard deviation as large (Hanushek 1996, Hedges and Greenwald 1996). Even effects of .1 standard deviation are potentially large, if they accumulate over time (Jencks 1985). The average difference in test performances of whites and minorities in the United States is one standard deviation (Hedges and Greenwald 1996, p. 78). If the results from Milwaukee can be generalized and extrapolated to twelve years, a large part of between-group reading differences and all of between-group math differences could be erased.

Without data beyond the Milwaukee program's first four years, one can only speculate as to whether such generalization and extrapolation are warranted. But if they are, the effectiveness of government-financed education could be greatly enhanced. One could also expect improvement in public perception of governmental effectiveness and public trust in government.

These moderately large effects on student achievement were observed even though the Milwaukee plan offered students and families only a slightly enlarged set of educational choices. These achievement effects were produced at lower cost.

One must nonetheless be cautious concerning the universe to which these results are generalized. Efficiency gains may be greater in Milwaukee and other central cities than in suburban areas, where competition among school districts is greater. They may also be greater in cities than in rural communities, where opportunities for co-production are probably more prevalent. The magnitude of the gains reported here may not be generalizable beyond central cities.

In addition, the study was limited to students from low-income families. Other studies suggest that private schools have a larger positive effect on the achievement of disadvantaged students (Jencks, 1985, Goldhaber forthcoming). Perhaps the results found in Milwaukee are restricted to low-income, minority populations.

Finally, the results are for families who applied for vouchers. It may be that the benefits of privatization are greater for those families who desire an alternative to the public school serving them. Their children may have been particularly at risk in public school, and they may be more willing to engage in co-production.

Conclusions that can be drawn are further restricted by limitations of the data made available on the world wide web. Many cases are missing from this data set. The percentage of missing cases is especially large when one introduces controls for background characteristics and pre-experimental test scores. But given the consistency and magnitude of the findings as well as their compelling policy implications, they suggest the desirability of further randomized experiments capable of reaching more precise estimates of efficiency gains through privatization.

One such randomized experiment is under way in New York City (Steinberg 1997). If the evaluation of this randomized experiment minimizes the number of missing cases and collects pre-experimental data for all subjects in both treatment and control groups, it could, in a few years time, provide a more precise estimate of potential efficiency gains from privatizing the delivery of educational services to low-income students. Similar experiments should be conducted in a variety of contexts, but especially in large central cities, where potential efficiency gains seem particularly likely.

**ENDNOTES**

1. In addition to analyses of data obtained from the world wide web (see <http://dpls.dacc.wisc.edu>), the research reported herein is based on the examination of documentary sources as well as interviews with principals, administrators, government officials and community leaders in Milwaukee and Madison in November and December 1994. Respondents were promised their identity would be held in confidence. Quotations that are not footnoted are from these interviews. We thank the Annie Casey, John Olin and Smith Richardson Foundations for their support for this research. Paul Peterson thanks the Center for the Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences and the National Science Foundation for additional support. The findings and views reported below are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the foundations. Leesa Boeger, Curtis Frazier, Jennifer Hill, Brett Klite, and Chad Noyes provided research assistance. We wish to thank Donald Rubin, Christopher Jencks, and Frederick Mosteller for their suggestions with respect to the statistical analysis. George Mitchell and James Cibulka provided information on the choice program in Milwaukee. We wish to thank Cecilia Rouse for identifying programming errors in the data set that we shared with her.

2. Although publicly funded medical services constitute a higher percentage of public expenditure, most medical services are provided by private vendors. In recent years the cost of defense has fallen below the cost of state-provided educational services.

3. Some of these increased school costs are due to improved services for the disabled and otherwise disadvantaged.

4. But see the evaluation of the Tennessee randomized experiment (Moesteller 1995), which found, contrary to many econometric studies (Hanushek 1986), that class size has a positive effect on student achievement.

5. Some results from the randomized experiment in Milwaukee were reported in Witte *et al.* 1994, but that study concentrated on a comparison of students in choice schools with a cross-section of students attending public schools. Data from the randomized experiment were under-analyzed and discussed only in passing (Peterson 1995). In addition to our initial report (Greene *et al.* 1996) two other unpublished studies report results from the randomized experiment in Milwaukee (Witte 1997; Rouse 1996) but all three studies rely upon inaccurate test score data.

Subsequent to issuing Greene *et al.*, 1996, we discovered that the Milwaukee test score data available on the world wide web do not adjust for the fact that some students are not promoted from one grade to the next. For example, students in both test and control groups who were held back for a year at the end of third grade were scored as third graders when they otherwise would have been scored as fourth graders. When this happens, a student can receive a much higher percentile score than is appropriate. Other students are allowed to skip a grade, and if this promotion is not taken into account, it produces an error of the opposite kind. We were able to eliminate both types of error by adjusting test scores

to the correct grade level by means of the conversion tables of Hieronymous et al. (1986) and Hoover et al. (1993).

6. The Milwaukee choice program is described as it was in its initial years, because the data on student achievement are available for only the first four years. In subsequent years the program was expanded somewhat, but the important expansion in 1995 to include religious schools has yet to be implemented, due to court challenges. For a fuller discussion of the program, see Peterson, Greene, and Noyes (1996) and Peterson and Noyes (1997).

7. The number of students attending each school was made available by the State Department of Public Instruction and reported in the Milwaukee Journal (1991) and Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau (1995, Table 2, p. 22, Table 3, p. 23).

In addition to the schools discussed in the text, a Montessori school serving a middle-class constituency admitted three students the first year and four the next. Woodland School, formerly a laboratory school for a local Catholic college, enrolled between twenty and forty choice students each year. After the first year, three other private elementary schools admitted a small number of students.

Test performances of a small number of students attending the high schools participating in the program were not analyzed because no appropriate control group was not available. These schools were initially established to serve at-risk students referred to them by the Milwaukee public schools.

8. The students attending this school are not included in the main analysis because they were not in a choice school at the end of the first year; nevertheless, they are included in the "intention to treat" analysis in table 7.
9. Four of the original choice schools were said to be in "serious financial difficulty" and, in addition to Juanita Virgil, two more were said to be "on the verge of closing in the Spring of 1990" (Witte, Bailey and Thorn 1993).
10. Siblings were exempt from the random assignment rule. We were unable to identify siblings from the information made available on the World Wide Web.
11. To protect the confidentiality of students, the data on the World Wide Web does not identify the school they attended. To obtain this information, we offered to protect student confidentiality, but we were unable to obtain access to these data.
12. Inasmuch as there were nine grades, two racial groups, and four years in which students applied, analyses could potentially include seventy-two dummy variables representing all possible points of randomization. In practice, the number of dummy variables or "blocks" included in the analyses reported in table 3 varied between eleven and sixty-five, the precise number depending on the number of grades for which students applied in particular years.
13. Many factors contributed to the large number of missing cases. Milwaukee public schools administered tests intermittently. Students were absent on the day the tests were administered. Students left the

city, left the choice program, or were excluded from testing, their test scores were lost, and so forth. One can speculate that the large number of missing cases may bias results in one direction or another. Low performers may be more likely to be tested (because of federal requirements) or may be less likely to be tested (designated as special students); they may be more likely to have moved (live in a mobile home) or less likely to have moved (do not have many options). If the initial assignment to test and control groups was random, one may reasonably assume that all extraneous factors operate with equal effect on both treatment and control groups. The fact that most observable characteristics of the treatment and control groups do not differ significantly is consistent with such an assumption.

14. These data are from the first four years of the choice school experiment. Test score information on the control group was not available on the World Wide Web for subsequent years.

15. We prefer the one-tailed t-test to estimate the statistical significance of the findings, because theory and prior research both suggest that students should perform better in a private school.

16. Results for three and four years after application were jointly estimated by averaging scores for students who were tested in both years and by using the single score available for the remaining students. Dummy variables were included for those who had only a third-year or only a fourth-year score.

17. Background characteristics of students who are included in the "intention to treat" category are virtually identical to those who actually enrolled, as reported in table 2.

**References**

- Arrow, Kenneth. 1951. "An Extension of the Classical Theorems of Welfare Economics." in Proceedings of the Second Berkeley Symposium on Mathematical Statistics. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Beales Janet R. and Maureen Wahl. 1995. Given the Choice: A Study of the PAVE Program and School Choice in Milwaukee. Los Angeles: Reason Foundation. Policy Study No. 183: (January).
- Belluck, Pam. 1997. "Learning Gap Tied to Time in the System: As School Stay Grows, Scores on Tests Worsen." New York Times (January 5): B1.
- Bish, Robert L. 1971. The Public Economy of Metropolitan Areas. Chicago: Markham.
- Blendon, Robert J. 1997. "Changing Attitudes in America." in Why People Don't Trust Government, ed. Joseph Nye Jr., Philip D. Zelikow and David C. King. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Brandl, John E. Forthcoming. Choice and Community: An Agenda for the States.
- Bryk, Anthony S., Valerie E. Lee, and Peter B. Holland. 1993. Catholic Schools and the Common Good. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Card, David, and Alan B. Krueger. 1992. "Does School Quality Matter? Returns to Education and the Characteristics of Public Schools in the United States." Journal of Political Economy 100 (February):1 - 40.
- Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. 1992. School Choice. Princeton, New Jersey: Carnegie Foundation.

- Cochran, W. G. 1965. "The Planning of Observational Studies of Human Populations," Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series A, 128: 234-65.
- Chubb, John E., and Terry M. Moe. 1990. Politics, Markets, and American Schools. Washington, D.C.: Brookings.
- Coleman, James S., Thomas Hoffer, and Sally Kilgore. 1982. High School Achievement. New York: Basic Books.
- Coleman, James S., and Thomas Hoffer. 1987. Public and Private Schools: The Impact of Communities. New York: Basic Books.
- Cookson, Peter W. Jr. 1994. School Choice: The Struggle for the Soul of American Education. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Dearden, James, Barry W. Ickes and Larry Samuelson. 1990. "To Innovate or Not to Innovate: Incentives and Innovation in Hierarchies." American Economic Review (December): 1105-06.
- Driscoll, Mary Erina. 1993. "Choice, Achievement and School Community." In School Choice: Examining the Evidence, ed. Edith Rasell and Richard Rothstein Washington: Economic Policy Institute. Pp. 155-56.
- Elmore, Richard F. 1990. "Choice as an Instrument of Public Policy: Evidence from Education and Health Care." In Choice and Control in American Education, vol 1. ed. William H. Clune and John F. Witte. New York: Falmer Press.
- Evans, William N., and Robert M. Schwab. 1993. "Who Benefits from Private Education? Evidence from Quantile Regressions." University of Maryland, Department of Economics.

- Friedman, Milton. 1955. "The Role of Government in Education." In Economics and the Public Interest, ed. Robert A. Solow. Rutgers University Press. Pp. 123-44.
- Giroto, Jay and Paul E. Peterson. Forthcoming. "Do Hard Courses and Good Grades Enhance Cognitive Skills?" In Meritocracy, ed. Susan Mayer and Paul E. Peterson.
- Goldberger, Arthur S. and Glen G. Cain. 1982. "The Causal Analysis of Cognitive Outcomes in the Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore Report." Sociology of Education 55 (April-July) 103-22.
- Greene, Jay P., Paul E. Peterson, and Jiangtao Du, with Leesa Berger and Curtis L. Frazier. 1996. "The Effectiveness of School Choice in Milwaukee: A Secondary Analysis of Data from the Program's Evaluation." Occasional Paper. Harvard University. Program in Education Policy and Governance.
- Gutmann, Amy. 1987. Democratic Education. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Hanushek, Eric A. 1986. "The Economics of Schooling: Production and Efficiency in Public Schools." Journal of Economic Literature 24 (September): 1141-77.
- Hanushek, Eric A. 1996. "School Resources and Student Performance." In Does Money Matter? The Effect of School Resources on Student Achievement and Adult Success, ed. Gary Burtless. Washington, D.C.: Brookings. Pp. 43 -73.
- Hedges, Larry V. and Rob Greenwald. 1996. "Have Times Changed? The Relation between School Resources and Student Performance." In Does Money Matter? The Effect of School Resources on Student Achievement

- and Adult Success, ed. Gary Burtless. Washington, D. C.: Brookings. Pp. 74 - 92.
- Henig, Jeffrey R. 1994. Rethinking School Choice: Limits of the Market Metaphor. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press.
- Herrnstein Richard J. and Charles Murray. 1994. The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life. New York: Free Press.
- Hieronymous, A. N. et al. 1986. Teacher's Guide Multilevel Battery Level 9-14: Iowa Test of Basic Skills Forms G/H. Chicago: Riverside Publishing.
- Hoover, H. D. et al. 1993. Iowa Tests of Basic Skills: Norms and Score Conversions, Form K, Complete and Core Batteries, Levels 5 - 14. Chicago: Riverside.
- Hoxby, Caroline Minter. Forthcoming. "When Parents Can Choose, What do they Choose? The Effects of Great School Choice on Curriculum." In Meritocracy, ed. Susan Mayer and Paul E. Peterson.
- Jencks, Christopher. 1985. "How Much Do High School Students Learn?" Sociology of Education 58 (April): 128-35.
- Jencks, Christopher and Meredith Phillips. Forthcoming. "Does Learning Pay off in the Job Market?" In Meritocracy, ed. Susan Mayer and Paul E. Peterson.
- Martinez, Valerie, Kenneth R. Godwin and Frank R. Kemerer. 1995. "Private School Choice in San Antonio." In Private Vouchers, ed. Terry Moe. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press.
- Mansbridge, Jane. 1997. "Social and Cultural Causes of Dissatisfaction with Government in the United States." In Why People

- Don't Trust Government, ed. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Philip D. Zelikow and David C. King. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Mayer, Susan and David Knutson. Forthcoming. "Early Education Versus More Education: Does the Timing of Education Matter?" In Meritocracy, ed. Susan Mayer and Paul E. Peterson.
- Meyer, Robert. Forthcoming. "Applied versus Traditional Mathematics: New Evidence on the Production of High School Mathematics Skills." In Meritocracy, ed. Susan Mayer and Paul E. Peterson.
- Milwaukee Community Journal. 1994. Special Supplement. May 4.
- Milwaukee Journal. 1991. "Court Time on Choice Extended." October 3.
- Miner, Barbara. 1990. "'Choice' School in Turmoil Because of Staff Cuts, Changes." Milwaukee Journal. (November 23) B5.
- Mitchell, George A. 1992. The Milwaukee Parental Choice Plan Milwaukee: Wisconsin Policy Research Institute.
- Moe, Terry M. ed. 1995. Private Vouchers. Stanford University: Stanford University Press.
- Moesteller, Frederick, 1995. "The Tennessee Study of Class Size in the Early School Grades." The Future of Children 5: 113-27.
- Nye, Joseph S. Nye, Jr. and Philip D. Zelikow. 1997. "Conclusions, Conjectures, and Puzzles." In Why People Don't Trust Government, ed. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Philip D. Zelikow and David C. King. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Ostrom, Elinor, Roger B. Parks and Gordon P. Whitaker. 1978. Patterns of Metropolitan Policing. Cambridge: Ballinger Publishing.
- Peterson, Paul E. 1990. "Monopoly and Competition in American Education" In Choice and Control in American Education, Vol I. ed.

- William H. Clune and John F. Witte. New York: Palmer, 1990. Pp. 47-78.
- Peterson, Paul E. 1993. "Are Big City Schools Holding their Own?" In Seeds of Crisis, ed. John Rury. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Peterson, Paul E. 1995. The Price of Federalism. Washington, D.C.: Brookings.
- Peterson, Paul E. 1995. "A Critique of the Witte Evaluation of Milwaukee's School Choice Program." Center for American Political Studies, Harvard University, Occasional Paper 95-2 (February).
- Peterson, Paul E., Jay P. Greene and Chad Noyes. 1996. "School Choice in Milwaukee," Public Interest (Fall), 38 - 56.
- Peterson, Paul E. and Chad Noyes. 1997. "Under Extreme Duress, School Choice Success," In Diane Ravitch and Joseph Viteritti, eds. New Schools for a New Century: The Redesign of Urban Education New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Public Perspective. 1993. Roper Center Review of Public Opinion and Polling (November/December).
- Putnam, Robert D. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." Journal of Democracy (January): 65 - 78.
- Putnam, Robert D. 1996. "The Strange Disappearance of Civic America." American Prospect (Winter): 34 - 48.
- Rouse, Cecilia. 1996. "Private School Vouchers and Student Achievement: An Evaluation of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program," Princeton University, Department of Economics and the National Bureau of Economic Research.

- Rubin, D. B. 1984. "William G. Cochran's Contributions to the Design, Analysis, and Evaluation of Observational Studies." In W. G. Cochran's Impact on Statistics, ed. Poduri S. R. S. Rao. New York: John Wiley.
- Schmookler, Jacob. 1966. Invention and Economic Growth. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Smith, Kevin B. and Kenneth J. Meier, 1995. The Case Against School Choice. Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe.
- Steinberg, Jacques. 1997. "Giuliani Plan Aims Tuition at Needy." New York Times (February 4): A1, B2.
- Taylor, Paul. 1991. "Milwaukee's Controversial Private School Choice Plan Off to Shaky Start." Washington Post (May 23): A3.
- Tiebout, Charles M. 1956. "A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures." Journal of Political Economy 64 (October): 416-24.
- U. S. Department of Education. 1991. Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Digest of Education Statistics. Washington D.C.: GPO.
- Wells, Amy Stuart. 1990. "Milwaukee Parents Get More Choice on Schools." New York Times, March 28: B9.
- White, Sammis B., Peter Maser, and Christine Cramer. 1996. Fourth Year Report of the Partners Advancing Values in Education Scholarship Program.
- Wilms, Douglas J. 1984. "School Effectiveness Within the Public and Private Sectors: An Evaluation," Evaluation Review 8: 113-35.
- Wilms, Douglas J. 1985. "Catholic School Effects on Academic Achievement: New Evidence from the High School and Beyond Follow-up Study," Sociology of Education 58 (1985): 98-114.

- Witte, John F. 1990. "Understanding High School Achievement: After a Decade of Research, Do we have any Confident Policy Recommendations?" Paper prepared for the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco. (August 30- September 2).
- Witte, John F. 1992. "Private School versus Public School Achievement: Are There Findings that Should Affect the Educational Choice Debate?" Economics of Education Review 11: 371-94.
- Witte, John F. 1997. "Achievement Effects of the Milwaukee Voucher Program." Paper presented at the American Economics Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, January.
- Witte, John F. 1991. "First Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program." Department of Political Science and the Robert M. La Follette Institute of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison. (November).
- Witte John F., Andrea B. Bailey and Christopher A. Thorn. 1992. "Second Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program." Department of Political Science and the Robert M. La Follette Institute of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison. (December).
- Witte, John F., Andrea B. Bailey and Christopher A. Thorn. 1993. "Third Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program." Department of Political Science and the Robert M. La Follette Institute of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison. (December).
- Witte, John F., Christopher A. Thorn, Kim M. Pritchard, and Michele Claibourn. 1994. "Fourth Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program." Department of Political Science and the Robert M. La Follette Institute of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison. (December).

Witte, John F., Troy D. Sterr, and Christopher A. Thorn. 1995.  
 "Fifth Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program." Department  
 of Political Science and the Robert M. La Follette Institute of  
 Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison. (December).  
 Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau, 1995. An Evaluation of Milwaukee  
 Parental Choice Program. (February).

**Table 1:**  
**Percentage of Students in Main Analysis for Whom Data are Available**

	Choice Students	Control Students
Test Score Available (Table 3, Columns 1 to 4)	79%	72%
Total Number Who Applied 1990 to 1993	908	363
With Test Score 3 or 4 Years After Application (Table 3, Column 5)	40%	48%
Total Number Who Applied in 1990 or 1991, Making it Possible to Have a Score 3 or 4 Years After Application	592	166

**Table 2:**  
**Background Characteristics of Students in Treatment and Control Groups**

	All Students in the Study			All Students with Scores 3 or 4 Years After Application		
	Choice Students	Control Students	p value <sup>a</sup>	Choice Students	Control Students	p value
Math Score Prior to Application	39.7 (264)	39.3 (173)	.81	40.0 (61)	40.6 (33)	.86
Reading Score Prior to Application	38.9 (266)	39.4 (176)	.74	42.1 (60)	39.2 (33)	.35
Family Income	10,860 (423)	12,010 (127)	.14	10,850 (143)	11,170 (25)	.84
Mother's Education 3=Some College 4=College Degree	4.2 (423)	3.9 (127)	.04	4.1 (144)	3.8 (29)	.15
% Married Parents	24 (424)	30 (132)	.17	23 (145)	38 (29)	.11
Parental Time with Child 1=1-2 hrs/wk 2=3-4 hrs/wk 3=5 or more	1.9 (420)	1.8 (130)	.37	1.9 (140)	1.7 (27)	.26

<sup>a</sup> The tests of significance are suggestive of the equivalence of the two groups. Technically, tests of significance should be done at each point of random assignment, but the number of cases at each point is too few for such tests to be meaningful.

**Table 3: Main Analysis**  
**The Effect of Attending a Choice School on Test Scores,**  
**Controlling for Gender Using Fixed Effects Model**

**Mathematics**

	1 Year of Treatment	2 Years of Treatment	3 Years of Treatment	4 Years of Treatment	3 or 4 Years Jointly Estimated
Effect on Math Scores	1.31	1.89	5.02**	10.65**	6.81**
Standard Error	1.98	2.05	3.07	4.92	2.97
N	772	584	300	112	316

**Reading**

	1 Year of Treatment	2 Years of Treatment	3 Years of Treatment	4 Years of Treatment	3 or 4 Years Jointly Estimated
Effect on Reading Scores	2.22*	2.26	2.73	5.84*	4.85**
Standard Error	1.74	1.78	2.63	4.22	2.57
N	734	604	301	112	318

\* =  $p < .10$  in one tail t test

\*\* =  $p < .05$  in one tail t test

**Table 4: The Effect of Attending a Choice School on Test Scores, Controlling for Gender, Education Expectations, Income, Marital Status, Mother's Education, and Time Spent With Child, Using Fixed Effects Model**

**Mathematics**

	1 Year of Treatment	2 Years of Treatment	3 Years of Treatment	4 Years of Treatment
Effect on Math Scores	6.01**	5.36*	8.16*	7.97
Standard Error	3.39	3.39	5.82	9.85
N	378	289	149	57

**Reading**

	1 Year of Treatment	2 Years of Treatment	3 Years of Treatment	4 Years of Treatment
Effect on Reading Scores	4.72**	1.17	8.87**	15.00*
Standard Error	2.88	2.99	5.27	9.45
N	358	293	150	55

\* =  $p < .10$  in one tail t test

\*\* =  $p < .05$  in one tail t test

**Table 5:**  
**The Effect of Attending a Choice School on Test Scores, Controlling for Gender and Test Score Prior to Application, Using Fixed Effects Model**

**Mathematics**

	1 Year of Treatment	2 Years of Treatment	3 Years of Treatment	4 Years of Treatment
Effect on Math Scores	2.34	3.46*	7.40**	4.98
Standard Error	2.32	2.71	4.08	9.16
N	286	185	83	31

**Reading**

	1 Year of Treatment	2 Years of Treatment	3 Years of Treatment	4 Years of Treatment
Effect on Reading Scores	1.50	3.24*	5.28*	-3.29
Standard Error	2.07	2.46	3.74	7.46
N	303	189	84	31

\* =  $p < .10$  in one tail t test

\*\* =  $p < .05$  in one tail t test

**Table 6:**  
**Percentage of Students in Intention to Treat Analysis**  
**for Whom Data are Available**

	Selected Students	Control Students
Test Score Available (Table 7, Columns 1 to 4)	89%	72%
Total Number Who Applied 1990 to 1993	908	363
With Test Score 3 or 4 Years After Application	63%	48%
Total Number Who Applied in 1990 or 1991, Making it Possible to Have a Score 3 or 4 Years After Application	592	166

**Table 7:**  
**The Effect of Being Selected for a Choice School (Intention to Treat) on Test Scores, Controlling for Gender, Using Fixed Effects Model**

**Mathematics**

	1 Year of Treatment	2 Years of Treatment	3 Years of Treatment	4 Years of Treatment
Effect on Math Scores	2.68*	2.59*	3.83*	11.00**
Standard Error	1.89	1.94	2.87	4.14
N	854	728	435	175

**Reading**

	1 Year of Treatment	2 Years of Treatment	3 Years of Treatment	4 Years of Treatment
Effect on Reading Scores	2.46*	2.57*	2.10	6.26**
Standard Error	1.71	1.68	2.48	3.65
N	816	738	441	175

\* =  $p < .10$  in one tail t test

\*\* =  $p < .05$  in one tail t test

## New Research Bolsters Case for School Choice

By HOWARD L. FULLER  
 The big news about Milwaukee's pioneering school choice program is supposedly that a Wisconsin judge struck it down. But there is a more important development, one not yet reported: New research has found "quite large" gains in math scores for the low-income, mostly minority students in Milwaukee's choice schools. Long after last week's ruling is appealed, the significance of the new research will be as successful in the courtroom as in the classroom.

The new research is from Cecilia Elena Rouse, an assistant professor of economics and public policy at Princeton University and a research fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research. Hers is the second study in five months to find positive outcomes from Milwaukee's six-year-old program. The other was by a team from Harvard University and the University of Houston.

Ms. Rouse's findings are especially significant because her independent research set a higher threshold for measuring academic success than did the Harvard-Houston team. The magnitude of the math gains surprised her, she said: Her findings, confined to one program in one city, "absolutely" support the need for more school-choice experiments.

A review of earlier research helps define the importance of Ms. Rouse's work. University of Wisconsin political scientist John Witte evaluated Milwaukee's program from 1990 to 1995. He found high parental involvement and satisfaction and was positive about the discipline, leadership and teacher morale in choice schools. He said choice gave new opportunities to families with very low income and to stu-

ents who were among the lowest performers in the Milwaukee Public Schools. These findings largely have been eclipsed in the media by his separate conclusion, now much in dispute, that choice students showed no academic gains. While choice opponents for years have seized on his to claim that choice "doesn't work," Mr. Witte's data were unavailable for independent review until 1996.

Harvard's Paul Peterson, a distinguished political scientist, questioned Mr. Witte's comparison of low-performing, low-income choice students with more advantaged, higher-performing Milwaukee Public Schools students. When Mr. Witte released his data, Mr. Peterson and Houston's Jay Greene performed an independent analysis. They say Mr. Witte erred by not comparing randomly selected choice students with those who had applied for choice but were randomly rejected. Using the latter comparison, the Harvard-Houston team found significant math and reading gains for students in the choice program at least three years.

Ms. Rouse also began her research last year, when Mr. Witte's data became available. Her study puts forth her independent analysis of the Milwaukee data and sheds light on important questions raised by Messrs. Peterson and Greene's report. First, is choice effective? While Messrs. Peterson and Greene studied students in the program for at least three years, Ms. Rouse imposes a tougher standard. She analyzed all students selected for choice, whether they attended a private school for two years, one year or not at all. She says this is the most comprehensive measure of choice's effect on eligible students.

Against this more demanding test, Ms. Rouse says: "I find the Milwaukee

Parental choice program . . . likely increased math scores by 1.5 to two percentage points a year. . . . Reading scores went up a few percent. When I total the math and reading scores, I estimate that choice students gained approximately 1.3 percentage points a year.

Using the Harvard-Houston comparison (third- and fourth-year choice students with those who were rejected), Ms. Rouse agrees that math gains cited by Messrs. Peterson and Greene are statistically significant. She does not concur that their reading findings are significant.

Ms. Rouse addresses the question of the appropriate comparison to make to determine if gains have occurred. She says the random acceptance and rejection feature of Milwaukee's program theoretically allows a near "idealized experiment," a conclusion consistent with Messrs. Peterson and Greene's. Significantly, she also compares choice students with the better-off sample of Milwaukee Public Schools students (Mr. Witte's preferred comparison) and still concludes that choice students achieved math gains.

The math gains cited by Ms. Rouse are, she says, actually somewhat stronger than Messrs. Peterson and Greene's. With scores for students entering choice at about the 38th percentile, sustained gains of 1.5 to 2.0 points a year are a major achievement in U.S. education. Considering the choice program's greater high parent satisfaction and involvement, it is reasonable to hypothesize that many of these youngsters will graduate from high school and attain other successes.

As a former school superintendent, I know that had the gains cited by Ms. Rouse occurred in a public school experiment, the educational establishment

would have arisen as one to hail their significance. Educators would be scrambling to take credit for a program that might reduce the academic gap between low-income, mostly minority students and more affluent children.

In this case, I predict a different reaction. Despite Ms. Rouse's findings, despite her call for more choice experiments and despite positive findings from Messrs. Peterson and Greene, choice opponents will intensify efforts to stop existing Milwaukee and Cleveland programs and to block new programs in other states. They will turn the word "accountability" on its head, claiming that to be accountable private schools must come under the regulatory burden that has stifled urban public schools.

Ms. Rouse and Messrs. Peterson and Greene correctly call for more experiments and studies to draw firmer conclusions. Among other things, these studies could address their differing views on choice reading scores. Messrs. Peterson and Greene have performed a new analysis that they say reconfirms the positive reading outcomes.

Meanwhile, new national data show that the public school gap between low-income and more advantaged students is persistently and unacceptably large. Milwaukee's choice program has become one of the best efforts anywhere to show that more educational opportunities might be a way to close this gap. Our courts and elected officials need to pursue every path to let this experiment continue.

Mr. Fuller is a distinguished professor of education at Marquette University and director of the university's Institute for the Transformation of Learning. From 1981 to 1995 he was superintendent of the Milwaukee Public Schools.

**Center for Education Reform**



1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Suite 204 • Washington, DC 20036

Tel 202-822-9000  
Fax 202-822-5077

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT  
MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**IMPROVING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES IN THE  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**By:**  
**JEANNE ALLEN**  
PRESIDENT, THE CENTER FOR EDUCATION REFORM  
April 17, 1997

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

I truly appreciate being invited to this all-important committee meeting.

The current condition of our school system here is no different than what Chicago, New York, Milwaukee, San Francisco, or Los Angeles, are experiencing. Nor is much of what the District's schools are facing different than what one finds in many suburban school systems; that is, a growing and urgent concern that we are not doing enough, that too many children are falling through the cracks, and that too many aspects of the system are simply irreparable. With all this said, Washington, DC is unique in that there are unprecedented opportunities available here for change and scores of dedicated people willing to bring that change, that reform, into fruition.

First and foremost, there is the extraordinary opportunity to open charter schools, in fact, to convert all District schools to charters and open up brand new ones. The Center's research shows that Washington, DC has the nation's second

strongest charter law. It is completely open to a diverse array of schools, and provides any charter school the important building level, independence and freedom that has allowed the nation's 480 charters to flourish. But theory and practice are two different things. The District has languished since the charter law was enacted, and lost many an opportunity to provide immediate relief for children from failing schools.

Let me explain how this has worked elsewhere: In virtually every state with charter schools, the authorizing bodies set-up a procedure for application and ways to inform the people of charter opportunities. From there, private groups drummed up interest, such that teachers, parents, civic and business leaders were made aware of what they could do. In most cases, this process took less than a year. States "friendlier" toward the concept worked even quicker.

Of the six states - North Carolina, Florida, South Carolina, Illinois, New Jersey, and Connecticut - and the District of Columbia - that passed charter legislation between January and July of 1996, five of those states [Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, and North Carolina] have already approved a total of 98 charters to open this Fall and the numbers are still rising. The District, on the other hand, was to approve as many as 10 charter schools by legislation passed last year by the Congress. But compared to the others, its pace for getting the process up and running was much slower. In fact, one could even say that at times, it was stopped dead in its tracks. Most people in the District still do not know what they have been given and those that do don't have the foggiest notion of who's in charge or what the procedure for applying will be, unless they happen to be friends with one of the board members. That, I am afraid, is a sad commentary on actually helping children.

Meanwhile, terrific charter schools are successfully serving over 105,000 children around the country and as many as 50,000 more will be in new charters this fall.

Schools like The Accelerated School, based in Los Angeles, was started by two teachers, one a former union steward. They have taken a group of over 80 children whose lives were continually influenced by gangs, violence in and ineffective schools, and created a school tailored to their needs...an oasis from what they had come to expect. The Accelerated School, praised by everyone from California's Governor Pete Wilson to Education Secretary Richard Riley, has over 90% attendance daily, virtually no sign of violence, and a rigorous curriculum that expects all children to learn.

Phoenix, Arizona's ATOP Academy is also that way. The Connect School in Pueblo, Colorado, though more suburban, offered parents an alternative to what they viewed as declining standards. After its first year, Connect posted 8-10% gains in math and reading scores.

Charter schools in Boston caused the teacher's union there to negotiate an unprecedented arrangement to take control of six pilot schools in exchange for being evaluated, like a charter, based on results.

Members of the Committee; there are literally thousand of real life examples like these we could share, and while the objective evidence of success is only now starting to trickle in as the charter movement matures, these stories are evidence in and of themselves that children who weren't, are now being well served, that a higher level of casework and more challenging curriculum are attracting parents from all walks of life, and that in charter schools, you find more integration of different people, different colors, and different levels of ability than what a traditional public school, segregated by artificial attendance zones, has to offer.

That is why watching the District's approach to charter schools is so infuriating for most of us who have seen how charters truly make a difference in the life of a child. Because of one bad apple, the rest of the branches have been cut

back. The District's commendable education leader, General Becton is obviously concerned. Yet we still seem to lack the drive, the initiative, and the sense of urgency to light a fire under the charter movement here. The bureaucracy is something with which you are all well-acquainted. But suffice it to say that those existing 20-30 interested teachers, parents and civic leaders that are fortunate enough to know about charter schools here have all but had their energy, drive and determination sucked out of them waiting for decisions to be made.

Even an approved charter, KIDS I, ready to start in January to serve special education children was forced to pull out of the District because of the failure of school officials to give the final go-ahead. KIDS I is a nationally-acclaimed company which provides a superior and affordable education to children with special needs. So many DC children would have had the chance, for possibly the first time, to be considered truly special and not be warehoused in a traditional DC public school without appropriate attention.

The bureaucracy is even sucking the life out of the District's only real, high quality charter school, The Options School at the Capitol Children's Museum. Director Catherine Martens is serving some of the most challenging students in her school, yet she has been fighting the bureaucracy over whether some of her students qualify for special education funding.

Must she bring in a crew from PrimeTime Live to expose the unnecessary delays, as Yvonne Chan of the Vaughn Learning Center Charter did when her district was two years overdue in its obligations? I would think your answer would be no.

Based on my experience, here is what the District - with the Congress's help - must do:

1. Require that the new charter boards be extensively briefed about charter schools from A-to-Z, by people who have created and managed the process in states such as Massachusetts, Arizona, Michigan and Florida, and by operators of specific schools.
2. Send the new charter board and the school board to spend two days in and around charter schools in Michigan, Minnesota or Boston.
3. Announce and promote [through the media, The Federal City Council's Committee on Public Education and other education leadership groups like FOCUS] the application process, deadlines, etc. The new charter board should **not** limit itself to consideration of applications once a year. They should be on a rolling schedule, and set several review periods.
4. The new charter board should be given its own autonomous staff, separate from the staff who serves the school board and the superintendent. Congress intended the charter board to be an advocate. Staff of the DC Department of Education who must be responsive to all viewpoints in the community cannot adequately promote and maintain a focus on charter schools.
5. Enforce a timeline of not more than five months to accomplish the above, in the hopes that charters may begin to open up in early 1998.
6. Finally, once operating, require that 100% of the average per pupil expenditure for traditional schools follow the child to the charter school and that special education moneys bypass the District completely and go from the US Department of Education to the charter school.

With such broad experience across the country, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. As I stated when I began, the District is not unique in that respect. But it could truly be a national crown jewel if all of the combined hearts and minds that are based in this city are pulled together...prodded, cajoled, and encouraged to reform the schools, and to act now.

I am grateful for the opportunity to be here today, and I'm happy to offer the services of The Center for Education Reform in helping Washington to maximize its educational opportunities.



**Kathleen Sylvester**

*Vice President for Domestic Policy, Progressive Policy Institute*

**"Public Education Improvement Opportunities for the District of Columbia"**  
**Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs**  
**Subcommittee on Oversight of Government, Management, Restructuring**  
**and the District of Columbia**

**Thursday, April 17, 1997**  
**Washington, D.C.**

**Common Standards, Diverse Schools**  
**Renewing the Promise of Public Education in Washington, D.C.**

The struggle to reform public education in the city of Washington is a powerful reminder of the national debate over the future of public education. Citizens here are wavering between their long-held allegiance to public education and an urgent sense of duty to do what is best for children.

This city, like the nation, faces a fundamental choice. We can commit ourselves to rebuilding the public schools by setting high standards and allowing diverse means for achieving those standards. Or we can allow the schools of Washington to atrophy by continuing to tolerate low standards and trying to reform schools with top-down prescriptions.

I hope that Washingtonians will choose to rebuild public education and that Congress will do everything in its power to support that choice. The opportunity is at hand; the need for reform is urgent; and the city is ready for radical change.

Here, as in other failing urban schools, support for privatization and vouchers is growing. Increasingly, those who can afford it are willing to abandon the public system.

But capitulating to the right's simplistic insistence on a market-based strategy of vouchers for private schools will never restore public pressure to make schools better. Private school vouchers will diminish public pressure for reform precisely when that pressure is most needed. Vouchers let politicians and communities off the hook. They will be able to proclaim themselves reformers and do

nothing more while they wait for market effects to bring about reform. Finally, vouchers will send public dollars to schools that have no public accountability and no obligation to meet public objectives.

This city must renew its national commitment to the common public/school and to the fundamental premise that strong public education is essential to a strong democracy. For 200 years, public education has been the foundation of equal opportunity; it is the sole public institution that guarantees every child the possibility of upward mobility and full participation in our common civic culture.

Designing an education system for the 21st century requires a radical approach. Americans must look again at the definition of public education and think again about what a public school should be.

In the past, public education has been defined by its governance—who owns and operates it—rather than its purpose. Public schools are institutions funded by public dollars, operated by public school boards, and staffed by public employees. For too long, the professional "educrats" have held the exclusive franchise on public education. Education professionals make most of the rules; they decide what children need and how schools will meet those needs.

Unlike other professionals, classroom teachers have discretion and control over how they do their jobs, and they are rarely held accountable for how well they perform. Bad teachers are rarely fired; excellent teachers are rarely rewarded. Superintendents are replaced, but the essential core of adults responsible for public education remains immutable—and largely immune from public pressure.

It's time to restore public pressure and hold the public education system in Washington responsible for what the public rightly and sensibly demands—safe and orderly schools where children are required to master basic knowledge, gain lifelong learning skills, and learn to be good citizens.

A new system of public education should not be defined by the way it is governed, but by how high it sets standards for students and how well it helps *all* students meet those standards. In this new system, any school would be considered a public school if it meets high common standards and is accountable to a public authority.

Such a system would completely re-order the priorities of public education. For too long, Americans have accepted a public education system that guarantees standardized schools producing widely diverse standards of quality. It's time to demand a system that allows—and encourages—diverse schools that produce high common standards of quality.

No school district in the nation is better suited than Washington to create such a system of schools. Washington D.C. has the strongest charter school law in the nation. Written by this Congress, the law allows the creation of 20 legally independent charter schools a year with no limit on the total number of charter schools. The law provides for alternative chartering authority so that

the local school board doesn't have veto power over applicants. In a city that currently operates 157 schools, nearly two-thirds of the city's schools could become charter schools in the next five years.

In Washington, the notion of charter schools faces far less opposition than it does in most schools districts. Citizens are ready to support radical change, and there is no central administration that has much power to resist that change. In Washington, the schools are governed by a board of trustees committed to change. These trustees have been given a three-year term in which to save our school system. I hope they choose to transform it.

Charter schools, endorsed and promoted by the Progressive Policy Institute since 1990, offer the model Washington should adopt. Since 1991, citizens and political leaders in 26 states and the District of Columbia have eagerly embraced the charter school idea and its results-oriented philosophy. Charter schools are freed from most traditional rules and regulations; in return, charter schools are held accountable to their sponsors for results measured by performance reviews. These schools focus on good educational results; they exist only as long as they attract students and satisfy parents.

Even with strong backing from the Clinton Administration, the charter movement has so far produced only about 400 schools. The movement has been stymied by teachers' unions fearful that their members will lose jobs. Under current conditions, this handful of innovative schools cannot provide enough leverage to transform 84,000 public schools into a results-oriented education system.

There is evidence, however, that public school choice—applied in a heavy dose—can improve a whole school system. A notable example comes from New York City's District No. 4 in Spanish Harlem. In District No. 4, the concept of public school choice was applied system wide. Teams of teachers were granted autonomy to create distinctive programs to attract students and parents, who became engaged in the process of education reform. Schools that could not compete were closed down. Progress was measurable. In 1974, only 15 percent of students in District No. 4 could read at grade level; by 1992 the number rose to 38 percent. District 4's ranking among New York City's 32 school districts rose from 32nd to 22nd over the same period.

Washington should look to that model and become what Paul Hill, director of the Center for Reinventing Public Education at the University of Washington, calls a "charter district."

The trustees should begin a transformation to a system that sets high common standards for *all* children in *all* of the District's schools—not just for some children in the city's better schools. What would these standards look like? They should be clear, easily understood by parents and teachers, and limited only to what students should know and be able to do so as to be well prepared for subsequent grades, higher education, or technical careers. The city would enforce these standards by requiring periodic testing and requiring students to pass these tests as a condition for promotion and graduation.

In such a system, the trustees would move to a model in which they would stop running

schools directly; they would no longer hire and fire school staffs. Instead, they would hire contractors to run schools, canceling contracts with failing schools; offering new ones to groups with successful track records or promising programs.

These contractors, especially in the early stages of this transformation, will include many groups of teachers and administrators already staffing the city's public schools. But vendors could also include other organizations—ranging from colleges and universities to labor unions to religiously affiliated schools. Any of these institutions could qualify to receive public dollars by meeting state standards for student achievement and public requirements for health, safety, and non-discrimination. Religiously affiliated schools would also be required to keep religious instruction separate from the core curriculum.

Beyond these basic regulatory functions, the central administration will no longer prescribe how every school must operate. Instead, the district will monitor how well ensure that every school meets health and safety standards, does not discriminate, and helps all students meet high public standards. When schools fail to achieve those results, they will lose their contracts and their students will be reassigned to better schools.

Under this common standards/diverse schools model, schools would hire their own teachers and administrators, either on the open market or from registries of certified professionals. Teachers and administrators could apply for jobs of their own choosing. Salaries would be set by the market; merit pay would provide substantial rewards for excellence; teachers could demand higher pay for difficult assignments or additional responsibilities.

Using the publicly accountable trustees as the purchaser of educational services would guarantee two critical elements missing in private voucher schemes: The trustees would ensure that no chartered school could discriminate in admissions policies, and they would withdraw public funding from failing schools.

The roles of teachers and their unions must change radically too. Ultimately, teachers will be accountable for ensuring that all students meet new common standards. In return, schools must allow teachers to use their professional judgment and skills to reach those goals. Their unions will continue to serve as their advocates by helping teachers get the professional training and support they need to help all students and insisting that schools guarantee teachers safe and stable environments.

Businesses and institutions of higher education must reinforce these efforts by offering a payoff for a high school diploma. They must honor only those that are backed up by test results that prove students meet high common standards.

And finally, parents must become active participants who not only help define the standard for what every student must know and can do, but also become educated consumers who monitor their children's progress in reaching those goals.

The D.C. schools must acknowledge the fundamental problem the system faces. The problem is not a lack of resources; it is not bad teachers, or crumbling buildings. And finally, the problem is not students who are too dumb to learn.

The fundamental problem of the D.C. public schools is a lack of high expectations. Few people in this city expect the best from our schools or our teachers or our students. It is this failure to expect—indeed to demand—high achievement that perpetuates inequality. The failure of so many of D.C.'s schools to expect high achievement from certain students—because they are low-income or minorities—means those students are likely to graduate without the basic skills and knowledge they need to succeed in life. When only 15 percent of graduates from inner city high schools go to college, these low expectations condemn the other 85 percent to unemployment or, at best, low-wage service sector jobs after graduation.

In *The Bell Curve*, Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray set forth the proposition that inequality of intelligence is a reality, and that there is a natural bell curve of human cognitive differences. To the detriment of children, American public education often applies this logic to education. School systems like the District's base their expectations on a natural bell curve of aptitude; a certain percentage of students are "expected" to fail; only a small percentage are expected to excel. Students are compared to one another instead of being compared to a common standard of excellence.

Washington must begin to reform its schools by setting out to create a system that evaluates students from all schools against the same criteria. We must pledge that all students will meet those criteria, and that schools will be designed to help them succeed. Taking a cue from the city of Chicago, the schools here must end social promotions. No students should move to the next grade without mastering the content and skills that are clearly defined for that grade. In Chicago, the city lived up to its word: In 1996, 100,000 students who were falling behind found themselves in mandatory summer school.

Dr. Lauren Resnick of the University of Pittsburgh suggests that designing a system on this premise will allow teachers to break through one of the most intractable barriers to good teaching. They will be able to invert the relationship between time and results. Schools now generally provide a standard amount of time of instruction, and whatever learning that takes place in that time is evaluated. Instead, an achievement standard should be set; then students and teachers should get the time they need to meet the standard. In such a system, a student who needs two hours a day of math instruction would get that time.

Such an approach brought great success to one high school with a predominantly poor and minority student body. In 1989, when Dr. Judy Coddling became a high school principal in Pasadena, California, she found that Pasadena High's teachers generally subscribed to the "bell curve" theory of differential expectations for poor students. Coddling insisted that teachers and administrators change their expectations of poor, minority students and demand that they work hard and perform in school.

Codding set a goal for 80 percent of students to finish with As and Bs, but she insisted that the grades be earned honestly. To reach that goal, students took two periods of math a day and attended the school's Center for Independent Learning for extra help. The school year was extended to give students more time to meet the new standards. By 1993, Pasadena had moved from the bottom quarter on standardized tests to the top quarter. Pasadena had literally jumped from being the poorest performing school to the highest in the school district.

Parents are the last ingredient in a system that restores consequences in public education. Public schools are in the exclusive domain of educators. Yet private schools and Catholic schools have always sought to engage parents in their children's education. Parents can walk into schools and talk to the principals or teachers, teachers are directly accountable to the parents. It's time to move away from the model that segregates the responsibilities of parents and teachers. Parents must be re-engaged as advocates for their children and "consumers" of public education.

In many Texas communities, parents are the driving force behind school reform. One such school is Zavala Elementary in Austin. In 1990, after inheriting a dispirited staff, low achievement, and grade inflation, a new principal at Zavala took the risk of telling parents that while a large percentage of Zavala students were on the honor roll, they were not competitive with other students across the city or the state. Their scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) were abysmal.

Working with the Texas Interfaith Education Fund, an organization dedicated to grassroots reform, angry parents became advocates for their children. The reform group held a workshop (with sessions in English and Spanish) to explain the meaning of TAAS scores. In the first grade, Zavala students fared as well as other Austin students, but fell behind each subsequent year. By fourth grade, most Zavala children were unqualified for the competitive middle-school program and high school magnet programs.

Once parents knew the facts, they were successful in partnering with the staff to shrink class sizes, start an after-school program, change curriculum and teaching techniques, and implement peer tutoring. In 1994-1995, Zavala had the highest attendance of any elementary school in Austin (97.8 percent), and the percentage of students who passed the TAAS surpassed the citywide average.

The trustees and General Becton have a real choice to make about how they will spend the next three years. They can patch the broken system by closing some schools; firing some teachers and administrators; repairing the worst buildings; and replacing outdated equipment and materials. Or they can *replace* the broken system with a new one by setting high standards and expectations and creating incentives for the best educators to meet those high standards.

If they choose the latter option, I predict they will have a great deal of help. Many parents are eager to help. Other urban school systems are ready to share the lessons they have learned. The local business community, through organizations such as the Committee on Public Education, backs the charter movement. A coalition of business and political leaders is organizing to form a Charter School Development Corporation to help offset capital costs for these schools. I hope the Congress will not only support but encourage this effort.

These changes will not transform every public school in the District of Columbia overnight. But they will begin to turn the public schools of this city into the kind of system that its 78,000 students—and all the other citizens who live here—deserve.

\*\*\*

**STATEMENT OF KEVIN P. CHAVOUS  
CHAIRMAN, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL'S  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, LIBRARIES AND RECREATION  
  
BEFORE THE UNITED STATES SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING,  
AND  
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**April 17, 1997**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

I am Kevin P. Chavous, the new Chairman of the D.C. Council's Committee on Education, Libraries and Recreation which, as you may know, has jurisdiction over the District of Columbia Public Schools, the University of the District of Columbia, the District of Columbia Public Libraries, and in addition, the Department of Recreation and Parks.

I would like to thank the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, Subcommittee on Oversight on Government Management, Restructuring, and the District of Columbia for giving me an opportunity to testify on "Public Education Opportunities for the District of Columbia".

Mr. Chairman, these are exciting times for the District of Columbia, for it is during this time of budgetary chaos and constraints that we can begin to rebuild

our entire educational infrastructure. We have no choice but to look for solutions to address the overwhelming underachievement of our student population. Our Committee is in a unique position to foster enhanced collaboration among the educational entities under our purview, for the sole purpose of producing a well-rounded student, who not only achieves, but can compete on a national level.

To that end, the Committee is working closely with the D.C. Public School System (DCPS) to "jumpstart" educational reform in the District of Columbia. One of our most important goals is to make sure that DCPS refines the recently developed FY 1998 School Based Staffing Model, which is the initial step in building a zero based budget for schools. Once all facets of the school-by school based are honed, it is the Committee's hope that the needs of the students will be adequately addressed.

Currently, a major debate rages about educational funding in this city. All policymakers are being faced with increased pressure to do more with less resources. There are those who say, we can no longer throw money into a vacuum. Yet, on the other hand, there are others who clamor for substantial increases in funding for schools. Student achievement must serve as a foundation for whatever additional resources are allocated to schools. While I do not claim to have the panacea or the "quick-fix" for the ails of the Public School System,

I am convinced that if we focus on four major areas, we can spend our money wisely. Those areas are:

**Student Achievement**

All the budgets in the world are for naught if "Johnny cannot read". In Goals 2000, the residents of the District of Columbia stressed that a performance based education is tantamount to accomplishing educational reform. The schools have to create more rigorous standards for student performance. The method for student assessment has to change so that DCPS can measure not only what students know but also what they are able to do with their knowledge. We have to ensure that students master reading, writing, and arithmetic in their appropriate levels before they are moved on to their next grade.

**School by School Based Budgeting**

Mr. Chairman, in attempting to achieve a school by school based budget, equity will serve as the foundation for the distribution of resources. However, some schools may receive augmented resources depending upon their particular needs. With such a budget in hand, any citizen of the District of Columbia can pick up the budget book and see how and where funds are spent in any school.

A parent should no longer need to question or decipher expenditures since they will be plainly and readily available. Additionally, the people who misspend money will be held accountable for their deeds.

#### **Principal/Teacher Training and Evaluation**

We must develop strategies that hold principals and teachers, alike, for the performance of our children. There is no tradition of decision making based upon setting priorities that are tied to accountability and teaching mechanisms that work. There should be performance-based appraisal for all employees. Teachers and principals need to be assessed accurately, fairly, and timely. Just as significantly, our system should be able to reward good teachers and principals, and ferret out those who are not performing. Specifically, as it relates to principals, more often than not, where we have good principals, our students excel. We must endeavor to place the very best principals in each school in our system.

#### **Community-Based Schools/Community Hubs**

Family and community participation, coordination and integration of social services, adult education and lifelong learning, and substantive collaboration and

partnerships with all segments of the community are listed as Goal VII of the Goals 2000 Plan. It is in this spirit that the Committee has embraced the Community Hub Concept, which as been defined by the D.C. Education Licensure Commission as " [a] D.C. Public School building used as a multi-purpose center that provides the opportunity to integrate support services and enable inter-generational uses to meet the lifelong learning needs of community residents. Family and community services could include before and after school care, counseling, tutoring, vocational and career training, art and sports programs, housing assistance, family literacy, health and nutrition programs, parent education, employment assistance, adult education, and access to technology." During a hearing in January of this year, the Committee was delighted to learn that Community Hubs do not require additional funding. Rather, Community Hubs coordinate and utilize already existing resources. It is our fervent hope that DCPS and other appropriate authorities will replicate the Community Hub Concept, as established at Patricia Roberts Harris Educational Center, in all wards of the city.

Mr. Chairman, children are no longer taught under trees or in one-room schoolhouses. In addition to strengthening the academic core of our schools, we must also concern ourselves with school facilities in which learning and other activities take place. Public school facilities have to be rebuilt, modernized and

maintained at 21st century standards. Children and all those who are involved in schools are entitled to the use of attractive facilities in which they feel safe, in which they want to come, and perform to their fullest potential. Additionally, the infusion of state-of-the art technology is mandatory if our students are to leap into the next millennium with a competitive edge.

Recently, the Committee received the "District of Columbia Public Schools Long-Range Facilities Master Plan". However, an essential element -- the academic component, which should be the driving force behind any facilities planning and improvements -- was absent. While DCPS's effort to derive a comprehensive facilities master plan is laudable, the Committee felt it was necessary to solicit parental and community involvement from a knowledgeable panel of persons from around the city to help DCPS produce a Facilities Master Plan for submission to Congress by April 25, 1997, as required by the School Reform Act. Consequently, as Chair, I appointed a Special Task Force to assist General Becton's office with the development of this edict. I am pleased to announce that the Special Task Force has met with General Williams and presented his office with its views on the fundamental parts which need to be included in the final plan. Both parties agree that the plan will be considered a living document for further revision and continuous update. This level of

cooperation between the Committee and DCPS gives credence to the commitment of both entities to move forward in the best interests of the children.

Over the past six months there has been marked advancement in the management of DCPS facilities. Our challenge remains the development of multiple sources and predictable financing for capital improvements for these facilities. We are aware that the D.C. Government's resources are insufficient to pay for these much needed improvements. We will, no doubt, have to look to other revenue sources in order to accomplish our goals.

Of all the tasks the Committee is charged with, perhaps none is more crucial than exercising vigilant oversight and holding parties accountable for the spending of taxpayer dollars. The Committee intends to be aggressive in its oversight responsibility, and has scheduled the following hearings:

- **Student Achievement (May 1, 1997)**

In this hearing the Committee will examine policies relating to student achievement in D.C. Public schools with special emphasis on early childhood development, Pre-Kindergarten through the third grade and meeting national tests standard goals.

- **Charter Schools (May 15, 1997)**

The Committee intends to examine the progress that the District of

Columbia Public Schools has made in: chartering new schools, monitoring existing schools, or revoking the charters of problem schools, if circumstances warrant such revocation.

- **Truancy (May 28, 1997)**

The purpose of this Public Oversight Hearing is to discuss truancy in the District of Columbia and to unveil a model truancy program that the Committee has been instrumental in helping develop and which is designed to empower children to stay in school.

- **Principal/Teacher Training and Evaluation (June 5, 1997)**

The Committee will examine what DCPS is doing to revolutionize this area.

These are but a few of the efforts the Committee is in the process of putting forth in its effort and commitment to make the D.C. Public Schools the pride of the District of Columbia.

Written Testimony of Mark E.P. Roberts, a parent, before the Senate Subcommittee on Oversight Of Government Management, Restructuring, and the District of Columbia, 4/17/974/15/97 Hearing on Improvement Opportunities for Public Education in the District of Columbia.

### **CHANGE BEFORE CHOICE**

*What business are we in?* As a marketing major at Columbia Business School, much of our case study analysis of businesses and organizations centered on this fundamental question. I remember vividly the oft-repeated history of a leading supplier to the horse and buggy industries who stubbornly refused to adapt his business to the nation's shift to automotive travel. His subsequent failure arose from the narrow definition he applied to his endeavors. He forgot what business he was in -- transportation -- and paid a steep price with warehouses full of useless inventory. As this subcommittee and other interested parties seek genuine and significant improvement in the D.C. public schools, we must be careful not to make the same mistake as this near-sighted businessperson, lest we reap the same results and find our educational coffers full of shortsighted solutions.

To me, the business of public education is knowledge, specifically the delivery of knowledge. It is through this delivery system that we as a nation make our biggest investment in our future. It is through this delivery system that we mold and, ideally, inspire our youth, develop and mine their innate skills and potential, create informed citizenry and national consciousness, foster appreciation and respect for both fact and interpretation, and assure our industries of a stable, motivated, and productive labor force.

When reviewing the report, *Children In Crisis*, released in November by the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority, its devastating conclusion merits revisiting. *"For each additional year that students stay in DCPS, the less likely they are to succeed, not because they are unable to succeed, but because the system does not prepare them to succeed."* The report goes on to detail countless symptoms of a system clearly in decline. For too long, it seems, the business of public education in the District of Columbia has been jobs creation. The system has been designed not to serve children, but rather to serve adults

**Written Testimony of Mark E.P. Roberts: CHANGE BEFORE CHOICE. 4/17/97**

and their political ends and economic means. In our efforts to prescribe remedy, therefore, we must be careful not to do the same.

The state of New York recently concluded an extensive study of its public schools in an effort to answer one important question: why do some public schools outperform others? After controlling for income and other demographic variables, New York concluded that four factors created success in public education, and this achievement was not limited to any one socioeconomic group or pattern. The four factors were: a strong principal with a clear vision; a well-articulated curriculum; targeted staff development; and strong, meaningful parent involvement.

Clearly, far too many D.C. public schools have failed to address each of these critical areas. What is needed now -- and what I believe can occur -- is a *systematic* approach to correct these deficiencies and reprioritize our efforts, rather than a localized solution which liberates only a few from the prism of failure and low expectation crippling the system today.

I was born and raised in Anacostia here in Washington, D.C. I received a solid elementary school grounding at Our Lady Of Perpetual Help, my neighborhood parochial school. Despite the small physical plant, relatively poor parish, overcrowded classrooms, and well-worn books, I was able to spring from that segregated platform all the way into the Ivy League. My wife, also a Washington native, received her firm educational foundation in her assigned neighborhood public school, and also later entered the Ivy League.

For us, then, neighborhood-based, public education was a logical choice for our children. We wholeheartedly embrace the egalitarian ideals shaping the very concept of free, public education. We wanted our children to attend their neighborhood school, as we had done, socialize with children also drawn from their community, and learn first-hand how to value their fellow human beings for whom, and not what, they were. Of course, we also wanted a quality program full of intellectual challenge, high expectations, and inspired instruction similar to the ones we enjoyed as children.

**Written Testimony of Mark E.P. Roberts: CHANGE BEFORE CHOICE. 4/17/97**

Prior to 1995, when we relocated back to Washington from New York, we remained confident that our children were being well served. Like most urban children, ours attended public schools which were overwhelmingly populated by children of color. Too often, this demographic reality alone has been used to justify massive failure, or to explain away consistently poor testing results, or even to legislate profound changes and takeovers, as recently occurred in Hartford. In fact, given the seemingly high per student expenditure rate in urban education today, one can presumably draw only one of two conclusions. Either these children cannot learn, or our public school systems are incapable of teaching them - unless, of course, their numbers are artificially diluted via various bussing, redistricting, or ability tracking schemes.

My experience as a public school parent tells me differently. In New York, all was not perfect. Our neighborhood schools suffered from overcrowding, uneven performance, and, sometimes, uninspired leadership. The difference here -- the answer here -- lies in the remedies at hand. New York's regulations regarding parental involvement gave us the ammunition we needed to effect change. Because parents and parent associations were treated as part of the system, rather than a part from it as is the case here in the District, we were able to improve our neighborhood schools.

If the principal failed to exhibit the strong, clear leadership required for excellence, we were able to effectively agitate for removal. If a vacancy in the local administration occurred, a parent-led panel interviewed and screened a worthy replacement. If a teacher's performance, as measured by yearly, class-specific data, indicated a deficiency in technique or instructional will, we were able to demand either extensive retraining, or lateral placement outside of the classroom.

Mandatory consultation areas, including budget, curriculum, resource allocation, and staff development, empowered both our local parent associations and our required school-based management teams. As an active member in both groups, I was able to work with the administration and teacher representatives as an equal. Together, we worked to raise our collective level of expectation for our students, including those whose parents were, for whatever reason,

**Written Testimony of Mark E.P. Roberts: CHANGE BEFORE CHOICE. 4/17/97.**

absent from our discussions. As a leader in our District's President Council, I was also able to work with other parents from around the city, strengthening both each other and our public schools.

Similar to The Citizen's Charter enacted in 1991 in Great Britain, we, parents, received extensive annual reports on our individual schools, including three-year trends, parent outreach programs, school-based budgets, and comparable performance data from similar schools. In addition, grade-specific descriptions of curricular goals, objectives, and assessment tools gave us the information we needed to rally for change. In effect, change became our choice.

Here in Washington, as I painfully discovered during a tortuous first year for one of my children at our assigned neighborhood school, these powers of change and influence did not exist. Schools operated as the private domains of principals and distant central administrators. The opinion of parents was neither sought, nor welcomed. Parent associations operated outside of the D.C. school system in a quasi-private collection of P.T.A.'s with no regulatory power and no clear purpose.

When my fourth grader was confronted with a program replete with low expectations and inadequate instruction, everyone told me there was nothing to be done. As I watched homework disappear, workbooks go unused, projects wither unassigned, I felt like a desperate mouse caught in an endless maze. After numerous conversations with the principal, the central administration, the local P.T.A., elected school board members, and others, I called my saga "*chasing it*," as in "there is nothing I can do about it," or "I'm not at liberty to discuss it."

In June, my daughter's standardized test scores exhibited a ten percentage point decline after only one year in the D.C. public schools. Here was physical evidence of the Authority's far-reaching conclusions. Had strong, meaningful parent involvement, one of the cornerstones of success in public education, been a legislated aspect of public education in D.C., we, parents, in concert with like-minded teachers and administrators, could not only have discovered "*it*", but also have turned "*it*" around. Instead, we transferred our children to a another school and joined the ranks of the fortunate few.

**Written Testimony of Mark E.P. Roberts: CHANGE BEFORE CHOICE. 4/17/97**

I now know public education can work here in the District. At their new public school, my children have found a strong principal with a clear vision. They have benefited from a well-articulated curriculum, outstanding staff development, and an active and informed parent body. I have watched them rediscover a joy for learning and challenging work, music and art, science and literature. I have seen their prospects grow. Each day, as I pass their old school, the neighborhood school which should be thriving, I look into the familiar faces of children who also deserve an equal chance, and I wonder how it is that two schools in the same city, with the same pay scale and the same basic books, could be so different in their approach to learning and their underlying expectations for achievement? My children sorely miss their daily interaction with the neighborhood kids and the neighborhood school, but they relish their new-found confidence in themselves and their abilities.

How, then, can this inequity be addressed? How can we improve the prospects for *all* the children, and not just a few? For me, the answer is clear. Rewrite the rules of engagement. Unleash parental influence through specific measures mandating parental input, approvals, and organization. Reclaim elected parent associations as central elements in the search for excellence, elements far too important to leave to the province of outside groups. Elevate the District's Office Of Parent Involvement beyond the Title I limits around which it now revolves. Educate parents on their new rights and responsibilities. Arm parents with specific data on local school and classroom performance, school budgets, and measurable curricular targets. Resist the urge to "solve" the problem from on high. Involve parents in all aspects of public education.

Do this, and I am convinced we can truly hail a new renaissance in public education in the District, *and* save our remaining neighborhood schools. All of them. It is imperative that we act now. Clearly, the right choice is change.

**TESTIMONY OF COUNCILMEMBER CHARLENE DREW JARVIS  
CHAIRMAN PRO TEMPORE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
SUBMITTED TO THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE  
ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING,  
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
ON "IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA"**

**April 17, 1997**

I am pleased to have this opportunity to submit testimony for the hearing today on "Improvement Opportunities for the Public Schools in the District of Columbia". I applaud your effort to work with the leadership in the District of Columbia to find the very best ways to improve our public school system.

We all agree that our school system is in crisis. A swift improvement in that system is essential to the revitalization of the District of Columbia. In addition to my current position as Chair Pro Tempore of the Council, I also chair The Committee on Economic Development and am a member of the Committee on Education, Libraries and Recreation. These capacities give me a unique perspective on how the success of the school system is intertwined with the success of the District as a whole.

I am cautiously optimistic about the effects of the efforts that new Chief Executive Officer General Julius W. Becton, Jr. and Dr. Bruce MacLaury, Chairman, and all the members of the Emergency Transition Education Board of Trustees have been making in the five short months since they were appointed. And there has already been an observable improvement in the management of elements under the purview of the system's facilities staff.

I am, however, concerned that their long range efforts thus far seem entirely real estate driven and not based on a clear plan for improving the academic success of the students. I grant that the new executive team faced a myriad number of emergencies that had to be addressed immediately. The physical condition of our aged school inventory had to be a top priority to avoid further court ordered schools closings, and to keep our students and teachers out of danger. General Charles Williams, the new Chief Operating Officer, has made substantial progress in this area.

There is, however, a more fundamental question that we must answer. As the writer of a recent document sent to the Council asked, "How should the school system restructure itself to handle educational reform, diminution of space, school closings, space allocation, repair, renovation, construction and capital decisions, while promoting improved learning of children?"

In the movement to efficiently reduce the school systems holdings, cut costs, and produce revenue there are several points that must not be overlooked:

Any school system should have as its mission the education of its students. I believe it is not appropriate, nor the best use of the school system's leadership and resources, to create a whole new real estate development entity within the school system. Most users of large space these days, such as corporations, pension funds, institutions, non-profits, municipalities and investing groups, are doing exactly the opposite. Much has been learned as companies down size, strive for efficiency, shift to new technologies, and grapple with the need for capital. These large entities are abandoning their full service real estate divisions in favor of selective outsourcing, in large part because they have realized that the entity's mission is weakened by becoming sidetracked by major efforts in construction and management of facilities. Because of the impossibility in these times, of counting on a consistent capital budget, large space users find long range planning difficult, and much creative thinking must be employed to find new sources of capital. The many options, selling to raise capital, issuing bonds, partnering with others, etc. are studied by outside finance and other experts. It would be best for a school system not to try to create this new bureaucracy when this expertise already exists elsewhere.

Some possibilities:

The District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Authority (RLA)

The Economic Development Corporation (EDC) proposed in the "President's Plan"

An independent School Construction Authority (SCA)

The District of Columbia Housing Finance Agency (HFA) for projects involving housing

Any disposition of former schools should be viewed within the context of the overall Comprehensive Plan for the District of Columbia and District wide economic development planning objectives. There are many questions we now ask of those who want to develop property in the District.

How will this proposed project:

encourage a growing and balanced economy through the retention and attraction of District-based industry, trade or commerce?,

maintain or increase the tax base?,

promote the health, happiness, safety, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of the citizens and residents?,

protect the resources of the District?,

encourage the expansion of economic opportunities for women and minorities?

These are not unimportant questions. We together must assess the needs of each community which now houses one of these former school buildings. These properties must not be disposed of, even for a quick financial gain, at the expense of the greater community.

General Becton, The Board of Trustees and the Administration of the District of Columbia Public Schools must concentrate their full efforts on the improvement in learning for our students. It would be helpful for the system to have outside, objective and authoritative standards against which it can measure each school's individual performance. In that regard, I recommend that the school system actively pursue accreditation of every school in the system by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Many of our high schools and one of our elementary schools are now accredited, but our efforts should be expanded to include all junior high, middle schools and elementary schools. Even a preliminary visit by the Middle States team can have a positive effect on a school community as it begins the process of self study in reaction to recommendations for improvement. The system also must continue to work towards a proper ratio of administrators, staff, teachers, counselors and psychologists that will make us consistent with other urban districts, taking into account the District's state functions.

I have conveyed my concern about these issues to General Becton and his leadership team, and we have pledged to work together to produce the best outcomes for our students and our city.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer my comments to this committee. I am most willing to discuss my recommendations further.



**Testimony on Hearing for Public Educational Improvement Opportunities  
For The District of Columbia**

**Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, Restructuring,  
and the District of Columbia**

**Testimony by Dr. Howard Fuller, Distinguished Professor of Education  
and Director of the Institute for the Transformation of Learning at  
Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Senior Fellow with the  
Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, Providence  
Rhode Island.**

Senator Brownback:

Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify on issues related to improving public education in Washington D.C.

I am and always will be a strong supporter of public education. For more than 14 years, prior to becoming the Superintendent of Milwaukee Public Schools in June of 1991, I was a consistent and constructive critic of that system's discriminatory practices against poor Black children - practices that had the collective impact of miseducating and under educating literally thousands of our children. I gain no solace from the fact that the system has not worked for a significant percentage of Milwaukee's poor Black children.

I am no expert on the Washington D.C. Public Schools, but I have read many articles, and I have talked to a number of people close to the situation in D.C. I believe that District of Columbia Public School System, like Milwaukee's system, has failed to educate far too many of our poorest children. It is crucial for the sake of children enrolled in the District of Columbia's Public School System that fundamental and radical changes be implemented. I believe a two-pronged strategy is warranted. There must be efforts to change the system from within. While at the same time, there must be the pursuit of alternative strategies outside of the existing system. Included in

the "outside of the system" strategies should be a program that gives real choice to poor parents.

Although I strongly support public education, in the final analysis, it is not the system that is important, it is the students and their families that must be primary. We must ask the question, "What is in the best interest of the children?" - not "What is in the best interest of the system?" In my professional opinion, the interest of poor students are best served if they are truly given choice which permits them to choose from a variety of successful options, public and private.

I want poor Black parents -- poor parents of all colors, for that matter -- to have the same options for their children that those of us with money have. Why should poor parents be told to remain in schools that do not work and then be told that if we give them the resources to leave, it might destroy the system? Again, I raise the question, what is the major concern here, the students and their parents or the system?

I believe the educational systems in this country are essentially organized to meet the needs and protect the interests of those who work in these systems, not the needs and interests of the children and families the systems are supposed to serve. For the sake of our children, WE MUST CHANGE!!!

As we look to the 21st century, we must develop ways to ensure that our kids can learn anything, anytime, anyplace. So our structures, curriculums, teaching and learning processes, and our funding mechanisms must help prepare our kids for the future.

During my tenure as Superintendent of 22, I supported a whole range of ideas and concepts aimed at improving learning opportunities for all of our children -- including charter schools, the flexibility to close down failing schools, public/private partnerships, rigorous curriculum standards, innovative schools from within, decentralization, and site-based budgeting. I found hundreds of administrators, teachers, and support staff in the Milwaukee Public Schools who supported these ideas. They believe, as I do that the system must be transformed radically if all of our children are to be effectively educated.

But educational systems like Milwaukee and Washington D.C. will not achieve this mission if the current configuration of power is allowed to remain in tact. I believe the Washington D.C. Public School System remains fundamentally mired in the status quo. Powerful forces conspire to protect careers, contracts, and current practices before tending to the interests of our children. I firmly believe, based on my study and experience, that school choice is an important tool to aid in the effort to change the current situation. I believe choice is a key element in the quest for the alternative strategies I mentioned earlier in my remarks. Twenty seven years ago, Dr. Kenneth Clark spoke to this very point when he stated:

**Alternatives --realistic, aggressive, and viable competitors--to the present public school systems must be found. The development of such competitive**

public school systems will be attacked by the defenders of the present system as attempts to weaken the present system and thereby weaken, if not destroy, public education. This type of expected self-serving argument can be briefly and accurately disposed of by asserting and demonstrating that truly effective competition strengthens rather than weakens that which deserves to survive. I would argue further that public education need not be identified with the present system of organization of public schools. Public education can be broadly and pragmatically defined in terms of that form of organization and functioning of an educational system which is in the public interest. Given this definition, it becomes clear that an inefficient system of public systems is not in the public interest:

--a system of public schools which destroys rather than develops positive human potentialities is not in the public interest;

--a system which consumes funds without demonstrating effective returns is not in the public interest;

--a system which insists that its standards of performance should not or cannot be judged by those who must pay the cost is not in the public interest;

--a system which says the public has no competence to assert that a patently defective product is a sign of the system's inefficiency and demand radical reform is not in the public interest;

--a system which blames its human resources and its society while it quietly acquiesces in, and inadvertently perpetuates, the very injustices which it claims limit its efficiency is not in the public interest.

It is within this general context then that I support choice for poor parents. I realize that there are many people who have philosophical and /or political differences with this concept. But, for me it is a very crucial part of the overall effort to radically transform learning opportunities for poor kids.

In closing, then, I want to make four points:

1. For almost 20 years I have struggled in various ways to improve learning opportunities for poor children. My support for choice is a continuation of that struggle.
2. I do not support any type of choice program that would increase the competitive advantage of individuals who already have resources.
3. My support for choice is aimed at helping to create an environment of change both within and outside of the existing system. I want to see improvement across the entire spectrum of learning opportunities

for poor children. I do not want to destroy the public segments of those environments. I do, however, want to empower poor parents to give them the capacity to influence the direction of the change that is needed.

4. Education is inextricably linked to a person's ability to function as a responsible, independent citizen. Yet for many children, particularly poor children of color, a quality education remains a distant dream. We must, if we believe in the fundamental American premise of equal opportunity, offer poor children the chance to have the best possible learning opportunities - a chance most of us take for granted for our own children.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important issue.

#####

Ms. Chris Llewellyn  
3731 18th St NE  
Washington, DC 20018  
202 832 1430

**PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND PROPOSED CLOSINGS OF DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**1. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACT (ADA) AND DCPS HEARINGS:** The recent April 1997 hearings for proposed school closings were open to the public and in a public school building, yet these hearings did not meet ADA standards. Consequently, students, parents, and other community members with disabilities did not have equal access to testify on behalf of their neighborhood school. Of these hearings, I participated in that of April 9 at Spingarn HS and watched the others on television. To my knowledge, there was no sign interpretation for the hearing impaired and none of the schools were wheelchair accessible. Because the microphone needed to be handheld and close to the mouth, persons reading braille and others unable to hold the microphone could not or could not independently give testimony.

Effective January 26, 1992, Title II of the ADA "prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in all programs, activities, and services of public entities. It applies to all state and local governments, their departments and agencies, and any other instrumentalities or special purpose district of state or local governments. A state or local government must eliminate any eligibility criteria for participation in programs, activities, and services that screen out or tend to screen out persons with disabilities, unless it can be established that the requirements are necessary for the provision of the service, program, or activity."

**2. NO ONE ON THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES IS A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY OR HAS DEMONSTRATED AN EXPERTISE IN THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.** Although individual testimonies at the April 9 hearings did address particular programs in schools serving special needs students, the Board of Trustees has yet to acknowledge that the school closings will affect an untold number of special education and special needs students.

**3. ADA AND SCHOOL CLOSING CRITERIA:** Ironically, one criteria for school closings is that schools buildings must meet ADA requirements. According to the Disabilities Rights Council of Greater Washington, very few schools meet ADA requirements. However, some schools which are proposed to closed meet more requirements than the receiving schools, e.g., Woodridge Montessori ES has a ramp and appropriate door widths while Langdon ES meets no ADA requirements.

**4. FACILITIES REASSESSMENT REPORT:** Although the Board of Trustees has pledged to reform Special Education Division (SED) to the degree that privately schooled students will return to local schools, they cannot successfully do so without the partnership of SED and the disability rights community. The aforementioned report was compiled without consultation with Mr. Jeff Myers, Executive Director, or Dr. Mattie Curry Cheek, the Inclusion Coordinator, or other SED administrators. Neither did the Office of the Chief Operating Officer/Director of Facilities DCPS consult with the special needs students or their advocacy groups to insure that "reasonable accommodations" required by ADA and IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) are incorporated into the master facilities plan.

**5. PROPOSED SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND SEGREGATION:** While there has been testimony about the illegality of closings which would further the racial segregation of local schools, attention needs to be paid to those school closings which would create the segregation of those special education and special needs students who are currently in inclusion programs. The Board of Trustees has yet to acknowledge that ADA and IDEA are as much of a public mandate as is the ruling of BROWN VS. BOARD OF EDUCATION.

**6. SEGREGATION AND EXCLUSION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS SHOULD BE AMONG THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES CRITERIA FOR SCHOOL CLOSINGS.** It is well documented that DCPS lacks the needed appropriate placements for special education students and that DCPS spends one-third of its \$63 million budget on private school placements.

DISTRICT  
OF  
COLUMBIA  
BOARD OF  
EDUCATION



**TONYA V. KINLOW**  
AT-LARGE REPRESENTATIVE  
415 12th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004-1994  
(202) 724-5457, fax: (202) 724-2040

April 18, 1997

Honorable Sam Brownback  
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management  
Restructuring and the District of Columbia  
601 Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Brownback:

Thank you for talking to me at the end of the hearing on D.C. Schools. This letter is a follow-up to our conversation about the proposed school closings. Children in the District of Columbia will suffer if the Board of Trustees is allowed to proceed with their school closings plan. We need you to:

- Direct the Trustees to close only six schools until they have developed a long-term academic plan to improve our schools
- Direct the Trustees to keep schools open where children are performing above grade level and parents are actively involved in their children's educational experience.

By April 23, the Board of Trustees will make a decision on closing several successful schools. Schools such as Hearst, Patterson, Woodridge, Peabody, Lewis and Nalle have students who consistently perform above grade level. Several of these schools are schools of choice for families. They provide an important alternative to unsuccessful neighborhood schools, and help to keep middle-class families in the city. We need your help to keep these schools open and available to our children and their families.

The Trustees would have you believe that they can move these programs in tact, and that they can do so without affecting performance. Unfortunately, this is not a fact. As stated by Mr. Mike Roberts at your hearing, it takes a good principal, effective teachers, sound curriculum and active parents working together to make successful schools. Creating the right formula does not happen overnight. Instead of closing successful schools, the Board of Trustees should seek to duplicate their success across the city.

I agree that we need to reduce the amount of space in the city school system. However, the Trustees should take a more rational approach that includes protecting academic excellence and preserving parental choice. Unfortunately, there are very few schools of excellence in our city, if the Trustees are allowed to close Hearst, Patterson, Woodridge, Peabody, Lewis and Nalle there will be even fewer choices.

I have attached for your review several news articles and a position paper from the Hearst Elementary School for your review. I welcome an opportunity to speak with you personally about this issue. Please call me at (202) 724-4289 if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

*Tonya Vidal Kinlow*  
Tonya Vidal Kinlow  
At-Large Representative

## Executive Summary

---

As the Washington Post's April 12, 1997, editorial states: "Throwing out good schools along with poorly performing ones makes little academic sense. So does resegregating the city's few racially diverse and educationally strong schools." (See appendix A.) Hearst Elementary School is one of the best performing, most racially balanced school in the city. This report presents the Hearst Elementary School PTA's justification for keeping Hearst open.

- Successful, fully-enrolled, and diverse schools, such as Hearst, should not be closed. *First, do no harm.*
- Hearst is a de facto magnet school, drawing children from all over the city. Sixty-five percent of our children are from out-of-bounds. School choice should be an important goal for the Trustees.
- As one of only seven early childhood demonstration programs in the city, Hearst draws upon the best current educational research and theory. Two of these seven programs are slated for closure. Preserving and promoting sound educational programs should be an important goal for the Trustees.
- Hearst is one of the most racially, culturally, and economically diverse schools in the city—it is 44 percent white, 41 percent black, 12 percent Hispanic, and 3 percent Asian. The out-of-boundary children bring Hearst its diversity. Closing Hearst will also adversely affect the racial balance at another neighboring school, Eaton. Preserving and promoting integration should be an important goal for the Trustees.
- The closing list includes transferring many smaller schools into larger, under-utilized facilities, which would cause overcrowding. This goes against current research showing that smaller class sizes and smaller schools promote educational excellence, which would in turn attract more families to the public schools. Striving for small classes and schools should be an important goal for the Trustees.
- The Hearst program will not survive a move to Whittier Elementary. Hearst and Whittier differ in their physical campus, assessment philosophies, approach to science and art, achievement levels, and ethnic composition. Merging three schools (Hearst, Petworth, and Whittier) with at least two different teaching staffs that have differing training, teaching

styles, and philosophies is both impractical and irresponsible. Achieving good school management should be an important goal for the Trustees

- When asked in a survey what they would most probably do if Hearst closed, Hearst families responded in the following way: 27 percent would move out of the city, 24 percent would apply to another Ward 3 school, 19 percent would send their child to private or parochial school, only 18 percent would consider Whittier, and 12 percent were unsure what they would do. Keeping families in the city and in its public schools should be an important goal for the Trustees.
- The DCPS rationale for closing Hearst is weak and flawed. Much of the data is outdated or inaccurate. *Systematically* evaluating all schools on each criteria should take place before schools are closed. A comprehensive facilities plan needs to be on-going and dynamic, and it needs input from the community and parents. Academic performance and parental and community involvement should be included as criteria.
- Closing Hearst would adversely affect the capacity of elementary schools throughout Ward 3, which already has the smallest ratio of square feet per child enrolled. Closing Hearst would leave no room for growth in Ward 3. Demographic analysis shows this to be true because Ward 3 schools are already operating at or above capacity.
- Hearst's low operating costs, low project cost to modernize, and low deferred maintenance costs would result in a *inconsequential net gain* from the sale of the facility. The Hearst facility is not obsolete. Renovating the building would be cost effective. Age of the building should not be a determining factor.
- Selling public park and recreational land, part of the Hearst parcel, to generate income for the school system is bad public policy. Once this precious natural resource, now held in the public trust, passes to private hands, it will be lost forever.
- There are significant obstacles to selling and redeveloping the site should the school be closed, least of which is uncertainty about ownership of the land. The Hearst school property may be owned by the National Park Service.

## Response to Criteria

---

This report responds to each of the DCPS criteria for closing Hearst Elementary. It points out inappropriate, inaccurate, and outdated data in the DCPS report and presents and discusses other criteria that should have been considered, such as academic program and parental involvement. It will show how the DCPS criteria, as applied to Hearst, is not only ambiguous and subjective but also harmful.

The decisive criteria cited in DCPS's report to close Hearst are:

1. **Composition of student population, including number of out-of-boundary**
2. **Proximity to other schools**
3. **Projected demographics**
4. **Physical condition, cost of repair, age**
5. **ADA compliance**

The Hearst PTA's response to each of these criteria, plus additional factors not considered by DCPS follows.

1. **Composition of student population, including number of out-of-boundary**

Hearst is a school of choice, a de facto magnet school that attracts children of all races and income levels from every Ward in the city. Sixty-five percent of Hearst's students come from outside the school's attendance zone. As a result, it is one of the District's most racially, culturally, and economically mixed schools.

The out-of-boundary enrollment process fosters integration, encourages understanding among people from different backgrounds and adds richness and vibrancy to a child's educational experience. On March 1, 1993, DCPS adopted a Voluntary Desegregation Plan to facilitate racial desegregation in some of the city's schools. In the Plan, DCPS acknowledged that the District has "high levels of racial isolation" that must be addressed. Closing Hearst because of its out-of-boundary population shows a startling lack of appreciation for the value of diversity in educational settings and of the legal battles that culminated in the integration of Ward 3 schools in 1967.

**Racial mix.** Hearst's racial distribution makes it one of the city's most balanced public schools: 44 percent white, 41 percent African American, 12 percent Hispanic, and 3 percent Asian.<sup>1</sup> This diversity is the product of voluntary selection. It occurs without busing, court orders, or additional funding. Closing Hearst would eliminate one of the city's truly integrated schools and might even challenge the legal precedent established in *Hobson v. Hansen*, 269 F. Supp. 401 (1967). In *Hobson*, Federal Judge H. Skelly Wright held that "[L]earning to live interracially is, or in a democracy should be, a vital component in every student's educational experience." (See also Lisa Greenman's article in the Washington Post Outlook section, April 13, 1997, in appendix A.)

**Economic mix.** Out-of-boundary enrollment also fosters economic diversity. A PTA poll taken in March 1997, with 66 percent of families responding showed that an equal number of Hearst families have incomes under \$20,000 as over \$125,000 with a normal distribution throughout all income levels. Thirteen percent of the students receive free or subsidized lunches.

**Cultural mix.** In addition, Hearst educates a significant number of children from the international community. This year, 18 percent of Hearst students are identified as ESL (English as a Second Language) students.

## 2. Proximity to Other Schools

Ward 3 has by far the fewest number of schools of any Ward—11 compared to 17 to 25 in other Wards. No new school has been built in Ward 3 since 1936. In school year 1996–1997, Ward 3 had the smallest average square foot per student, at 118 sf/student, of any Ward. This is considerably lower than the targeted 142 sf/student ratio stated in the DCPS Goals 2000 report.

Hearst serves as an over-flow school for its nearest schools, which are all over-enrolled: Eaton at 125 percent, Janney at 106 percent, and Murch at 122 percent. Hearst annually accepts pre-kindergarten students from Murch, Janney, and Eaton because those schools cannot accommodate them.

The DCPS report states that "Eaton could most likely absorb the 44 in-boundary students" and that Eaton has "12 rooms identified as resource rooms and have no capacity assigned."

---

<sup>1</sup>These data come from the October 4, 1996, official DCPS enrollment numbers.

In reality, Hearst has 55 in-boundary students, not 44, and Eaton's resource rooms are already being fully used as a storage room/entryway to the teachers' lounge, an afterschool program room, music room, one science lab, 5th grade classroom, 1st grade classroom, 2nd grade classroom, two art classrooms, two ESL classrooms, and a PE room.

The DCPS technical corrections issued March 27, 1997, states that neighborhood children from Hearst's attendance zone will have priority on space at Eaton over out-of-boundary children. . . ." The effect of this new policy would be to force Eaton's out-of-boundary students back to their neighborhood schools and imperil the delicate racial and cultural balance at Eaton, another of the city's most racially and culturally diverse schools. In addition, Hearst's 55 students will not come as a block of two classes. They will be spread through pre-kindergarten to 3rd grade further increasing Eaton's already bulging class sizes.

### **3. Projected Demographics**

Ward 3 is the only Ward with a significant increase in population. Between 1980 and 1990, the number of Ward 3 residents increased by 7 percent. Each time redistricting occurs, Ward 3's boundaries are adjusted to keep its population comparable to other Wards. More specifically, tables 1 and 2 show that Ward 3 is the only Ward with a growing school-age population and increasing enrollment trend. Enrollment in all other Wards has decreased or not changed.

The population in the census tracts around Hearst are, by citywide standards, showing signs of healthy growth. Tract 10.2 increased 70.6 percent between 1980 and 1990. Tract 6 increased 9 percent. Tract 12 decreased 1.7 percent. An independent analysis of birth records in the relative census tracts shows stability between 1984 and 1995, with occasional slight spikes in a given year.

Table 3 shows that Ward 3 also has experienced a significant increase in the number of housing units compared to other Wards. In fact, only one block from Hearst, on Springfield Lane, seven new single-family homes are under construction. Contrary to the DCPS's report, these indices reflect a pattern of increased future growth.

**Table 1**  
**Changes in Total Population and Residents Under 18 by Ward,**  
**1980-1990**

Ward	Total Population	Under 18 years old
1	1%	-6%
2	0	-2
3	+7	+1
4	-4	-15
5	-9	-18
6	-7	-23
7	-16	-28
8	-12	-22

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *1991 Indices*, p. 78.

**Table 2**  
**Enrollment Trends by Ward**

Ward	SY '81-82	SY '92-93	Number Change	Percent Change
1	7,425	6,993	-432	-6%
2	6,772	6,743	-29	0
3	<b>4,850</b>	<b>5,420</b>	<b>+570</b>	<b>+12</b>
4	10,295	9,663	-632	-6
5	12,932	9,753	-3,179	-25
6	10,685	10,646	-39	0
7	15,960	12,664	-3,296	-21
8	17,334	13,417	-3,917	-23

Source: *DCPS School Buildings; 1981-82 to 1992-93*

**Table 3**  
**Change in Housing Units, 1980-1990**

Ward	1980	1990	Difference	Percent Change
1	37,945	38,712	+1,000	+2.0%
2	45,171	45,119	-52	-.1
3	<b>38,110</b>	<b>40,420</b>	<b>+2,310</b>	<b>+6.1</b>
4	30,280	30,389	+109	+.4
5	30,496	30,795	+299	+1.0
6	32,687	32,274	-413	-1.3
7	33,157	31,920	-1,237	-3.7
8	29,133	28,860	-273	-.9

Source: *DCPS, Trends for the District of Columbia Schools*

#### 4. Physical Condition, Cost of Repair, Age

Hearst's facility is structurally sound and well maintained. Walk into Hearst and experience its cheerful, safe, vibrant environment. The building is neither dilapidated, costly to operate, nor costly to modernize.

Hearst's operating budget is one of the lowest in the city—only *two* others cost less to operate. The Division of Facilities Management Operational Cost by School Report for FY 1995, in appendix B, shows the operating costs for DC schools in descending order.

Hearst also has one of the lowest facility project cost needs. According to the DMJM report prepared for DCPS on February 18, 1997, Hearst ranks in the *bottom* 10 percent of elementary schools. Only *nine* other schools had lower project costs to modernize. (See appendix B.)

The Hearst PTA commissioned Eichberg Construction, Inc., a regional commercial construction company based in Rockville, Maryland, to complete an independent evaluation of the condition of the school building, which can be found in appendix B. Contrary to the DCPS report, Eichberg found that project costs for Hearst would cost under \$1 million, at least 40 percent less than DCPS's estimate.

In addition, Eichberg found that none of the project costs identified by DCPS posed immediate health and safety risks. Rather, Eichberg suggested that all the improvements could be made over time as money became available. The only repairs that should be undertaken within the next six months are the replacement of gutters and downspouts—a need that has been apparent since the winter of 1995–1996 and that was *missing* from the DCPS report.

Hearst's total project costs are *inconsequential* compared to DCPS's projected overall project costs to modernize of \$2 billion.

If deferred maintenance costs were compared among schools, the 21st Century Fund Position Paper (draft dated April 4, 1997) found that only one school's cost of repair was lower than Hearst's, at \$660,199. The average cost of all schools was more than 5 times that amount of \$3.4 million.

DCPS maintains that buildings constructed before 1930 tend to be obsolete and need be removed from the DCPS inventory. Forty-six percent of DCPS were built in the same decade as Hearst, 1930, or earlier. The Hearst facility is clearly not obsolete. It is an example of an older building that needs relatively few renovations. Whittier Elementary (where Hearst's program is

proposed to be moved) was built in 1926 and by contrast needs substantially more in improvements—approximately \$3.5 million in project costs.

Hearst's high-ceilings, large airy rooms, and expansive windows offer a conducive learning environment for an early childhood program based on learning centers that are set up around each classroom.

The October 25, 1995, utilization survey cited in the DCPS report is *out-dated*. Hearst now houses eight classrooms, one art/afterschool program room, one science/computer lab, and one assembly room/library resource center. The facility has exhibited its flexibility each year as the staff have adapted its space to meet changing learning needs.

As for technology, the building is ready for the 21st century. Hearst successfully converted the telephone system from a rotary to a digital one in 1995 and installed an internal wiring network connecting each classroom to an Internet hub.

The financial net gain with regard to operating costs, project costs to modernize, and deferred maintenance cost, by closing Hearst is so meager that it will not incrementally contribute toward the financial savings envisioned by DCPS.

#### **5. ADA Compliance**

Few, if any, DCPS schools are ADA compliant. This criteria cannot fairly be used to justify closing Hearst.

#### **6. Potential Value if Sold or Leased**

Although the property value was not cited as a decisive criterion for closing Hearst, it is significant that DCPS has rated the property Class A—one that can be quickly sold or leased and with revenue potential estimated at approximately \$1.9 million. The estimate contains several flaws.

First, the DCPS property value evaluation included the entire undivided (Lot A) upper lot (159,995 square feet) encompassing the school facility's footprint, the upper fenced-in asphalt playground, the D.C. Recreation Department's lower playground and historic "Little House," the basketball court, upper soccer field, and wooded area. The lower soccer field and tennis courts (Lot B), clearly owned by the National Park Service and maintained by the D.C. Recreation Department, comprises the remainder of the land, referred to in this report as the Hearst campus. The site zoning map can be found in appendix B.

Hearst's campus is heavily used by residents from all over the city who have come to know Hearst through the school and the D.C. Recreation Department's summer camps and soccer programs. The ethnic diversity of Hearst's classrooms are mirrored on Hearst's basketball courts.

Second, the property is zoned RIB, which would allow a residential developer to build homes on 5,000 square foot lots accommodating 20 to 30 new homes. A plan to dispose of not only a school building, but valuable public park and recreational land is not only bad public policy, it will be extremely difficult to accomplish.

Numerous problems would hinder this development and would make a quick sale impossible:

- A developer would encounter significant opposition from activist neighborhood associations who would oppose losing such valuable amenities as the school and public parkland, resulting in lowering of property values.
- There is sufficient uncertainty about the ownership of the Hearst land. The Hearst PTA commissioned Land Research, Inc., to conduct a title search. No title could be found. Historical records cited in *Tenleytown, D.C.: Country Village into City Neighborhood* by Judy B. Helm (1981) indicate that a large parcel, known as the Hearst campus, was turned over to the federal government in 1931 by then-owner Rear Admiral Cary Grayson for development of an elementary school and a large playground. The property may still be owned by the federal government.
- If Lot A is still owned by the federal government, precedent holds that the federal government will retain it.
- Development of land next to National Park Service Land (Lot B) is complicated and time consuming, requiring environmental impact statements and other extensive reviews.

#### **7. Academic Program and Parental and Community Involvement**

Two of the goals in the DCPS's Goals 2000 Interim Report (dated January 31, 1997) were not criteria in the school closing consideration:

- Goal I—Ensure that all students reach high standards of academic achievement, and
- Goal VII—Increase family and community involvement in education.

*Why close a school, such as Hearst, that has reached and surpassed these goals? Hearst exhibits all the characteristics of parental and community involvement. (See Fact Sheet in appendix B.)*

The Analysis and Recommendations Report prepared by D.C. Councilwoman Kathy Patterson states that schools should strive for the seven features listed below. Hearst has already reached each of Ms. Patterson's levels of achievement.

**1. High academic expectations for students and outstanding results**

- Hearst's CTBS scores were recognized as "most improved" in 1994.
- Hearst's third grade CTBS scores for mathematics were third highest in the school district in 1995.
- Hearst's third grade CTBS total battery of scores were in the 91st percentile nationwide in 1996.

**2. Small class size and low student-teacher ratio**

- Hearst's class sizes range from 17 to 23 students.
- Hearst has a teacher and aide in every class.

**3. Small school size**

- Hearst's enrollment is less than 200 children.

**4. Clear goals and priorities**

- Hearst is effectively implementing an early childhood education plan.

**5. Staff empowerment, professionalism, and competence.**

- Hearst's highly trained staff frequently demonstrate their understanding of developmentally appropriate early childhood instructional practices to teachers and administrators from across the metropolitan area and the nation.

**6. Effective instruction**

- Hearst's test scores, noted in item 1 above, clearly indicate that effective instruction is taking place at Hearst.

**7. Parent and community involvement**

- Nearly 80 percent of Hearst families have paid PTA dues and all or part of the \$180 student assessment fee.
- Twenty-one PTA standing committees organize school-wide events.
- Hearst's Local School Restructuring Team (LSRT) is fully functioning.
- The PTA raised more than \$50,000 during last school year to be invested in providing resource teachers, computers, and supplies.
- Hearst's active community connections include partnerships with the Naval Telecommunications Command Center, Sidwell Friends School, The Washington Home, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Fillmore Arts Center, and Discovery Creek Children's Museum, and the Northwest Health Care Center.

## **Response to the DCPS Proposal to Move Hearst's Program to Whittier**

---

Hearst's model program is studied by teachers and administrators throughout the city who seek to learn from it. We know portions of the program are being replicated at other schools, but we also know Hearst's program cannot be moved intact to another location. Many factors are key to Hearst's success. Most of them cannot be found at the Whittier location.

This section of the report explores the reasons why Hearst's early childhood program would not survive a move to Whittier Elementary.

### **A Different Physical Campus**

Hearst's early childhood program and responsive classroom techniques require an environment and classroom management style that encourage young children to be strong critical thinkers, to feel confident in their abilities, and to be willing to take risks in their learning. Hearst's small-scale setting allows children to know other children and teachers outside the boundaries of their own classroom. For a young child, this conveys a feeling of safety and security that encourages the intellectual risk-taking necessary for academic excellence. Transplanting Hearst's program into a facility triple the current size will destroy this fundamental aspect of the program.

In addition, the Hearst campus with its extensive parkland offers adequate outdoor green space to expand and enhance classroom lessons and to foster the development of gross motor skills, which research directly links to literary success. Whittier's adjacent outdoor space is limited to blacktop areas with no green areas for field sports and science exploration.

### **Different Assessment Procedures**

Hearst uses the Work Sampling System, which has been adopted by demonstration schools and which includes narrative reports to parents. Whittier uses standardized checklists and report cards, which are not compatible with Hearst's approach to early childhood education. Hearst's approach recognizes that each child develops at a different pace and that social development is a necessary precursor to academic excellence. Hearst's teacher's accept the child's individual growth pattern as they work at grade level expectations.

### Different Arts and Science Programs

An integral part of Hearst's early childhood program is the instruction students receive in art, dance, science, music, and drama, which is integrated across the curriculum at all grade levels. The objectives of the arts program is coordinated and consistent with the classroom teachers' objectives. The Consortium of National Arts Education Association notes that "arts education benefits the student because it cultivates the whole child, gradually building many kinds of literacy while developing intuition, reasoning, imagination, and dexterity into unique forms of expression and communication."<sup>2</sup>

### Different Achievement Levels

The scores shown in table 4 reflect differing achievement levels of the school.

**Table 4**  
Comparison of 1996 CTBS 3rd Grade Median Percentile Scores

	Reading	Math	Language	Science
Hearst	77	85	90	78
Whittier	40	53	46	43

Source: DCPS, Office of Educational Accountability, Student Assessment Branch

Families who send their children to Hearst have experienced high performance. They will shy away from schools where performance has not been consistently high.

### Different Cultural Composition

Table 5 shows that Hearst is a small school with a multicultural and multiracial orientation. Whittier is a much larger school with an ethno-centric orientation. Families who choose Hearst for its well-balanced racial composition will likely seek another, more integrated school.

---

<sup>2</sup>Consortium of National Arts Education Association, *National Standards for Art Education*, 1992.

**Table 5**  
**Comparison of Ethnic Composition**

	<b>Total Students</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Asian</b>
<b>Hearst</b>	165	41%	44%	12%	3%
<b>Whittier</b>	428	96%	1%	3%	0

Source: DCPS, Office of Educational Accountability, *SY 1996-97 Official Membership by School, Grade, Sex, and Race*, October 3, 1996.

#### **Different Age Grouping and Enrollment**

Hearst serves children from pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade. Whittier students continue to 6th grade. Hearst's enrollment is 165 versus Whittier's enrollment of 428. If Hearst and Petworth are transferred to Whittier, the total enrollment would balloon to more than 600 children—a number completely incompatible with early childhood learning needs. Research from the Consortium on Chicago School Research and from the Center on Organization and Restructure of Schools at the University of Wisconsin indicates that the ideal school size for elementary schools is 350 or less. The grouping of older children with the youngest children is also inconsistent with Hearst's program goals.

#### **Additional School Management Issues**

The early childhood program at Hearst began in 1991. The Hearst principal, teachers, and parents have worked for many years to establish a foundation that produces academic excellence. Trying to infuse the Hearst philosophy at Whittier will leave behind the foundation: the many years of collaboration and hard work that has produced consistency in a small, safe, diverse, friendly setting that educates the whole child. After six years, much hard work, and collaboration among the teachers and staff, the program is fully functioning, the goals are clearly defined, and the children achieve at or above their expected grade level. Whittier's program is headed by a dynamic principal and has a parent body and faculty that have made tremendous strides in just 1 1/2 years. But Whittier does not operate an early childhood program, and their goals are still forming. The principal states that teachers use a range of styles, from traditional to innovative. The merging of three schools with different teaching staffs, instructional methodologies, administrative

procedures, and goals requires planning. Proposing to accomplish this task during the 10 weeks of summer vacation when teachers are not working is not only impractical, it is an irresponsible management decision.

Perhaps most critical to the success of Hearst's program are the families. A PTA survey (contained in appendix B) revealed that more than 50 Hearst families (46 percent of those responding) would consider leaving the city or sending their children to private or parochial schools rather than risk the move to Whittier. Of the 108 families who responded to the survey, only 2 in-boundary and 17 out-of-boundary families said they would consider using Whittier. Even more significantly, none of the out-of-boundary students would attend their neighborhood school. Many Hearst families are already preparing to put their homes on the market or placing their names on waiting lists at private schools.

In summary, Hearst's program would be dismantled by moving it to Whittier, most Hearst families will not make the move to Whittier, and the Trustees' objective of attracting more families back to D.C.'s public schools would be dealt a severe blow.

### **Community Support for Hearst**

---

In addition to the hundreds of heartfelt, passionate personal letters you have received from parents and neighbors (excerpts enclosed), Hearst has also garnered support from the following individuals and organizations whose letters of support, testimonials, and editorials are enclosed in appendix C.

- Ward 3 Councilwoman Kathy Patterson
- At-Large member of the D.C. School Board Tonya Vidal Kinlow
- ANC 3C
- ANC 3F
- Hearst Recreation Council and Friends of Hearst Park
- The Washington Home
- The McLean Gardens Condominium
- Tech Corps-DC
- D.C. Stoddert Soccer League
- The Northwest Current
- More than 200 neighbors and friends who signed a petition to oppose the Board of Trustees proposed plans to close Hearst
- Ward 3 PTA Presidents

## Recommendation

---

The early childhood program at the Hearst site should remain open.

The Hearst PTA's goal is to work with the Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees in a responsible and thoughtful manner in pursuing alternative funding sources, public-private partnerships, and studying the feasibility of DCPS building a new early childhood education center for children across the city, at the Hearst location.

Hearst has received letters from The Enterprise Foundation and NCB Development Corporation expressing interest in proposals for financing if Hearst decides to pursue Charter School status. (The letters can be found in appendix D.) We also will pursue the Hearst Foundation and Fannie Mae, our neighbor, for grants. Hearst has received more than \$75,000 from the Hearst Foundation in the last 6 years.

In addition, the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, Inc., which is funded by the Department of Education to assist public schools on issues related to equity and school improvement, has offered free assistance to Hearst and DCPS to establish a structured adopt-a-school program between Hearst and other schools so Hearst can continue to share its experience as a leader in early childhood education. (The letter can be found in appendix D.)

The Hearst PTA has a strong track record for raising and managing funds. In the past two years, we have raised more than \$50,000 annually. These funds are invested in the school. The parents contribute to purchase materials and services that help make Hearst an excellent learning environment.

Keep Hearst open, and welcome involved parents and committed community leaders into the long-range facilities and educational planning process.

---

## Appendix A:

### Letters to the Editor, Editorials, and Articles

---

# The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

## *Closing the Right Schools*

**T**RY TO IMAGINE the public's reaction if former school superintendent Franklin Smith had recommended closing 16 schools without bothering to weigh each school's performance or whether it offered a successful educational environment. Such short-sighted action would have provoked an understandable public outcry. That's exactly what the appointed D.C. school board of trustees now have on their hands. The proposed school-closing plan drawn up by the new school administration ignored—with the trustees' assent—questions of educational quality. Academically successful school programs with citywide appeal are now in peril. Parents are upset, and with good reason.

Few would dispute the need of a cash-strapped school system to get rid of excess space. That clearly is a way to cut costs and acquire funds to put into schools that survive the cut. But the D.C. Council's Education Committee chairman, Kevin Chavous, and Ward 3 council member Kathy Patterson contend that the new plan is driven by real estate and facilities decisions to the exclusion of considerations of a sound educational mission. Their view is drawing plenty of support across the city.

Ms. Patterson has prepared an analysis which shows that if the plan is adopted without changes, more elementary school students will be housed

in larger rather than more desirable small-to-medium schools, and that more students will be assigned to less desirable open-space design schools. Moreover, the analysis indicates, the plan will have a crushing effect on school choice, because out-of-boundaries students will be sent back to more racially segregated schools in their neighborhoods.

Initially, the trustees had hoped to put school closings on a fast track by conducting two quick public hearings followed by a speedy decision in order to meet a control board mandate to close at least six schools by the beginning of the school year in September. However, after three public hearings filled with emotional and fact-laden testimony from hundreds of witnesses, the trustees now have much to consider.

Throwing out good schools along with poorly performing ones makes little academic sense. So does resegregating the city's few racially diverse and educationally strong schools. The new trustees face a daunting task. In the space of three years, they must bring operating efficiencies to a poorly managed system, get more bang out of limited educational dollars and achieve fundamental improvement in the core areas of academics. Closing the wrong schools will undercut those essential goals.

# Turning Back the Clock

## Why Close a School Where the Races Mix?

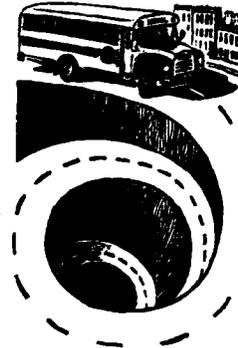
By Lisa Greenman

The years between 1991-1994 saw the largest backward movement toward segregated schools since the Supreme Court decided *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, the Harvard Project on Desegregation reported last week. "In American race relations, the bridge from the 20th century may be leading back into the 19th," the report said. We may be deciding to bet the future of the country once more on separate but equal."

The District of Columbia's Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees is poised to accelerate this disturbing trend by proposing to close one of the only District schools that offers both racial diversity and academic excellence. Before voting on whether to close Hearst Elementary School, the most racially balanced school in the District, the board should reflect upon the history of educational segregation in this city and the efforts to overcome it. Setting the clock back on integration is something our city cannot afford.

Hearst is located west of Rock Creek Park, in Ward 3. The neighborhood is largely affluent and predominantly white. Perhaps the board staff believed that dooming a Ward 3 school would make the overall school closing plan more palatable throughout the District. If so, the

See CLOSINGS, C3, Col. 1



BY CHRISTOPHE VOULET FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

### 'DEEPENING SEGREGATION'

From: "Deepening Segregation in American Public Schools," a report by the Harvard Project on School Desegregation.

"Desegregation is not only sitting next to someone of the other race. A child moving from a segregated African American or Latino school to a white school will very likely exchange conditions of concentrated poverty for a middle class school. Exactly the opposite is true when a child is sent back from an interracial school to a segregated neighborhood school.

... it is important not only to consider isolation of nonwhite students from whites but also the isolation of whites from the growing parts of the population. . . . Although they are growing up in a society where the Census Bureau predicts that more than half of school age children will be non-whites in a third of a century, many are being educated in overwhelmingly white schools with little contact with black or Latino students."

cont., The Washington Post, Outlook, April 13, 1997

## The Cost of Closing Schools

CLOSINGS. From C1

Emergency Board needs to examine its target more closely.

Hearst students, for the most part, neither mirror nor hail from the affluent white neighborhood in which their school is located. Fully two-thirds of Hearst students—my child among them—are enrolled from beyond its boundaries and attend by choice, their parents having lined up at dawn or camped out overnight to gain admission to the program.

Hearst's 165 students this year are 44 percent white, 41 percent African American, 13 percent Latino and 3 percent Asian. Less than a handful of District schools have similarly equitable proportions of black and white students; only 18 of 155 schools still have more than 25 white students.

Some of the 16 schools on the list of those slated for closing are dramatically underused and underachieving. But Hearst is filled beyond capacity and its test scores annually rank above the 90th percentile nationwide. It is a premier early childhood education program that trains teachers from schools throughout the District and is visited by educators from around the country.

School desegregation expert Sheryl Denbo, director of the Mid-Atlantic Center, a nonprofit organization funded by the U.S. Department of Education, cites Hearst as "one of the District of Columbia's great success stories. It is not only desegregated physically, but integrated socially." Closing Hearst, says Denbo, "should be unthinkable."

That the Hearst community exists as it does and where it does is the result of years of litigation, followed by an extraordinary investment of talent, commitment and trust by school administrators, teachers and parents.

While most Americans are familiar with *Brown v. Board of Education*, they may not realize that the District of Columbia school system, too, argued for "separate but equal" education all the way to the Supreme Court. In *Hollings v. Sharpe*, a companion case to *Brown*, the Supreme Court held unconstitutional the District's "legally" segregated school system. Outlawing segregation, however, did not lead to integration in 1954. The struggle for equality in education continued.

In 1967, in a lawsuit brought by African American parents of District schoolchildren, federal Judge J. Skelly Wright held that D.C.'s school system deprived African American and poor children of their constitutional right to equal protection. "Racially and socially homogeneous schools damage the minds and spirit of all children who attend them," he wrote in *Hobson v. Hansen*, and he ordered that high-achieving schools west of Rock Creek Park offer access to poor and minority children from other parts of the city.

"[L]earning to live interracially is, or in a democracy should be, a vital component in every student's educational experience," Wright wrote. "Negro and white children playing innocently together in the schoolyard are the primary liberating promise in a society imprisoned by racial consciousness." Those words have particular meaning in the hallways and on the playgrounds of Hearst, where parents and teachers follow the children's lead in forming transracial friendships.

The Hearst of 1967 was one of the schools required under *Hobson* to open its doors to the larger community. Since then, no D.C. school has achieved integration more successfully. If the Emergency Board closes Hearst now, it nullifies this accomplishment. It also makes an affirmative decision to resegregate the remaining first-rate Ward 3 schools.

The Emergency Board has indicated that if Hearst closes, its in-boundary students—the children of Ward 3—will be invited to enroll in another high-achieving Ward 3 school, John Eaton Elementary. The out-of-boundary families, on the other hand, who have chosen Hearst to meet our children's needs, will lack that comfortable option.

In addition, giving in-boundary Hearst students a right to attend John Eaton will reverse that school's progress toward diversity. Located in affluent and predominantly white Cleveland Park, John Eaton is already operating at 125 percent of its capacity. Nevertheless, the school uses out-of-boundary admission to foster diversity. Its student body is 23 percent black, 44 percent white, 27 percent Latino and 6 percent Asian. Adding in-boundary students will mean again displacing out-of-boundary students.

Responding to public outcry on behalf of Hearst, the Emergency Board now suggests it intends simply to close the Hearst building and move the school's model program to the physical plant of Whittier Elementary, one of the underused schools in Ward 4. Establishing an early childhood program in Ward 4 is a terrific idea. Hearst's success should be replicated. But what does it mean to "move" a school—particularly one like Hearst that thrives as a small school for small (4- to 9-year-old) children—and plunk it down into another one, triple its size?

Whittier is a school that has struggled in the past but has shown significant progress in the last few years. Still, it is a fledgling program: its reading, math and science scores are below the national average and District average and its educational approach is radically different from Hearst's. One need not be clairvoyant to predict what will happen if the board continues in this direction. Hearst's in-boundary families will choose the easier alternative of sending their children to John Eaton. Those out-of-boundary families who can afford to will likewise opt to avoid the unknown, which Whittier represents, and search elsewhere for academic excellence. The Hearst community would be destroyed.

Across the country, school districts are investing in "magnet" schools, hoping that by offering academic excellence they can overcome residential segregation and create schools that are desegregated by choice. Hearst provides the District with exactly such a program, at no extra cost. Yet the Emergency Board cites Hearst's large out-of-boundary population as a reason for closing the school.

Fortunately, board members can still vote to preserve Hearst. By doing so, they will help to ensure that the bridge our public school children build leads to diversity—and not more years of separate and unequal.

## School closings, round one

For much of this school year, adults have been dragging children around to one public hearing after another as the debate over school closings takes center stage. Most of these children have been elementary students and there's always at least one adult in the audience who suggests, because these hearings run late into the evening and draw scores of speakers, that the children be allowed to speak first so as not to miss their bedtime. While it is encouraging to know the District's troubled public education system produces such articulate young folks, the very fact that there are too few of them is a testament to the real dilemma facing the city.

The successful programs at Hearst, Brent, Peabody and Patterson — schools whose students speak up at various hearings — ought to be available in all D.C. schools. However, they are not. For instance, two-thirds of the Hearst student body does not live around 37th and Tilden streets NW, where the school is located. Of varying backgrounds, they come from all over the city.

Indeed, parents of Hearst and a handful of other schools are the most vocal in the city. They speak proudly of the schools, whose students score higher on comprehensive tests and have tremendous support from home and community. They talk about the love they have for the buildings that house their schools, and how awful it would be if the building were closed. Some parents have even threatened to yank their young ones out of D.C. public schools altogether, claiming their children will suffer if taught somewhere else. They have a point. More than one study has demonstrated that the longer children stay in the majority of D.C. public schools, the worse off they are.

How heartbreaking for the thousands of other par-

ents who want to enroll their own child in the Hearsts of the city but cannot because those few precious programs are full. Right now the District is ripe for school choice, but school officials in the past have denied parents that option. While there are a couple of charter schools available, vouchers would afford the children of Southeast and other parts of the city the options now available to families at Hearst and other excellent schools.

The divisive issue of school closings highlights more than the need to shutter half-filled schoolhouses. The overall academic failings of children who attend D.C. public schools means officials need to pull off the road of misplaced priorities they have traveled for decades.

The young voices are indeed crying out. As one said Thursday night, even children in the District could be doctors and lawyers and CEOs. But in order for them to have those opportunities, school officials must prove they are indeed committed to the slogan Children First. As the D.C. financial control board pointed out last fall, our children are in crisis. Past promises of systemwide academic excellence were merely that. Instead of smarter children, parents have more of the same — low test scores, crumbling buildings and continued decline in enrollment.

Since 1977, the school board has closed 56 buildings, and students still languish. If officials really want to see more working-class families take their leave of the city, they need do no more than perpetuate the status quo. Our children are pleading for adults to do the right thing. The pained faces of the officials at Coolidge High School on Thursday night reflect the unfulfilled desires of parents for academic success for their children as well as the hard decisions that lie ahead. The children have no choice.

Tonya Vidal Kinlow and Kathy Patterson

# School Closings: First, Do No Harm

At the top of our list of school-closing criteria—or criteria for virtually any reform of D.C. Public Schools—is this: In those buildings where students are learning, where the real mission of the public schools is being met, do no harm.

With 157 buildings housing classrooms today, how many do you think meet the standard of successful education? We are talking about schools where test scores are solid; attendance and graduation rates are above average; and parents are actively involved in their child's education. Would it surprise you to learn that of the 18 schools proposed for closing, at least a third meet the test of successful schools? So why, then, are they proposed for closing?

Look at Patterson Elementary School in far Southeast, a school that, yes, is badly in need of repair. What is happening inside? The 387 children, all African American, all qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches, are testing two or three years ahead of grade level. Sixth graders last year were working above the ninth-grade level in mathematics according to standardized tests. Attendance hovers near 100 percent. The gifted-and-talented program fosters learning and there is strong community support.

School administrators would take the students from Patterson, a traditional, successful program, and move them to Patricia Roberts Harris. What will happen to Patterson's gifted-and-talented program? How will the students adapt to P. R. Harris's open classrooms? What will be the effect on the successful Patterson students of going from a school of fewer than 400 to one that already has more than 1,000 students? Remember, first do no harm.

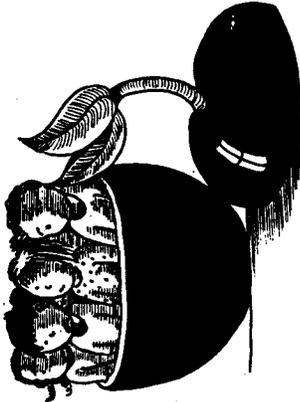
Parents at Hearst Elementary School are weary of being their story. Stung stop prices Cleveland Park real estate, Hearst has been a target for the last several rounds of school closings despite its consistent rate of success in educating children from pre-kindergarten through third grade. As one Hearst student wrote in her

letter to the Emergency Board of Trustees, "We may be small, but we are smart." At Hearst, students consistently perform above grade level on standardized tests. While the school is made up of more than 50 percent out-of-boundary students, it encompasses a level of diversity—40 percent African American, 40 percent white, and 20 percent Hispanic and Asian—that court rulings and busing in the '60s could only dream of achieving. And the school is operating above capacity. Hearst's success is a combination of good teachers, diverse student population, active parents and a safe and nurturing school building.

Shouldn't the school system want to close rather than close such a successful school? A few more examples: Peabody Early Childhood Center in Northeast. This school is a haven for children and a drawing card for their families. The model early childhood center draws visitors from around the country. Both Peabody and Hearst are alternative educational programs that provide "educational choices" for families who want public school education in nontraditional classroom environments.

School administrators also are pushing the envelope when it comes to schools like Lewis and Nale, both successful, traditional schools serving top-paying middle-class families. Here again, students at both schools test above grade level. Our school system needs to find ways of securing our middle-class tax base, and closing schools that meet the needs of these families was not cut it.

Where is education, where are children in the school closing plan? In approving a list of criteria this year, the Board of Trustees dropped one critical basic performance indicator. Having deleted any consideration



BY MICHAEL LEVY

of education, the school administration was free to look solely at bricks and mortar and resale value. Yes, children need safe schools. Yes, we are overbuilt for our population and should not maintain 157 schools. Yes, closing at this year is a legitimate goal.

But what are our priorities? With a limited number of strong academic programs in a school system that routinely tests near the bottom nationally, we should at very least hold harmless the programs that are succeeding today. All our children deserve good schools. The place to start is to build on our successes: Create a mirror of Hearst in Ward 4; create another Peabody in Ward 7, by all means. But don't destroy what is working today.

Tonya Vidal Kinlow is an at-large member of the D.C. School Board. Kathy Patterson represents Ward 3 on the D.C. Council.

## Good D.C. Schools Would Go With Bad

### *Some Top Performers Are Included in Proposed Closings*

By Michael Powell  
Washington Post Staff Writer

It's one of those deceptively simple questions, one that Robyn Jones has replayed over and over again these last few weeks.

Why take a school in an impoverished neighborhood that has high attendance and student achievement, great morale and an energetic principal and that attracts children from all over Southeast Washington—and close it?

"Soon as you find out the answer, give me a call, please," Jones said. "It's amazing that we're fighting for our lives here."

Jones's daughter attends fourth grade at Patter-

son Elementary, one of four or five top-performing schools on the chopping block as the D.C. school board of trustees weighs the closing of 16 schools.

In a city where educational performance is far below the national average, and 40 percent of high school students drop out, the decision to consider closing successful schools has ignited a firestorm of criticism from parents and several national education specialists.

With the assent of the trustees, Charles E. Williams, the school's chief operating officer, and his staff did not weigh the quality of education in deciding what schools to suggest for closing. And, documents indicate, officials penalized schools where the

See CLOSINGS, D3, Col. 2

# Some Parents, Experts Question Proposal to Close Top-Performing School

CLOSING, P. 21

alone in making these sort of decisions—it just shows the low esteem for educational performance."

No one disputes that the D.C. schools have more space, perhaps 5 million square feet in all, than current enrollments require. And the fact that so many schools and large repair bills with a desire to disband a few schools is possible.

"We must consolidate space so that money can be free to reinvigorate schools," said Bruce K. MacLaury, chairman of the school trustees and president emeritus of the Brookings Institution.

That said, interviews with the trustees reveal some disagreement and confusion on the issue. Several said they thought that school officials did weigh academic performance in drawing up the closure list, and one wasn't sure that she had any choice in voting not to include performance in the criteria for closing.

"For better or worse, academics was not the primary focus," MacLaury said. "That's something the trustees must now give weight to themselves. . . . Conceptually, I'd agree you want to cut well-performing programs list."

MacLaury noted that the trustees face several layers of political entanglement. They estimate they need \$200 million a year for 10 years to rehabilitate the schools. And they must turn to Congress for that money.

"I believe the Congress will want

to know if we have done everything in our power to maximize money savings before coming to the taxpayers," MacLaury said.

The trustees and schools officials argued that "most successful educational environments can be moved from one building to another. But each proposed relocation appears mired by problems."

Officials propose to move the 387-student Patterson program into a wing at P.R. Harris Education Center. The three-year, traditional education program at Patterson would be absorbed into a 1,000-student school with far lower test scores and promotion rates, and more discipline problems. "We're like a big old family," Jones said. "That's hard to keep up in a large school."

Doyle said many large schools are inherently unwieldy, a conclusion that lies at the heart of education reform in several other cities.

"The national research powerfully suggests that big is bad and small is good in schools," Doyle said. "You want to create intimate communities of scholarship."

At Woodridge Elementary School in Ward 5, a well-regarded 300-student Montessori program would move into an administrative wing at the academically troubled Langdon Elementary School. But that wing can house no more than 150 students, a situation that seems destined to create crowding even if many Woodridge students opt for schools closer to their homes.

es on fostering parental choice and creating competition between schools to attract students.

"The direction that most urban school systems are moving is toward more choice," Ravitch said. "You force schools to put up their best programs, or not. What doesn't work is to take this mechanistic view that children must stay within boundaries."

The trustees now insist that everything is on the table, and some that they are under no obligation to close all 16 schools. But to some critics, that doesn't explain why the trustees and new school administration embarked on a plan that failed to take educational performance into account.

"It's Gen. Julius Rection and Williams who failed to put a strong academic officer in place from Day One," said D.C. Council member Kathy Patterson (D-Ward 3). "And they don't have a strong education person at the table when they drew up these lists."

Staff writer Debra Wilgoren contributed to this report.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

To read the school system's rationale for closing each of the 16 schools, click on the above symbol on the front page of The Post's Web site at [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)

cont., The Washington Post, April 11, 1997

# Hearst Elementary serves as magnet for quality education

## VIEWPOINT PHIL MENDELSON

School officials should not be closing good schools. Yet that is what they are trying to do.

The proposal to close Hearst Elementary School is wrong for this reason alone. The proposal reveals a shortsightedness on the part of the new generals in charge as well as the Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees.

Hearst's "crime," so to speak, is that it has too many out-of-bound students. I suspect the other sin is that Hearst is in Ward 3, and when the board decided to list the proposed school closings by ward, it could not leave a blank by Ward 3.

School officials did cite other reasons for recommending closure — essentially dealing with the need for building repairs. Hearst wouldn't be a D.C. school if it didn't need repairs. But relatively speaking, Hearst is in

pretty good shape; it doesn't even make the infamous fire code violations list.

The reason that Hearst is a good school and yet is being proposed for closure are pretty much the same. It is a magnet school — in this case an early childhood demonstration program for children pre-kindergarten through third grade. Parents may choose Hearst over their neighborhood school. And they do. This year, about 73 percent of Hearst students are out-of-bound.

Magnet schools are out-of-bound. District. They were developed in response to criticisms about public education — about the need for choice, a desire to create schools with specialized programming, and a need for voluntary desegregation.

Year after year, Hearst is at full-capacity enrollment, and its students test in the highest percentiles. Its achievements have placed Hearst among the top four racially diverse schools in the District. This year, 41 percent of its kids are black, 44 percent are white, 12 percent are Hispanic and 3 percent are Asian.

In other words, Hearst is bustling with out-of-bound kids by design. Hearst is being proposed for closure without any regard for this design — for the educational policies that caused it to be, and to be a success. And closing Hearst would be a substantial step backward toward reassigning Ward 3's and the District's schools.

Moreover, to close Hearst would adversely affect the capacity of elementary schools throughout Ward 3, because all are currently operating at or above capacity. The ward has fewer school buildings than any other ward.

Although in relatively good repair, these schools average among the oldest in the District and litigany instances, therefore, lack resource rooms. As a result, the ward has by far the least amount of square footage per child enrolled, and, therefore, the least space per child enrolled, and, therefore, the least walk-out capacity.

Yet Ward 3 is the only ward where both school-age population and number of housing units are increasing. If the goal of school officials is truly to improve the public

schools and make them more attractive, then Ward 3 will not have the elementary school capacity for success, because it does not now. Closing Hearst would be counterproductive.

Indeed, it's likely that the in-bound students from Hearst will be accommodated by eliminating half the resource rooms at John Eaton Elementary. Eaton will suffer too.

It is not right to destroy successful public schools. School closings must be guided by the standard that the closing will result in improvements in the educational opportunities of the students affected.

That will not be the case if a full-capacity, highly regarded, school-choice program such as Hearst can be closed and the ward's other schools made more crowded. School officials should be seeking to create and maintain good schools, not to close them.

Phil Mendelson, a McLean Gardens resident, chairs Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3C.

The Northwest Current, April 2, 1997

### Closing Hearst would betray kids, parents

I am writing as one of the parents of an out-of-boundary student at Hearst Elementary School.

I feel a personal sense of betrayal at the proposed closing of Hearst. I have remained committed to this city, throughout its many problems.

When I placed my home on the market last year, most of my friends assumed that I would be leaving the city since I had a school-aged child. My answer was no, I planned to purchase another home in the District. I believed at that time that I could continue to

live in the District and not sacrifice my child's educational promise.

I believed it because I knew that there were pockets of good programs in the District, and that if you got up early in the morning on Oct. 1 (or spent the night) and stood in line, it was possible to secure a spot at one of those schools for your child. Having done this, I felt I could continue to live here and utilize the system to ensure a quality education for my son.

This week, that sense of positive feeling left me as I was informed that Hearst was again on the list for closing. My sense of betrayal is a very real thing because it was based on a sense of relief in knowing that my child's education was in good hands.

That sense of relief is shared by many out-of-boundary parents, and it translates into a lot of support for the school. Our children don't have an "inalienable right" to attend this school. So when the school needs a new air conditioning system, we raise money for it. When the "big" room needs to be painted and carpeted, we pay for it. When the copier is broken, we replace it. When we need aides for the classroom and the budget has been cut, we pay for them.

In a city that has betrayed most of its school children for many years, I had found a small haven. At Hearst, it was possible to actively support the school and reduce the impact of the misuse of funds that has negatively affected most of the District's schools.

So I sit here in anger and dismay. My alternatives are bleak. The neighborhood school is not an option I would consider. Private school ... can I afford it? No.

But what am I to do? As I stare at all of the auction fund-raising paraphernalia that litter my home, I think of the "For Sale" sign in my yard. When it sells, I will not be purchasing another home in the District. I need to be able to tell my son where he will go to school this year and the next.

**Clyneise Cheney**  
Kilbourne Place, Mount Pleasant

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### City should not close Hearst Elementary

The Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees will decide in the next two weeks whether to close 16 schools, including Hearst Elementary.

Hearst is a demonstration center located in the city's Ward 3, which is visited by educators from all parts of our nation and overseas. The school is one of the city's few truly racially mixed schools and one of our country's most culturally diverse.

As parents of a first grader at Hearst, we were deeply saddened to learn that Hearst is on the list of schools that the board is considering closing.

One of the board's arguments for the possible closing is that the majority of students come from out of boundary. This is true; however, Hearst's Early Childhood Program is a citywide program. The board, we've heard, rationalizes that the sale of Hearst would bring the city cash.

Hearst's racially diverse mix and its teaching program for children 3 through 6 were why we and fellow parents wanted to be associated with this institution.

We could have sent our son to a private school, but opted for Hearst because it would provide good academic training and a realistic approach to the world. Among our son's closest friends are African Americans, a Mexican American, and a Danish boy.

When I accompany our son to school each day and look at the children, I am reminded of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech and words from a song that, if memory serves, says "the children in the playground, the faces that I see, all races and religions, that's America to me."

Of course, we're a long way from realizing Dr. King's dream. But saving Hearst could help. We and other parents believe that the capital of the richest nation on Earth can't afford to close the doors to this school.

**Jeanne and Kurt Ruderman**  
30th Street, Forest Hills

## Hearst should be taken off the hit list

It was with great concern, sadness and frustration that I read that Hearst Elementary School is on the list of District schools slated for closure ("18 D.C. schools slated to be closed," March 19).

My wife, a former District elementary teacher, and I moved here from Maryland in 1988 because the city at that time had a residency requirement for employees. We bought a small house and became an active part of our neighborhood.

Since then, we've had two daughters and have worked hard to make this a better place. But the tide increasingly has run against us. We've watched our taxes rise, our city services fall and our community lose its center. On our one block, we have witnessed and experienced scores of crimes — from the brutal rape and murder of a mother and child to drive-by shootings to a long string of unsolved burglaries and car thefts.

So far we haven't left. And the biggest reason has been Hearst Elementary School. Our ability to choose a good school in a safe neighborhood has been the single greatest anchor keeping us in the District. It is not just the strong academic and arts program Hearst offers that attracts us, but also the particular blend of committed families from all over the city that makes the school work so well.

At Hearst, I know my kids are safe. I know they are with other kids whose families care enough to get them across town each day for a better chance to

succeed. This is not the case in my neighborhood school. Nor would it be the case if the "Hearst program" is relocated to some other facility. We, like most Hearst parents, would not follow the program to another part of the city.

If any members of the Emergency Transitional Board of Trustees had visited Hearst before placing it on this closure list, they might have learned that Hearst is one of the few successes the District can point to right now. In one small, fully utilized school, it embodies better than any other in the city the widely touted notion of school choice, ethnic diversity, community participation and self improvement. Its scores on the comprehensive tests of basic skills are among the very highest in the city.

To steal Hearst away from this city's battered middle-class



taxpayers and sell it off for some quick cash is misguided. For many of us it will be the final indignation that will drive us out.

KELLEY DOOLAN  
Washington

The Northwest Current, April 2, 1997

## Don't close Hearst

The Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees will make a grave error if its members vote this month to close Hearst Elementary School.

Realistically, the main reason Hearst — renowned for its early childhood program — is on the list of 18 schools targeted for closure is its location in Ward 3. The school system's administrators saw a political need to target at least one school in each of the city's eight wards.

But the students who will suffer the greatest injury if Hearst does close do not live in Ward 3. They are the roughly 120 students who live outside the ward and who will lose access to a successful program.

Administrators mistakenly believe that they can re-create the entire program at Whittier Elementary School, located at 5th and Sheridan streets NW.

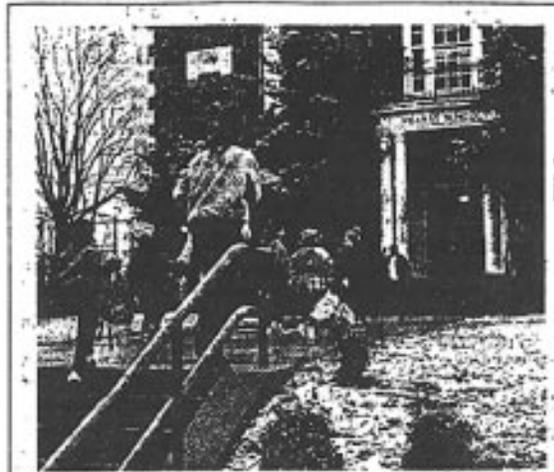
But the plan is not practical. Unfortunately, few if any Ward 3 parents will send their children to Whittier. Years ago, the school system developed a strong science and mathematics program at Banneker High School, but its location on Georgia Avenue means that few Ward 3 students have ever attended.

Many of the parents of out-of-boundary students do not consider the new site a real option either. Instead, they are mulling private schools if they can afford the tuition. Many others have started looking at homes in the suburbs.

Once the existing base of support is divided, Hearst's program will never again take shape. The system can indeed move the teachers and the books. But the success of Hearst — like the other successful elementary schools in Ward 3 — has come largely because of parent support.

In the end, everyone will lose. Ward 3 children — and children elsewhere — will lose a strong program that offers excellent educational opportunities. And the city will lose one of its most integrated schools.

The Washington Post, April 5, 1997



BY LARRY SCHLES — THE WASHINGTON POST

### Shutting Down a Winner

I am an angry Hearst parent. Through the out-of-boundary program, I was able to enroll my daughter in this excellent school even though my family does not live in that neighborhood. Now the Board of Trustees threatens to close Hearst. Among the reasons stated is "the large number of out-of-boundary students" — people like my daughter.

Our family cannot afford to live within Hearst's boundary, or near any other high-achieving public school in the District. Many families like us live throughout this city — people who seek a better education for their children than what their neighborhood schools can offer.

Currently, 10,000 out-of-boundary students are enrolled in the D.C. public school system. Parents of these students make the sacrifices necessary to get their children to and from school every day, many driving from homes in faraway Southeast and Southwest. These parents are among the most enthusiastic and supportive members of their school's PTA.

Hearst is the most racially diverse school in the District, yet it is located in a primarily white neighborhood. Forty-one percent of its students are African Americans, 44 percent white, 12 percent Hispanic and 3 percent Asian. My daughter has an opportunity to make friends with children of various races and economic backgrounds. My neighborhood school does not offer this opportunity. I believe Hearst's biggest problem is its location. Does the Board of Trustees feel that it must close a school in an affluent white neighborhood for political appearances? Does the board understand that mainly non-white students will suffer most by its closure?

By closing Hearst and sending its out-of-boundary students back to their neighborhood schools, a step will have been taken to eliminate choice in education. Unfortunately, a step also will have been taken back to segregation.

PAT MORRISON  
Washington

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Current merits kudos for Hearst coverage

As a parent of two children at Hearst, I would like to applaud John LeGon on his continuing coverage of the unfolding school closing saga.

As I read the March 26 article "Hearst parents fight closing," I was wondering why we should be having to go through this struggle in the first place.

Hearst is an ideal school, housed in a small building ideal for its program, with outdoor space surrounding it ideal for the needs of young children, with an ideally integrated student population. I would think the board of trustees would be singing its praises.

Instead, they want to close it. That doesn't leave me with much hope for the school system. When we moved six months ago, we stayed in the city largely because our children are receiving such a fine education at Hearst. Now, with a sinking feeling, I wonder what the future holds for us here. I hope against hope that the board of trustees will do what is right for the future of the city. I hope they will keep Hearst open.

Betty McLain

Quebec Street, Cleveland Park

### Hearst isn't broken, so don't close it

Why is Hearst Elementary School being closed? I am a resident of Ward 3, and I send my two daughters to my local public school, Hearst Elementary School.

Despite all the bad publicity that the D.C. Public Schools have received over the last year, Hearst is a place where the system works. Not only are my children receiving a quality education, they are doing so in a racially and ethnically diverse environment.

At a time when people seem to find fault with most things in the District, why is a school that is working for the city, working for the community and working for our children being closed?

If the only answer is money, then the District has once again missed the mark. We spend money to make programs work. Here is one that is already working. There is no justifiable reason for this school to be closed.

Susan Vogel Salodoff  
3800 Rindge Road, Forest Hills

The Northwest Current, April 9, 1997

---

**Appendix B:**  
**Supporting Documentation to the**  
**Hearst PTA Reponse**

---

**Division of Facilities Management  
Operational Cost  
By School  
for FY 1995  
(Ranked in descending order)**

<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>TOTAL COST*</u>
Fletcher-Johnson	\$464,368.63
Dunbar SR	\$451,631.67
Banneker SR	\$420,373.61
Roosevelt SR	\$388,500.39
Woodson	\$385,743.27
Ballou SR	\$328,831.27
Cardozo SR	\$304,783.20
Reed	\$297,373.36
Wilson, W. SR	\$297,239.54
Anacostia SR	\$279,187.19
Eastern SR	\$273,760.15
Montgomery	\$263,094.59
Shaw JR	\$259,881.65
McKinley	\$248,141.14
Coolidge, SR	\$246,662.25
Wilkinson	\$246,472.18
Browne JR	\$242,482.71
Ferebee Hope	\$227,914.55
Johnson JR	\$225,095.92
Taft JR	\$223,747.27
Winston	\$216,064.60
Fort Lincoln	\$213,198.60
Merritt	\$208,264.72
Young	\$207,424.09
Watkins	\$199,240.64
Roper MS	\$198,263.54
Deal JR	\$193,050.77
Jefferson, JR	\$188,693.99
Kramer JR	\$185,751.90
Bruce-Monroe	\$181,819.73
Ellington SR	\$180,476.25
Wilson, J.O.	\$179,409.04
Moten	\$179,193.29
Armstrong	\$178,393.39
Walker-Jones	\$177,084.76
Douglass JR	\$174,302.13
Birney	\$173,791.85
Sharpe Health	\$169,335.59
Miller J. JR	\$162,711.13

<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>TOTAL COST*</u>
Langdon	\$161,670.70
Savoy	\$160,238.57
Hart, JR	\$159,123.97
Bell SR	\$155,675.97
Thomas	\$155,126.16
Malcolm X	\$150,891.78
Eliot JR	\$150,253.99
Tyler	\$149,744.74
Raymond	\$149,039.85
Harris, P.R.	\$148,229.36
Francis JR	\$147,351.28
Orr	\$135,363.65
Backus MS	\$134,728.78
Sousa MS	\$134,658.31
Seaton	\$133,725.41
Chamberlain SR	\$133,058.14
Green	\$132,721.87
Burrville	\$132,299.67
Barnard	\$130,996.40
Lincoln MS	\$130,945.04
Takoma	\$128,871.74
Ketcham	\$127,908.37
Gage-Eckington	\$127,337.40
Burdick SR	\$127,008.47
Terrell M.C.	\$126,010.66
Truesdell	\$125,916.35
Lafayette	\$125,722.53
Kimball	\$124,335.09
West	\$123,510.92
Bowen	\$123,112.04
Hine JR	\$122,781.66
Nalle	\$118,979.30
Washington MM SR	\$118,184.47
Weatherless	\$115,952.54
McGogney	\$115,712.79
Burroughs	\$114,976.40
Stanton	\$114,158.50
Amidon	\$112,641.76
Hamilton	\$111,329.66
Webb	\$110,708.72
Turner	\$110,175.97
Shadd	\$108,618.26
Park View	\$107,615.03
Paul, JR	\$106,882.60
Terrell R.H. JR	\$105,396.64
Rosario	\$105,015.86
Hendley	\$104,962.73

<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>TOTAL COST*</u>
Draper	\$102,353.43
Blow	\$102,285.20
Evans JR	\$101,962.49
Tubman	\$101,554.32
Murch	\$100,557.06
Davis	\$100,188.44
Bunkerhill	\$98,540.72
Brightwood	\$97,432.68
Garnett-Patterson	\$96,653.06
Houston	\$96,010.76
Payne	\$94,414.88
Bancroft	\$92,398.95
Benning	\$92,266.21
Kenilworth	\$92,255.15
Adams	\$91,324.06
Brookland	\$90,488.52
Petworth	\$90,319.35
Cooke, H.D.	\$90,164.76
Noyes	\$90,035.54
Beers	\$88,351.91
Gibbs	\$86,149.97
Cleveland	\$84,471.18
Leckie	\$83,128.14
Lee, Mamie D	\$83,014.75
Goding	\$82,717.76
Meyer	\$82,677.33
Lewis	\$81,853.25
Randle Highlands	\$80,420.28
Woodridge	\$80,169.57
Slowe	\$79,827.74
Miner	\$78,451.73
Rudolph	\$77,661.53
Wheatley	\$77,406.42
Clark	\$77,336.19
Patterson	\$76,964.70
Van Ness	\$76,790.68
Stuart-Hobson MS	\$76,672.13
Plummer	\$76,316.05
Emery	\$76,255.32
Maury	\$75,807.83
Garfield	\$75,205.70
Richardson	\$74,793.15
Eaton	\$73,627.38
Smothers	\$73,553.74
Shepherd	\$73,429.82
Whittier	\$71,543.36
Garrison	\$71,029.67

<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>TOTAL COST*</u>
Phelps SR	\$72,538.50
Aiton	\$69,002.91
Drew	\$68,844.19
Shaed	\$66,462.21
Keene	\$65,949.03
Giddings	\$65,049.70
King	\$64,881.54
Brent	\$64,086.81
MacFarland MS	\$62,238.82
Peabody	\$61,671.50
Ludlow-Taylor	\$60,403.51
Harris C.W.	\$59,992.18
Langley JR	\$59,605.90
Stoddert	\$57,056.92
Congress Height	\$56,676.05
Cook, J.F.	\$56,484.13
Powell	\$56,058.75
Janney	\$55,082.03
School Without	\$54,077.57
DC Street Academy	\$53,976.87
River Terrace	\$53,668.83
Thomson	\$52,436.62
Lasalle	\$51,981.69
Harrison	\$46,635.19
Stevens	\$48,063.91
Simon	\$47,838.34
Oyster	\$47,416.20
Lenox	\$44,758.08
Mann	\$42,819.12
Key	\$34,771.66
Hearst	\$32,463.08
Hyde	\$30,468.98
Ross	\$27,433.11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$21,833,971.80</b>

\* Total Cost includes Labor, Material, DAPS, Electricity, Fuel Oil, Gas, Telephone, Trash Removal, Bottled Water.

**DMJM Report  
Project Cost Report  
By Elementary School  
2/18/97  
(Ranked in descending order)**

<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>TOTAL COST</u>
Davis	\$58,586,694
Moten	\$5,930,349
Birney	\$5,342,472
Tyler	\$5,277,435
Truesdell	\$5,023,677
Turner	\$4,971,330
Wheatly	\$4,852,095
Carver	\$4,809,114
Draw	\$4,776,142
Lincoln	\$4,715,956
Green	\$4,617,615
Bunker Hill	\$4,572,399
Barnard	\$4,482,686
Hendley	\$4,455,388
Houston	\$4,347,084
Rudolph	\$4,317,771
Savoy	\$4,256,153
Draper	\$4,196,955
Cooke	\$4,109,450
Kimball	\$4,016,853
Park View	\$3,932,257
Shadd	\$3,910,931
Richardson	\$3,810,495
Shepherd	\$3,803,125
Patterson	\$3,801,398
Nalle	\$3,718,187
Wilkinson	\$3,668,066
Watkins	\$3,662,542
Giddings	\$3,625,042
Van Ness	\$3,614,191
Harrison	\$3,613,776
Harris	\$3,586,525
McGogney	\$3,564,834
Whittier	\$3,471,467
Raymond	\$3,408,434
Ludlow Taylor	\$3,329,965
Leckie	\$3,317,256
Orr	\$3,312,405
Lewis	\$3,285,948

<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>TOTAL COST</u>
Webb	\$3,281,594
Murch	\$3,258,948
Slowe	\$3,240,012
Bowen	\$3,225,888
Lafayette	\$3,222,813
Weatherless	\$3,174,529
Garrison	\$3,132,905
Beers	\$3,131,950
Burroughs	\$3,103,442
Alton	\$3,100,607
Miner	\$3,086,895
Wilson Jo	\$3,080,434
River Terrace	\$3,053,475
Bancroft	\$2,982,428
Plummer	\$2,976,929
Young	\$2,966,623
Adams	\$2,931,840
Seaton	\$2,910,261
Meyer	\$2,876,433
Burrville	\$2,862,238
Randle Highlands	\$2,844,442
Garfield	\$2,801,373
Goding	\$2,793,382
Kenilworth	\$2,789,955
Takoma	\$2,765,864
Woodridge	\$2,752,672
Petworth	\$2,695,894
Walker Jones	\$2,667,544
Smothers	\$2,593,334
Terrell MC ES	\$2,526,511
Janney	\$2,445,843
Lasalle	\$2,426,116
Tubman	\$2,406,594
Noyes	\$2,376,676
Montgomery	\$2,351,689
Cleveland	\$2,349,653
Maury	\$2,297,053
Winsten	\$2,281,956
West	\$2,272,119
Benning	\$2,268,312
Blow/Pierce	\$2,259,754
Malcolm X	\$2,210,735
Hyde	\$2,204,606
Gibbs	\$2,193,488
Stevens	\$2,191,815
Amidon	\$2,114,387
Ferebee Hope/Washington Highland	\$2,086,959

<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>TOTAL COST</u>
Stanton	\$2,075,520
Peabody	\$2,062,873
JF Cook	\$2,012,950
Thomas	\$1,903,015
Brookland	\$1,824,543
King	\$1,817,253
Emery	\$1,736,269
Mann	\$1,585,513
Hearst	\$1,548,604
Keene	\$1,487,533
Key	\$1,428,021
Brent	\$1,397,398
Ross	\$1,381,182
Shaed	\$1,323,729
Stoddert	\$1,187,227
Brightwood	\$1,144,758
Logan	\$1,100,621
Eaton	\$742,813

**HEARST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
3950 37TH STREET, N.W.**

**BUDGET ANALYSIS**

	EVALUATION BUDGET	SCI BUDGET
<b><u>ROOF - FLAT ( B/U OR MEMBRANE)</u></b>		
Demo/replace alum gutters	582	582
<b><u>ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS</u></b>		
New fire alarm system	61,484	35,000
Emergency egress system	10,578	5,250
Exit signs / lights	1,367	1,000
Electrical service	23,884	18,500
Electrical distribution	252,384	104,400
Lighting interior	105,777	61,250
<b><u>STEAM / HOT WATER PIPING REPLACEMENT</u></b>		
Replace steam heating system piping	63,510	45,850
Allowance for ACM removal / disposal	3,000	3,000
<b><u>DOORS</u></b>		
Replace double door / frame hardware	7,191	6,000
Replace double door with single door & slide	66,310	48,600
Replace door / frame / hardware	58,108	40,800
<b><u>AUTOMATIC SPRINKLERS</u></b>		
New fire sprinkler system	4,880	4,880
Sprinkler allowance for ACM removal	300	300
<b><u>AHU REPLACEMENT</u></b>		
AHU allowance for ACM removal	3,000	3,000
Upgrade general ventilation system	34,800	34,800
<b><u>A/C EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT</u></b>		
Replace wall / window A/C to 18,000 BTUH	8,935	8,935
<b><u>PLUMBING FIXTURE REPLACEMENT</u></b>		
Total restroom retrofit for degradation	117,120	48,860

**HEARST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
3860 37TH STREET, N.W.**

**BUDGET ANALYSIS**

	<b>EVALUATION BUDGET</b>	<b>BCI BUDGET</b>
<b><u>SANITARY WASTE SYSTEM</u></b>		
New sewage ejector ( Duplex)	11,117	11,117
<b><u>WATER HEATER</u></b>		
New water heater - medium	2,117	3,600
<b><u>WINDOWS</u></b>		
Replace existing windows w alum. windows w (LBP)	206,629	147,000
<b><u>WALLS / FRAME - CIP CONCRETE</u></b>		
Repair / patch spalled structural concrete	1,110	1,110
<b><u>BUILDING SKIN - BRICK/MASONRY</u></b>		
Patch & repair brick wall	47,300	41,280
<b><u>CEILING - INTERIOR FINISHES</u></b>		
Repaint ceilings	660	360
<b><u>WALLS - INTERIOR FINISHES</u></b>		
Patch and repair tile wall	1,664	1,664
<b><u>FLOORS - INTERIOR FINISHES</u></b>		
Refinish wood floor	2,311	2,311
Replace VCT floor	6,538	2,960
Replace carpet	20,760	11,220
Floor allowances for ACM removal	3,760	3,760
<b><u>STEPS / RAILINGS</u></b>		
Replace concrete steps	1,662	1,662

**HEARST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
3950 37TH STREET, N.W.**

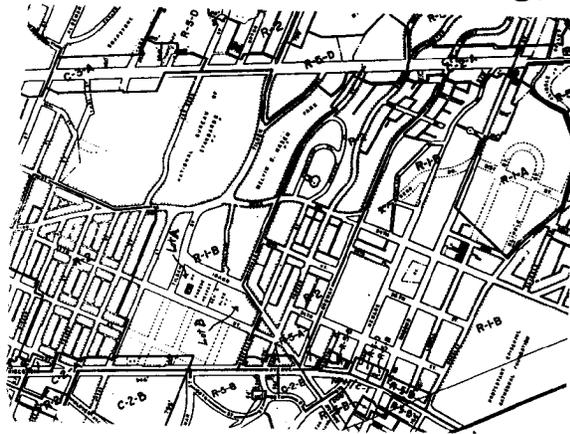
**BUDGET ANALYSIS**

	<b>EVALUATION BUDGET</b>	<b>ECI BUDGET</b>
<b><u>PAVING</u></b>		
Repair concrete sidewalks	9,417	7,740
<b><u>RAMPS / STAIRS ACCESSABILITY</u></b>		
Handicap ramp complete	15,038	15,038
<b><u>SIGNAGE / MISCELLANEOUS - ACCESSABILITY</u></b>		
Miscellaneous handicap repair	5,046	5,046
<b><u>TOILET ROOMS - ACCESSIBILITY</u></b>		
New drinking fountain (handicap)	6,283	3,800
Gut and renovate toilet room (200 sf)	140,150	78,500
Gut and renovate toilet rooms w ACM	12,000	7,500
<b><u>ELEVATOR / LIFTS - ACCESSIBILITY</u></b>		
New low level elevator (Exterior wall)	182,500	98,000
<b><u>REPLACE UNDERGROUND TANKS</u></b>		
Underground fuel tank	19,584	19,584
Allowance for contaminated soil	10,000	10,000
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>1,550,624</b>	<b>942,888</b>

# Zoning Map of the District of Columbia

---

**Effective May 12, 1958  
Containing Amendments Through April 1, 1996**



## **Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia**

Jerrily R. Kress, Chairperson  
Maybelle Taylor Bennett, Vice Chairperson  
Howard R. Croft  
John G. Parsons  
William L. Ensign (Herbert M. Franklin)

★ ★ ★ Government of the District of Columbia  
Marion Barry, Jr., Mayor

**Fact Sheet**  
**District of Columbia Public Schools**  
**PHOEBE HEARST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

*"An Early Childhood Demonstration Center"*  
 3750 - 37th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20008 (202) 282-0106

Phoebe Hearst is one of the District of Columbia Public Schools' Early Childhood Demonstration Centers. The District of Columbia Public Schools' efforts in early childhood education are nationally known and highly successful. Hearst serves as an exemplary training and demonstration site where teachers and administrators, throughout the city and beyond, can observe current effective practices in the field of early childhood education.

The Hearst Early Childhood Program was created in 1991, by the school system, to address the research on the most effective instructional strategies for children ages 3 through 8. That is, to move from a more traditional teacher-centered classroom to a more experiential, hands-on, child-centered classroom. The program, by confirming early learning experiences, supports the students commitment to continuing their life-long educational process. While serving its neighborhood children, Hearst has evolved into a city-wide program, drawing its children from all wards in the city.

**High Academic Achievement**

• Recognized in 1994 by the City for having the most improved scores on The Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills. Recognized in 1995 by the District for having the third highest overall scores in 3rd grade Mathematics as measured by the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills. Test scores in the 2nd and 3rd grades were in the 91st national percentile for school year 95/96.

**Third Grade Test Scores**

	Reading	Spelling	Language	Math	Total Battery & Nat %	Science	Soc.
SY 92/93	4.1	3.7	4.8	3.9	4.2/67%	3.7	4.1
SY 93/94	4.8	3.9	5.3	5.2	5.0/87%	6.1	5.0
SY 94/95	5.0	4.2	5.5	6.1	5.3/92%	5.4	5.1
SY 95/96	5.2	4.2	5.5	5.5	5.3/91%	5.4	4.8

SY 96/97	Multiple Choice		Open Ended (Percent of students in each grouping)		Composite	
	Below Basic	0	Below Basic	0	Below Basic	0
	Basic	33%	Basic	38%	Basic	38%
	Proficient	54%	Proficient	63%	Proficient	53%
	Advanced	13%	Advanced	0	Advanced	8%

**Strong Parental and Community Support**

- Fully functioning School Based Management Team.
- Parents as daily educational resources in the classroom.
- Before and After School Program; after school chorus and dance; after school math & Spanish clubs.
- Strong & active parental involvement program: PTA raised over \$50,000.00 during school year 95/96.

-continued-

### State-of-the-Art Educational Practices

- Educational development of the whole child - social, emotional, physical and intellectual.
- A challenging academic program that integrates all curriculum areas.
- A social curriculum that helps build the classroom and school into a learning community where high social and academic goals are both attained.
- A physical design that is small (less than 200 students), nurturing, and safe; a social curriculum that builds high social and academic goals.
- A teacher and an educational aide in each classroom; a full time counselor and English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher on staff; a part time nurse.
- Use of the Work Sampling Assessment System which includes portfolio development, a checklist, and a narrative report, emphasizes on-going performance.
- An arts curriculum that encompasses dance, drama, music, and visual arts; physical education & science resource staff; second language instruction is planned for school year 97/98.
- Science Exploration Program that emphasizes the discovery method.
- Community Service experiences for students: The Washington Home, Northwest Family Center, Christ House, Amidon Elementary School

### Highly Trained Instructional Staff

- Teachers that provide weekly demonstrations on developmentally appropriate early childhood instructional practices for teachers and administrators from DCPS and throughout the country.
- Highly trained instructional staff who have been trained and/or provided training in the following:
  - Responsive Classroom I & II: (A management system built around six central components that integrate learning, cooperation, responsibility and caring values, in the daily program.)
  - Action Labs (Labs emphasize each of the components of the Responsive Classroom)
  - Whole Language (includes phonics instruction)
  - Cooperative Learning
  - Literacy Based Instruction
  - Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI): (Problem solving techniques & individual student strategy development)
  - Performance Based Education
  - Integration of subject areas with an arts assisted program
  - Technology implementation
  - District Staff Development needs: (First Six Weeks of School, Support Staff Training, Testing Taking, Authentic Assessment, Literacy, Targeted Assisted Schools, Performance Based Education)
  - Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Learning
  - Authentic Assessment: (Work Sampling System)

### Public and Private Partnerships

- Naval Telecommunications Command Center, Sidwell Friends School, The Washington Home, The Kennedy Center, Georgetown Day School, Fannie Mae Corporation, Discovery Creek Science Center, Northwest Family Center, Emeritus Foundation.

**SURVEY PHOEBE HEARST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
**CLOSING IMPACT SURVEY # 2**

This is a 2nd survey. Please fill out and return by tomorrow. (ONE SURVEY PER FAMILY) We are looking for 100% response.

1. Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_
2. a. Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Ward: (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8  
 c. Are you \_\_\_\_\_inboundary \_\_\_\_\_out-of-boundary?
3. How many years have you been a Hearst parent? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of children in each grade level at Hearst? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is your neighborhood school? \_\_\_\_\_
6. If you are in-boundary, answer #6:  
 If Hearst closed, our family would most probably (choose one)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ use John Eaton (new neighborhood school)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ use another Ward 3 school  
 \_\_\_\_\_ use Whittier if it has an early childhood program  
 \_\_\_\_\_ move out of the City  
 \_\_\_\_\_ send children to private or parochial school  
 \_\_\_\_\_ other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_
7. If you are out-of-boundary, answer #7:  
 If Hearst closed, our family would most probably (choose one)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ use my neighborhood school  
 \_\_\_\_\_ use Whittier (this school has been designated to house the Hearst early  
 childhood program)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ move out of the City  
 \_\_\_\_\_ send children to private or parochial school  
 \_\_\_\_\_ other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_
8. If Hearst closed, will any of these issues affect your children?  
 a. loss of the Hearst early childhood curriculum \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no  
 b. breakup of friendships \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no  
 c. loss of before and after school arrangement \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no  
 d. your carpool arrangements \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no  
 e. loss of special programs \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no  
 f. your journey to work \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no
9. Do you have children in other Ward 3 schools? \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no Which ones?

---

**Appendix C:**  
**Community Letters of Support and Endorsement**

---

Excerpts from letters written by Hearst parents to General Becton and the Board of Trustees

"We feel deeply dedicated and committed to living in this city. My husband and I have worked with inner-city teenagers here for fifteen years...but we will not compromise our children's educational and social needs by sending them to our neighborhood school. Isn't [Hearst] the kind of environment you would like to have as a model for the rest of the schools in this city?" Gaelyn Haun Wagner

"Test scores are up at Hearst and down at our neighborhood school. Need I say more on this subject? There are currently ten thousand out of boundary families in the DC Public School system. To send those out of boundary Hearst students back to their neighborhood schools is to deny them the privilege of choice. This move would threaten all ten thousand families with out of boundary students all over the city. Is the District willing to pay the price?" Pat Morrison and Byron Genner

"I am afraid that the decision to close such a wonderful school may be the deciding factor for many families to finally move to the security of the surrounding suburbs. I know it will be for our family if told to return to our neighborhood school. While I know it is necessary to take steps to improve the entire DCPS and that some of these steps will be painful, I ask you to reconsider Hearst's fate. Forcing more families with children to seek homes and schooling elsewhere cannot have the desired effect." James and Debra Maher

"By closing Hearst at this point in time, you are robbing every parent of CHOICE. It is too late to apply to either other out-of-boundary public schools or to private schools (even if we could afford them) — the admission process closed long ago. You are forcing me and others like me to either attend the neighborhood school, which has much lower test scores than Hearst, or to move out of the city. Frankly, the analysis that went into this decision makes no sense to me. Minor repairs are needed both inside and outside the building. These problems, however, are easily correctable and do not interfere with the miracle that occurs each day at Hearst. Don't take this gem away from the residents of the District of Columbia; we have had so much taken away from us already. Show that the children really do come first and keep Hearst open." Deirdre K. Karambelas

"It is foolish to pursue "school reform" by closing an outstanding example of what's right with the DC school system. Why does the Board want to eliminate an institution that is highly regarded even by the harshest critics of the DC schools? The District has too few top-flight schools as it is. While the neighborhood school concept is sound in principle, many of us at Hearst (and elsewhere) refuse to settle for the mediocrity (or worse) that we find at our in-boundary school. By closing Hearst, perhaps you hope to "force" us into the in-boundary schools in the hope the "active" parents will improve them. More likely, your decision will drive many of us out of the system (or the city) altogether. Perhaps the Board has not yet understood that many parents demand a real school choice for their children. We demand attractive opportunities for our

children now, and this is what Hearst provides now. The Board needs to fix what's broken elsewhere in the system, not dismantle what works well at Hearst" Ted Nunez

"We did not leave when our across-the-street neighbor and her seven year old daughter were brutally raped and murdered by two boys who live near-by. We did not leave shortly thereafter when our first daughter was born. Nor did we leave as our neighbors' cars were stolen one at a time with zero police response. We did not leave when several of our neighbors' houses were burglarized. We did not leave when the window of *our* car was shot out. We did not leave when our second daughter was born. Then we didn't leave when *our* car was stolen. And we didn't even leave the night our next-door neighbor's home was sprayed with automatic gunfire in a drive-by shooting.

"We didn't leave the District when it stopped picking up bulk trash and yard clippings, even as our taxes went up. We did not leave the District when we were told we would have to buy our drinking water because it was too risky for our growing children to drink, despite our expensive water bills. We have not left as nearly every aspect of our government has lost its center. And we did not leave when an appointed body not answerable to us or anyone else in our town took over.

"So why have we stayed? Our neighbors, friends, jobs — and HEARST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. Our ability to choose a good school in a safe neighborhood has been the single greatest anchor keeping us in the District. If any of you had visited Hearst and talked with parents here before placing it on this closure list you might have learned that it is a fully utilized, all-city school full of the most committed middle class taxpayers the District has left. It is one of the most culturally diverse schools in the city and it works. To steal it away from this city's battered middle-class taxpayers and sell it off to a tax-exempt private school like Sidwell Friends would be misguided and a very, very bad public relations move." Kelley Doolan

"As you well know, Hearst has a large number of out-of-boundary families (mine included). This is a strength of the school, not a weakness. You may not realize the difficulties a parent goes through to get a child in an out-of-bounds school, but the time and effort is significant, and the large number of out-of-bounds students attests to the draw that Hearst has all across the city. It is difficult to live in DC these days. Our house has been robbed more than once, our taxes are high, and many city services are in decline. Although the city also offers many benefits, one of the most important to me is my children's education, and Hearst has always surpasses my expectations in this area. Please reconsider any plans to close this fine school. It provides diversity, warmth, and excellent educational opportunities to people who, as DC residents, often have little to be proud of." Elizabeth Alicandri

"We chose Phoebe Hearst because it is a microcosm of how this city should work. The diversity in this school is building the bridge that will span the great divide between east and west of the park. If you close Hearst, you will be closing a school that represents the kind of learning environment that DCPS is striving for and DC parents are begging for. To close Hearst because

it will be politically expedient for you to close a school in ward three shows reckless disregard for the high achievement of Hearst students, teachers, and parents.” Bernard and Rita Sykes

“While we appreciate the difficulties the Board faces in attempting to revive a city school system that is dying, we cannot believe that the Trustees would willingly snuff out the life of a school that is succeeding. In a cynical city, a city that is collapsing from the weight of crime, poverty, indifference, and neglect, we have discovered one thing that works. We found a safe haven for our son where he can develop into a thoughtful, talented, secure, and selfless young man. And it is a school in which we believe we are shareholders. We want to continue to live in this city. But if we lose this school — if we lose this thing that is so critical to our lives — we will question why we choose to live here. We would like you, the Trustees, to think about what you would lose if you close the Hearst school. You will lose a focused educational setting which is turning out exceptional District students. You will lose a resource for the entire District school system that provides a proving ground for the importance of early childhood education. You will lose our son. You will lose one success story.” Joseph F. and Rebecca W. Kelly

“This city is painfully segregated and Hearst is a wonderful and unusual example of a school representative of this city’s cultural diversity. Its presence in Ward 3 should not be a liability but an example for all schools in the District of Columbia of how cultural diversity and harmony can work.” Michele Rhodes

“In choosing a school for my daughter, Aiskah, I did a lot of research and visited several schools before choosing Hearst. Aiskah has become a child that loves to learn and challenge herself. Before attending Hearst, Aiskah shied away from challenging experiences. I told her that her school might be closed and she said: ‘What did we do? Are we being punished?’ She has a good point.” Sharon E. Thomas

Hearst is one of the few schools that offers a genuinely diverse educational experience where minority children can look around and see more than a handful of other children of color working, learning, and playing with other children. It’s an experience that teaches children to judge others not by the color of their skin or the size of their purse, but by the content of their character.” Janice N. Skipper

We decided upon Hearst after considerable searching. My wife stood in the cold dawn for hours to assure that my son could attend. Two other children from my neighborhood at 10<sup>th</sup> and “O” Street attend Hearst because it is so obviously superior to the other schools available. I am an officer veteran of Viet Nam and Desert Storm and appeal to you personally as a fellow soldier to seriously consider the consequences of terminating or dislocating Hearst’s excellence.” Lt. Philip Neuscheler (USAR, ABN)

"The mere thought of the possibility of Hearst closing saddens me deeply. It seems that all of the good qualities of the school serve as a hindrance to its existence. Children's education should come first...not how much money can be made from the sale of the property. And certainly not because it is politically correct!" Lori Smith

"We can't believe you would really close a school that is providing such an outstanding education for our children. Yes, we need our gutters repaired, but that is a small price to pay to keep alive one of the (few) great success stories in the DC school system." Judith Bauer and Richard Koretz

"I wish to express not only my deep disappointment that such a move may even be considered, but also my outrage at what I perceive to be a total lack of understanding of what this school has meant and contributed to many Washington families. To force parents back to their community schools is to negate the joy of learning and to push parents away, out of Washington, where they can seek more integrated classrooms and a better learning environment elsewhere. All have worked hard to create the cohesive learning atmosphere that exists today. Please don't take that away from them" Stephanie Maze

"We are new to Washington and chose our house based on the fact that our son would be attending Hearst." Deborah Mackie

"If Hearst closes, we will leave the public school system." Ben Hecht and Lynn Leibovitz

"I think you might find that this out-of-boundary program, in addition to providing an excellent educational opportunity, is one of the few places in this city where people from all walks of life — adults and children — actually wind up working together and becoming friends regardless of the typical divisions of race and socioeconomic status. It works, in other words, and on a number of levels critical to the health of this town, it is precisely the kind of thing that the rest of this country does not think of when they think of DC. The threats of closing Hearst and discarding out-of-boundary generally simply force us all to begin to retreat to what we each know best and fear least — which in our case would lead to thoughts of moving and/or private school. We know others do not have such options. It would be inexpressibly harmful to all of us to shut down Hearst, and simply send everybody back to what amounts to the old way of doing things. We all know what that is and what it means." Mary Grigonis and Jim Ludwig

"The environment at Hearst is a FAMILY one. It would be a tragedy to break up this family." Amber Green

"I urge you to consider carefully the great disservice you would be doing to the children of DC — both those who attend Hearst and those whose teachers benefit from studying with the master demonstration teachers at Hearst — if Hearst were to be closed. Closing such a school would only encourage young families not to stay or move into a city that has such disregard for its children." Nancy Arbuthnot

"First of all, we decided to look at schools other than our neighborhood school because we found the environment there to be unsatisfactory. There is no diversity in the student population, the school has open classrooms, and there is a drug dealer on one side of the school and a liquor store on the other. The atmosphere at Hearst is optimistic and idealistic; families who come from all over the city have a strong commitment to making the school succeed. The outcome for us would be, ultimately, to leave the District. We do not intend to send our son to the neighborhood school." Paula Strange and Mamadou Traore

"Those of us who are out-of-boundary DC public school parents form a citywide community of families that is deeply concerned about the closing of schools...Hearst is arguably the most racially, culturally, and socio-economically diverse elementary school within the DC public school system. Similarly, it is one of the most educationally and socially successful. And importantly, very importantly for those of us who are out of boundary parents, Hearst is one of the few such schools [at which we had some chance of getting our children accepted]. As citizens of DC, we must dedicate ourselves to nourishing healthy microcosms of balance and equality. If a frontline, working model like Hearst is eliminated, the city will lose more than a model school. It will probably lose dozens of middle and moderate income families who finally have no real choice but to flee to the surrounding suburbs." Elizabeth Bruce

"If Hearst is closed we will be heartbroken. We are out-of-boundary but our children will not attend our neighborhood school and we will likely move out of DC" Laurie, Michael, Sam, and Christian Mehalic

"Our neighborhood school fell far short of meeting [our selection criteria]. You surely want to see schools such as the one in our neighborhood regain their attractiveness to nearby residents, and we support you in that goal. It will not be achieved, however, by closing or dismantling and scattering a school which has been successfully educating our children, rebuilding a sense of community in Washington, and restoring some of the confidence which residents have lost in the school system. Hearst elementary works; it is a model which should be preserved and then emulated and replicated elsewhere in the city." W. Shaun Pharr and Mette Hørtlyck Pharr

"Our family does not live in the Hearst district, and we can guarantee you that if the school were closed, we would scrape together our meager funds and leave the school system entirely. This is not meant to sound as a threat; it's just where we settled many months ago after tedious research trying to find the school setting that best suits our child. Hearst has been the perfect school, blending together all the attributes we think are important — foremost its richly diverse student body and its sterling commitment to student learning and achievement." Joseph Windham and Marilyn Milloy

"Both our children have flourished at Hearst and the city would suffer a tremendous loss if an educational institution that is working and converting a lot of people to the city's public schools was lost." Jacqueline Trescott Darden and Edward M. Darden

"I have spent most of this day in a fog of depression, the most conscious thought: What am I going to do about school for Justin and Alexis. The decisions that most the District residents make when we choose to live in this city often leaves us with the question: Am I sacrificing my child in order to support my desire to remain committed to the District of Columbia? At present I feel that I have done exactly that. With the closing of Hearst and no hope of out-of-boundary placement for this September (the waiting lists are extremely long), I have no choice but to move." Clyneice Chaney

"We are not one of the families who would consider leaving either the District of Columbia or its school system if Hearst is closed. But as we try to persuade our friends and neighbors to stay, our excellent neighborhood elementary school is one of the District's few selling points. Closing Hearst would represent a triumph of politics and cynicism over common sense. Don't do it." Alan M. Cohen and Andrea C. Ferster

"You talk about our children needing a good education. I'm here to tell you that Hearst gives the best there is. The Bible says to train a child that he or she may grow up with wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. That is what I love about Hearst. I am asking the Board to reconsider [its decision]." Mrs. Karen Long

"[Hearst] is a microcosm of Dr. Martin Luther King's dream of black children and white children playing together peacefully in America. There are no other District public schools, to my knowledge, which better exemplify the beauty of diversity in early childhood education." Erie F. Sampson

"The Hearst parents really care. Please don't let this wonderful institution fall apart." Monique E. Beaudry.

"Don't make another family move out of D.C.! You're killing the District!" Janet Zalman

"At a time when the Board is trying to make schools better, it seems to us to be unwise to destroy an institution about which the school system should be proud." Mark and Deborah Hankin

"Please keep our hope in the District alive. Don't close Hearst." Jolene and James Buchanan

"At the top of the criteria, the quality of the education and student performance should be paramount. Parents rich, poor, Black, White, Jewish, Hispanic, work their butts off" for International Night, the grocery coupon program, the annual auction...Why? Because of the quality of education at Hearst and the mix of students from all types of backgrounds is so unique. Clearly, a place the District should be proud of. I know the Control Board is facing and making some tough decisions but Hearst is not the school to be closed. It is the model for all schools in the District to measure up to." Jennifer D. and Gary L. Harris

"Logic and common sense dictate that Hearst stay open for the good of the District's school children as well as the District as a whole. Because Hearst is a school that works it is a de facto magnet school that attracts families from all over the District of Columbia. The fact that Hearst has a high out-of-boundary population should be seen as a positive, not a negative, attribute. There are rumors that Hearst is slated to be closed because it is just across the street from Sidwell Friends School and Sidwell would be interested in leasing or buying the property. We object to the District favoring the needs of an elite school like Sidwell over the needs of a successful public school like Hearst. We wonder if Hillary Rodham Clinton would approve of a District school being closed for the benefit of Sidwell." Mary L. Wilson and Jonathan M. Dana

"We have already determined that the school in our immediate neighborhood is not the best option for our daughter due to the crime rate in and around our own neighborhood. If Hearst school is closed and no comparable alternative is found, we and many families will be literally forced out of the District to seek acceptable public schools in Virginia or Maryland." Brian and Kristin Robinson

"One reason for remaining in the District was the fact that my daughter was able to attend a school like Hearst. With all the problems the District is having, why [fix something that is not broken]. Don't we as a city need to keep model schools open?" Candace A. Chester

"Let's face the truth: Hearst exemplifies everything you want a school to be. Hearst is an example of what a school can and should be. Hearst is a success. Hearst is the school of choice for many DC residents." Debra A. Laird

"When the decision was made to effectively do away with our local school board, we accepted our lost vote in the hopes that in the end everyone would benefit from better schools across the city. Had we known that closing one of the few high achieving schools in the system was part of the plan, I would not so easily have accepted disenfranchisement. I am also surprised, given the emphasis both political parties on Capital Hill are placing on school choice, that you would consider closing a school that represents choice for parents all over the city. I would think that an integrated school with test scores in the high 80's and 90's would be rewarded with a plaque or maybe a parade. I can't imagine that closing is a reasonable alternative." Bruce A. Alpert

**ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3-C**

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

CATHEDRAL HEIGHTS • CLEVELAND PARK • MASSACHUSETTS AVE. HEIGHTS • MCLEAN GARDENS • WOODLEY PARK

2737 DEVONSHIRE PLACE, N.W.  
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008  
 (202) 232-2232 FAX: 232-0667

Single Member District Commissioners:

March 28, 1997

01-Cheryl A. Opacinch  
 02-Alan Blevins  
 03-Maureen Bkum  
 04-Jeanne Ingram  
 05-Gloria D. Redman  
 06-Phil Mendelson  
 07-Gail Daubert  
 08-Rosalyn P. Doggett  
 09-Jeremy Bates

Mr. Bruce MacLaury  
 Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees  
 415 12th Street, N.W. Suite  
 Washington, D.C. 20004

RE: Proposed School Closings --  
 Hearst Elementary School

Dear Mr. MacLaury:

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3-C, which is the ANC within which the Phoebe Hearst Elementary School is located, is unanimously opposed to the proposal to close that school. We adopted our position at a public meeting held March 24, 1997. We cite numerous reasons, which can be summarized as follows:

- The school is not underpopulated and has been operating at capacity for many years.
- Closing Hearst will eliminate the only early childhood demonstration program/school in Ward 3.
- Closing Hearst reverses educational policy which has developed specialized, quality schools that enable parental choice in school selection.
- Closing Hearst reverses educational policy which has promoted specialized schools as a means to achieve voluntary desegregation of D.C. Public Schools. Closing Hearst would be a substantial step toward resegregating Ward 3's and the District's schools.
- Closing Hearst would affect adversely the capacity of elementary schools throughout Ward 3, which already have the smallest number of square feet of school space per child enrolled.
- Since Ward 3 elementary schools are already operating at or above capacity, closing Hearst would leave no room for growth should the Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees be successful in its stated goal of improving the public schools and making them more attractive.

- The public school system is not improved by closing schools on the basis of "sharing the pain."
- It is not right to destroy successful public schools. School officials should be seeking to create and maintain good schools, not to close them.
- The site will not be easily redeveloped should the school be closed.

The full text of our resolution which elaborates the above points follows. It was adopted unanimously by the Commission.

BE IT RESOLVED BY ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3-C: That it opposes the proposal of D.C. Public School System officials to close the Phoebe Hearst Elementary School at 37th and Tilden Streets, N.W. for the following reasons.

1. The student population at Hearst is at or has exceeded capacity for many years; it is not underpopulated. This year it is operating at 101% capacity with 165 students.

2. Hearst is an early childhood demonstration program; it exclusively serves pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade children. As such, it has a large number of out-of-boundary students. This is by programmatic design. Indeed, the presence of a large out-of-boundary student population indicates that the school is attracting students and that the program is successful. Closing Hearst would:

- a) Eliminate the premier early childhood demonstration program in Ward 3;
- b) Dismantle a successful program and redistribute the students to other school's with "traditional" programming;
- c) Reverse educational policy which has developed specialized, quality schools that enable parental choice in school selection; and
- d) Penalize parental choice by using a high out-of-boundary student population as a "decisive criterion" for the closing.

3. An important priority for many parents -- both in Ward 3 and throughout the city -- is to be able to send their children to a racially and culturally diverse school, which their neighborhood school does not offer. In recent years Hearst and Eaton elementary schools have been two of the most racially and culturally diverse elementary schools in the District. Due to the District's residential racial demographics, closing Hearst (which includes transferring its in-bound students to Eaton) will be a substantial step toward resegregating Ward 3's and the District's schools. This contravenes established school policy to encourage voluntary desegregation.

4. The closing of Hearst would affect adversely the capacity of elementary schools throughout Ward 3, because all are currently operating at or above capacity. The Ward has fewer school buildings than any other ward. Although in relatively good

repair, these schools average among the oldest in the District and in many instances, therefore, lack resource rooms. As a result, the Ward has by far the least amount of square footage, the smallest number of square feet of school space per child enrolled, and, therefore, the smallest capacity. It is the only ward where the student enrollment exceeds capacity. Yet it is also the only ward where both school-age population and number of housing units have been increasing.

A substantial number of out-of-boundary students at Hearst are Ward 3 overflow. Eaton would be impacted the most since it would have to absorb an estimated 44 students at this time. But other Ward 3 schools would also have to absorb students "returning" from Hearst. Closing Hearst would have a ripple effect throughout the ward. Moreover, if it is the goal of school officials to improve the Public Schools and make them more attractive, then Ward 3 will not have the elementary school capacity for success, because it does not now. Closing Hearst would be counterproductive.

5. Selecting Phoebe Hearst for inclusion on a list of possible closings, given that this matter was thoroughly debated and the same proposition rejected only a few years ago, is debilitating to parents and children, and appears to be political. It is not right to destroy successful public schools -- the result of years of effort by a diverse and integrated school community. School closings must be guided by the standard that the closing "will result in improvements in the educational opportunities of the students affected." That will not be the case if a full-capacity, highly-regarded, school-choice program such as Hearst can be closed and the Ward's other schools made more crowded.

6. The notion that "proposals will be issued for sale, lease or joint venture for the Hearst ES property" should be qualified. This ANC and community groups will insist that all existing land use controls (e.g., large tract review and matter-of-right zoning) be strictly adhered to.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED: That Phil Mendelson is authorized to testify and otherwise represent ANC 3-C in opposition to the proposed closing of Phoebe Hearst Elementary School.

*I reiterate: you should be seeking to create and maintain good schools, not to close them. Closing Phoebe Hearst Elementary School -- a highly-regarded, fully-occupied school -- will not result in improvements in the educational opportunities of the students affected. Do not close Hearst School.*

FOR THE COMMISSION:

  
Phil Mendelson  
Chairman

**ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3F**  
3400 International Drive, N. W.  
Suite 2J-21  
Washington, D. C. 20008

**DATE:** March 26, 1997

**FAX TO:** D.C. Board of Trustees:  
Lt.Gen. Julius Becton, Jr.;  
Ms. Maudine Cooper;  
Mr. Peter A. Gallagher;  
Mr. Elliott Hall;  
Mr. Nathaniel Howard;  
Ms. M. Charito Kruvant;  
Mr. Bruce MacLaury;  
Mr. Don Reeves;  
Ms. Emily Washington;  
Ms. Paula Pearlman;  
Ms. Jacqueline P. Brocks;

Members of the Control Board:  
Dr. Andrew Brimmer  
Dr. Joyce Ladner  
Mr. Edward Singletary  
Mr. Stephan Harlan

**FROM:** ANC 3F

**SUBJECT:** Hearst Elementary School

Attached is the Resolution passed unanimously  
by ANC 3F (vote of 6-0-0) at its March 24, 1997 public meeting.

Tel: (202)362-6120 Fax:(202)686-7237

**ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3F**

**RESOLUTION ON PROPOSED CLOSING OF  
HEARST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

WHEREAS, the Emergency Board of Trustees for the District of Columbia public school system has released a list of proposed school closings that includes Hearst Elementary School, an early childhood development center; and

WHEREAS, Hearst is filled to 100 percent of its capacity, and more than 60 percent of the Hearst school population consists of "out of boundary" students, demonstrating that Hearst Elementary School is a resource for the entire City, not just the children of Ward 3; and

WHEREAS, some (if not all) of the students currently attending Hearst will need to be transferred to other Ward 3 schools, at which capacity is limited or non-existent, meaning that the proposed closure will disrupt, and perhaps damage the quality of the education provided to both the Hearst student population and the students attending Ward 3's remaining elementary schools; and

WHEREAS, there has been no conclusive demonstration that closing Hearst Elementary School at the end of this school year will improve the quality of the education provided to the students of the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, ANC 3F will not consider a change to the zoning restrictions currently applicable to the property on which Hearst Elementary School is located; and

WHEREAS, the Emergency Board of Trustees is meeting on April 2 and 3, 1997 to consider further the proposed closing of Hearst and many other District of Columbia schools;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD  
COMMISSION 3F:**

That ANC 3F calls upon the Emergency Board of Trustees to abandon their proposal to close Hearst Elementary School.

HEARST RECREATION COUNCIL  
 FRIENDS OF HEARST PARK  
 3643 TILDEN STREET, N.W. WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008  
 PH: 202 966 4463 <> FX: 202 966 9556

March 29, 1997

TO: The Emergency Education Board of Trustees

We are writing to urge you to reconsider the decision to close The Phoebe Hearst School/ Early Childhood Demonstration Center and to sell any part of the land of Hearst Park. In addition, we would like to express the community's strong commitment to keeping historic Hearst Park, *including the playground and recreation center adjoining the school*, a public space.

The Hearst Recreation Council, a non-profit tax exempt community organization, was established over 15 years ago to provide community support for the Hearst Recreation Center. The strong commitment of neighborhood residents to the park was shown last spring when the Friends of Hearst Park was formed by the HRC Board of Directors. The District was not sending maintenance crews to care for the park or the playground which is used constantly by Hearst School and the community. The scope of the organization grew as over a hundred local families and businesses contributed funds and their volunteer time to the effort. Many of the members of FOHP are Hearst School alumni.

During the past year, families from this neighborhood have provided support for numerous activities. FOHP has painted playground equipment, planted a garden with the help of Hearst school children, donated tons of sand to the sand box, mowed all summer long after grass grew close to a foot high without D.C. maintenance, rebuilt the tennis court backboard, planted over 200 bulbs, and cleaned up huge amounts of debris in the park and in the woods on two sides of the park. This winter we have been working with the D.C. Stoddert Soccer League and the Department of Parks and Recreation to come up with a plan that will be both acceptable and exciting to the community for renovating the lower field as a dedicated youth soccer field.

Many people who are members of FOHP live in this neighborhood because of the reputation of Hearst School - a jewel in the city's school system- and the beauty of the surrounding park land with its recreational programs. Any plans to sell the school or this land to build more houses, or for other non-park/recreational center use would be devastating to the community.

We appreciate the grave financial crisis facing the District of Columbia. We also think that, in the long run, *diminishing the quality of life in one of your finest neighborhoods* (with a high tax base) will not be beneficial to the city.



Robin R. Cutler  
 President/ Member, Hearst School Restructuring Team



April 2, 1997

To Whom it May Concern:

We are writing in strong support of the continued operation of the Phoebe Hearst School. For over ten years, The Washington Home has enjoyed a unique partnership with the students and staff of Hearst. Ms. Sandra Dixon, a guidance counselor at Hearst, accompanies members of the third grade class to the Home each Tuesday throughout the school year.

Ms. Dixon and the students assist our certified therapists with regularly scheduled, clinically appropriate activities for our residents such as Powerhouse Exercise and Shuffleboard. The visits by the Hearst students significantly enrich the quality of life for the Home's mostly elderly resident population. At the same time, the students are learning about elders — how to interact with them, how to learn from them, and how to honor them. These are skills and abilities, learned at an impressionable age, that will continue to have a positive impact on the students' own lives and those of family and community members as they grow into adulthood. In addition, the joy on our residents' as well as the students' faces when they are exercising is a marvelous example of what can happen when the young and the elderly work together.

For several years, The Washington Home has been pleased to offer the Hearst students our Garden Room for the third-grade promotion ceremony. In this event as well, it is an absolute joy to see the young people's proud faces as they receive their certificates.

We would be very sad to see such an extraordinary school close. Throughout the years of our partnership with the Hearst School, hundreds of students and elders have enjoyed this priceless, life-altering and enriching experience. Please feel free to call us at (202) 895-0174 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Genevieve Davison, RN  
Director, Volunteer Services

Stephanie Bailey  
Coordinator, Volunteer Services

3720 UPTON STREET NW  
WASHINGTON DC 20016-2299  
202 966-3720  
FAX 966-5679

MCLEAN GARDENS  
CONDOMINIUM



March 27, 1997

Lt. Gen. Julius Becton, Jr., Superintendent  
District of Columbia Public Schools  
415 12th Street, N.W. Suite 1209  
Washington, D.C. 20004

RE: Proposed closing of Hearst School

Dear General Becton:

I am writing on behalf of the McLean Gardens Condominium Association, representing 720 units, to express our opposition to the proposal to close the Phoebe Hearst Elementary School. Meeting last night, our Board of Directors voted *unanimously* to adopt the following resolution:

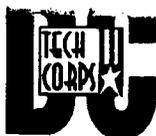
BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MCLEAN GARDENS CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION: That it state its opposition to the proposed closing of an elementary school serving McLean Gardens: Phoebe Hearst. This is an excellent school and to close it will disadvantage McLean Gardens parents as well as a diverse group of parents and children from throughout the city. The apparently-designated recipient of Hearst students -- John Eaton School -- is farther away, and would require the crossing of a secondary-arterial street: 34th Street. The closing of Hearst would also disadvantage McLean Gardens (and all Ward 3) residents by depriving them of the only early childhood demonstration program in Ward 3. The public school system is not "improved" by this closing.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED: That the closing of Hearst School would: reverse educational policy which has developed specialized, quality schools that enable parental choice in school selection; penalize parental choice by using a high out-of-boundary student population as a decisive criterion for the closing; and would have the undesirable effect of re-segregating the racial population of Ward 3 schools vis-a-vis the city.

If your intention is to make the public school system -- and therefore the District -- more attractive to families considering whether to stay in or relocate to the District, this proposal will have the opposite effect. *School officials should be seeking to create and maintain good schools, not to close them.*

Sincerely,

*Dave Sherman*  
Dave Sherman, President



---

March 19, 1997

Julius W. Becton, Jr.  
Chief Executive Officer  
District of Columbia Public Schools  
415 12th Street, N.W.  
Washington DC 20004-1994

Dear General Becton,

I recognize how difficult it must have been to propose the closing of schools last night and I respect your courage to do so. On behalf of Tech Corps-DC, there's something I must say, though.

As you saw first-hand this past Saturday at Janney ES, projects like NetDay have a way of revitalizing a school and its community. What matters most is not the final product, but the process students, teachers, parents, and other volunteers go through in achieving it. Six of the 18 schools that have been targeted for closure have experienced this phenomenon and 2 more were about to do the same this spring.

What's important to understand, though, is that taking on a project like NetDay demonstrates a huge degree of leadership and courage. These are innovative schools that will do whatever it takes to ensure the best possible future for their kids. In a city that desperately needs this sort of initiative, are these the kinds of places that should be shut down?

Of the 157 schools in the District there are 4 in particular that have demonstrated this leadership and courage the most (Stevens, Keene, Hearst, and Patterson). Since our organization first began over a year and a half ago, we've accomplished many things together and their ongoing pursuit of resources like this is truly above and beyond the norm. These schools are exemplary and what they embody should be replicated and not eradicated.

I empathize with the difficult position you were put in and wish you the best in the final outcome. It is our hope, however, that as the next phase of the process begins, the qualities these schools have demonstrated will be lifted up and not overlooked.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Root  
Director

**Proposed School Closings**

**WARD 1**

Harrison Elementary\*  
Lewis Elementary

**WARD 2**

Stevens Elementary\*\*

**WARD 3**

Hearst Elementary\*\*

**WARD 4**

Keene Elementary\*\*  
Petworth Elementary

**WARD 5**

McKinley High\*\*  
Taft Junior High  
Woodridge Elementary

**WARD 6**

Blow Elementary  
Peabody Elementary

**WARD 7**

Kelly Miller Middle  
Evans Middle\*  
Nalle Elementary  
Richardson Elementary

**WARD 8**

Douglas Junior High  
McGogney Elementary\*\*  
Patterson Elementary\*\*

\*Scheduled to participate in NetDay this spring

\*\*Participated in NetDay last fall



March 27, 1997

Lieutenant General Julius Becton Jr.  
415 12th Street, N.W.  
Suite 1209  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Re: Hearst Elementary School

Dear Lieutenant General Becton:

As chairman of D.C. Stoddert Soccer League (DCSSL) I am writing to you to help ensure that Hearst Lower Field (adjacent to the Phoebe Hearst Elementary School) will NOT be a casualty of any decisions you make regarding the closing of Hearst School. For many years this public field has provided thousands of children in our League an opportunity to play organized soccer and is a key factor in the success of our program.

D.C. Stoddert Soccer League is celebrating its 20th anniversary as Washington's largest nonprofit co-ed youth soccer organization. The League was founded by a group of parents in 1977 with a handful of players. It has grown into an enthusiastic mass engaging more than 4,000 girls and boys aged 4-16 throughout the Washington area.

The purpose of the League is to encourage children to play soccer, to learn and practice good sportsmanship and to build strong bodies through physical fitness in a friendly environment. DCSSL is run by a 40 member volunteer board and approximately 400 volunteer coaches and team managers - offering a full soccer schedule in both spring and fall to the 4,000 players and their families.

As you know, users of the Hearst Field are granted permits through the D.C. Department of Recreation and Parks. DCSSL has worked closely with D.C. Rec. over the years and has received yearly permits to use the field for a variety of soccer related purposes including soccer games, practices and tournaments.

All who use Hearst Field have enjoyed playing in the natural amphitheater setting, surrounded by tall trees and a countrified atmosphere. Over the years the condition of the field has deteriorated somewhat, and recently many in the community realized that it was time for some action to help preserve this beautiful piece of land. A coalition of groups has risen to meet the challenge. DCSSL in conjunction with the D.C. Department of Recreation has developed a plan to rehabilitate the field which will include regrading the land, resurfacing with new turf, installing a drainage system, providing appropriate landscaping, as well as other improvements.

**DC Stoddert Soccer League - PO Box 39203 - Washington, DC 20016  
Hot Line (202) 965-GOAL**

DC Stoddert Soccer League



Hearst Elementary School  
March 27, 1997  
Page 2

In order to ensure full agreement and support from the neighbors in the area, a series of meetings have been held with the friends of Hearst Park, a neighborhood group committed to the preservation and improvement of the entire park, including the field. Many suggestions were made at these meetings that were incorporated into the final plan for the Hearst Field renovation. In addition, the Advisory Neighborhood Commission has participated in the negotiations that have taken place to help ensure full community input.

If all goes as planned, in a few months there will be an improved park and a beautiful new field that all of us (especially our children) will be proud and fortunate to use.

Again as the chair of DCSSL, I strongly urge you to KEEP HEARST FIELD OPEN FOR PUBLIC USE. I know that the families, coaches, managers, and most importantly the 4,000 youth soccer players, many of which are Hearst neighborhood residents, will appreciate the continued use of this field.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William B. Willis', written in a cursive style.

William B. Willis  
Chairman

cc: Emergency Transition Education Board of Trustees

STATEMENT OF THE WARD 3 PTA PRESIDENTS OPPOSING THE CLOSING OF HEARST SCHOOL

We strongly oppose the proposed closing of Hearst Elementary School. This proposal is educationally indefensible and economically unsound; it also threatens the state of public education in Ward 3. Furthermore, we believe that the closure of Hearst is against the public interest because it would undermine the public infrastructure of Ward 3 and lower the ward's property values and property taxes, which contribute significantly to the economic health of the city. We urge the Board of Trustees to remove Hearst from the list of schools slated for closure.

First, closing Hearst makes no sense in educational terms. Hearst is a successful school academically; this success is the product of years of dedicated and collaborative work on the part of the principal, teachers, parents, and the community. To destroy this success for a few extra dollars is not right. Although the proposal calls for sending the in-boundary students to Eaton and "moving the program to Whittier," there are no details on how this will preserve the collaboration that has made Hearst the success that it is today.

Second, the constellation of "objective criteria" used to put Hearst on the list--age of school, condition of the physical plant, and out-of-boundary enrollment--was used simply to ensure that a Ward 3 school was included. Many schools of similar age and with far greater facility needs were not selected. However, the use of high out-of-boundary enrollment as a selection criterion when a school is fully enrolled and academically sound is completely unjustifiable. In the case of Hearst, the low in-boundary population is the direct result of past DCPS policies that have left the school with small boundary area (so Hearst would serve as a magnet school) when neighboring schools are over capacity. In addition, expelling grades 4-6 and the repeated attempts by DCPS to close Hearst

have made the school less attractive to parents who crave stability. In-boundary enrollment has decreased since 1993, when DCPS proposed consolidating Hearst, Eaton, and Oyster.

We believe that the use of out-of-boundary enrollment as a criterion is inappropriate. If established as a precedent, this criterion could be used again to close other Ward 3 schools--particularly Oyster, Eaton, Deal, and Wilson. Though many people believe that a large share of DCPS resources have been diverted to Ward 3 to the sole benefit of Ward 3, the reality is that since 1967--the date of the landmark *Hobson vs. Hansen* case--schools in our ward have been serving the children of other wards. This service to students across the city is now established as a Ward 3 tradition, of which we are proud.

In fact, the notion that Ward 3 is absorbing resources that could be better spent elsewhere has no factual basis. Ward 3 has only 11 schools in the 157-school DCPS inventory. All other wards have about twice as many, despite the fact that the populations of all wards are equal and the school age population of Ward 3 has increased. Furthermore, no new school has been built in the ward since 1936; the last two major renovations took place in 1977 and 1980. In short, the facilities needs of Ward 3 schools have been neglected for decades.

We reject the notion that a Ward 3 school must be closed as a matter of equity because the real inequity is that our ward's public school infrastructure is woefully inadequate. If Hearst is closed we will be even more underserved. Ward 3 residents pay a large proportional share of DC taxes in return for few services. We believe that we have a right to see our tax dollars return to our ward for the most basic of public services--public education. Universal public education is an American tradition and the basis for the strength of civil society in our country. To suggest that Ward 3 can do with one less public school because

many children attend private schools not only undermines support for public education, but also contributes to the class and ethnic divisiveness that rends our city.

Furthermore, closing Hearst makes little economic sense and would have a detrimental effect on the ward in general. In specific terms, the Hearst property has a low value apart from the land on the same parcel currently owned by the DC Recreation Department and the National Park Service. The figure of \$1.89 million cited by DCPS is unrealistically high if the adjacent properties were donated gratis by the other owners. Even if this donation scenario had a shred of probability, it would encounter fierce opposition from the neighborhood and Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3-C; both groups have considerable experience in opposing inappropriate development. The ensuing fight would be so protracted that the financial gain to DCPS would be negligible. Sale of the Hearst property alone would bring far fewer dollars to DCPS coffers, and if a zoning variance were required, would have to meet the approval of ANC 3-C. Thus the sale of Hearst, an academically successful, fully enrolled school for a few hundred thousand dollars makes little economic sense.

Another reason to keep Hearst open is that in the long-term, with Ward 3's population increase, another school will have to be built. There are few parcels of land in the ward suitable for a new school and land is expensive.

Finally, the sale of Hearst is inconsistent with the Ward 3 Comprehensive Plan, which emphasize the importance of protecting the ward's residential character. That law provides, *inter alia*;

Ward 3 is primarily a residential sector of the District, rather than a center for commercial or industrial activity....The primary economic development issue for Ward 3 is...how to control the strong economic

development pressures...that exist...." (Section 1200.302 (a)).

The Comprehensive Plan also provides that:

Ward 3 can contribute to the economic viability of the District through the protection and promotion of its residential character.... (Section 1300.302

(c) (1).

We believe that the strength of the residential character and property values in Ward 3 are directly linked to the strength of the ward's public schools. Neighborhoods with strong public schools attract residents regardless of whether those residents have school-age children or not. Closing Hearst--further shrinking the inadequate public school infrastructure in Ward 3--would send a powerful message to our residents that the cornerstones of our community are disposable and that the residential character of our community can be degraded. An attempt to sell both the school and the playground would do even greater damage to property values, drastically reducing property taxes and weakening our ward's economic contribution to the city.

Therefore, we oppose the closure of Hearst.

Rohan D.V. Somanadin  
Dyster Community Council

*[Signature]*  
Co-President  
LARCHMONT NSA

Way Feltner  
SAL EMK 1110

*[Signature]*  
Sanyone Johnson  
Co-Presidents, Wilson SHS PTSA

*[Signature]*  
1st Co-President, Jannay Elementary  
Jannay PTA  
1151 W. 11th St. N.W. #1111111111

Sarah Whitman and Penny Ray  
PTA co-Presidents, Jannay Elementary  
\* Please see letter from Mike Gartin  
to Bruce MacLaurin dated April 10, 1997.

Margaret A. Weekes  
Co-President, Deal JHS PTA

---

**Appendix D:**  
**Letters Supporting the Hearst PTA Recommendation**

---



# THE ENTERPRISE FOUNDATION

April 3, 1997

JAMES W. ROUSE  
CO-FOUNDER  
PRESIDENT

F. BARTON HARVEY III  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

REYNARD RAMSEY  
PRESIDENT OF THE FOUNDATION

EDWARD L. QUINN  
MEMORIAL PRESIDENT

PATRICIA T. ROUSE  
CO-FOUNDER  
VICE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

WILLIAM R. FREY  
VICE PRESIDENT

RICHARD M. HESSE  
VICE PRESIDENT AND CFO

KRISTINE SIGLIN  
VICE PRESIDENT

TRUSTEES

HARRY W. ALBRIGHT, JR.

SUSAN G. BAKER

CATHERINE P. BESSANT

JOHN P. BOORN

PAUL C. BROPHY

RAOUL L. CARROLL

RAYMOND G. CHAMBERS

JILL K. CONWAY

GORDON COSBY

DOROTHY CULLMAN

CUSHING N. DOLBEARE

MARTIN FINE

SAMUEL GARY

W. H. KROME GEORGE

RONALD GRZYWINSKI

F. BARTON HARVEY III

ANDREW HEISKELL

ROBERT A. IGER

JAMES A. JOHNSON

JUDITH E. JONES

JINGLI MAN

CHARLES M. C. MATHIAS

DAVID O. MAXWELL

RAYMOND J. McGUIRE

ROBERT S. McNAMARA

EDWARD L. QUINN

ALBERT B. RAJNER

HENRY S. REUSS

MICHAEL I. ROTH

PATRICIA T. ROUSE

WILLARD G. ROUSE III

WILLIAM A. SCHREYER

JOHN C. SITES, JR.

J. McDONALD WILLIAMS

KAREN HASTIE WILLIAMS

RALPH ZIGLIBRE

BARRY ZIGAS

Ms. Susan Wedlan, PTA President  
Hearst Early Childhood Demonstration Center  
37<sup>th</sup> and Tilden Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Ms. Wedlan:

The Enterprise Foundation would be happy to entertain a proposal for financing the rehabilitation of the Hearst Early Childhood Demonstration Center, should it decide to do so as a charter school or otherwise.

The Enterprise Foundation has been actively lending to non-profit, community-based organizations for nearly fifteen years, and has recently become involved in several charter type schools in Baltimore. Our loans have been as small as \$5,000 for pre-development expenses, to as large as \$1 million for new facility construction.

Should you have questions, please feel free to call me at 410/772-2422. I look forward to hearing from you as the project develops.

Sincerely,

Reynard Ramsey  
President and Chief Operating Officer

/arl



March 31, 1997

Ms. Susan Wedlan, PTA President  
Hearst Early Childhood Demonstration Center  
37th and Tilden St. NW  
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Ms. Wedlan:

National Cooperative Bank and NCB Development Corporation would be happy to entertain a proposal for financing for the Hearst Early Childhood Demonstration Center, should it decide to pursue charter school status in the District of Columbia.

NCB has been actively lending to non-profit, community-based schools for nearly ten years, and has recently become involved in financing several charter schools across the country. Our loans for charter schools have been as small as \$5,000 for pre-development expenses, to as large as \$2 million for new facility construction.

Enclosed is a package of information on NCB and NCB Development Corp. Should you have questions, please feel free to call me at 202.336.7677. I look forward to hearing from you as the project develops.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Angie Donovan".

Angie Donovan  
Vice President

1401 Eye Street, N.W., Suite 700  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
(202) 336-7680  
Fax (202) 336-7804



*The Mid-Atlantic Center*

April 1, 1997

Dear Members of the Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees:

I am writing to urge you to keep Hearst Elementary School open. The Mid-Atlantic Center, which I direct, is an organization funded by the Department of Education to provide assistance to public schools on issues related to equity and school improvement. As an expert on school reform and as a parent whose son attended Hearst, I want to assure you that Hearst is, unfortunately, a rare institution, a highly successful urban school.

While there are some pockets of excellence in schools throughout the country there are few schools and even fewer school districts which are successfully educating children from a wide variety of cultures, socio-economic groups and family situations. Researchers have been trying to identify the characteristics of effective schools for many decades. While there have been identified characteristics and identified "model programs" they have proven exceedingly difficult to replicate, or in the rhetoric of school reform to "scale up".

Research tells us that it is not effective to purchase "a model program" and/or bring in expensive consultants to "train" staff on effective practices. Frustratingly, experience has shown that a model that works in one setting doesn't necessarily work in another. Unfortunately, the expert consultant goes home and change rarely gets implemented in the classroom. What is more effective is for one successful school and school community to adopt another school that is less successful.

I suggest that the Hearst Elementary School is one of the District of Columbia's great success stories. It is not only desegregated [38% Black, 39% White 17% Latino, 6% Asian] physically, but integrated socially, where the children actually work and play together. The tests scores - in the 91 percentile nationally for the second and third grade- indicate significant academic success.

As a parent, I was constantly impressed with the nurturing and academically stimulating environment of the Hearst educational community. The principal, Diane Worthy, took a personal interest in the students. My son proudly pointed her out to me when I would visit the school. When our family was trying to make educational decisions for my son her door was always open, her advice was always sound and her support always visible. I have visited schools throughout the country and the two teachers that taught my son at Hearst were among the best I have ever observed. His first grade teacher brought parents in to teach them to support the schools math and reading program. I was consistently impressed with how well the teachers at Hearst knew my son, both his strengths and his weaknesses.

The district should attempt to replicate Hearst's success through a structured adopt a school program. The Mid-Atlantic Center can provide free assistance to the District of Columbia to establish such a program. Our Center has an abundance of resources on issues of school improvement and is funded to serve the District. It is the mission of the Mid-Atlantic Center to utilize the best of research, pedagogy, technology and practice to assist the school systems in the mid-Atlantic states and the District of Columbia to provide equity and excellence for all students. The Center builds upon its experience and established capacity for program and staff development to transform schools into sites where all students can learn.

There are simply too few schools any where in the country successfully serving a diverse student body. To close one should be unthinkable. Research tells us that it is important to keep the ingredients of success in tact to assure continued success. The principal, teachers or even location should not be changed. However they can be used as parent, teacher and administrator support systems for another school whose achievement can be improved.

Let the success of Hearst be replicated rather than destroyed.

Sincerely,



Sheryl Denbo  
Executive Director

256



**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004**

April 8, 1997

Dear Mr. Utt:

Enclosed please find a copy of my analysis of the SY 1996-7 school closing recommendations, which concludes that eight elementary schools recommended for closing should continue their operations because they meet criteria enumerated for successful schools.

While this paper focuses on the need to build on, rather than undercut successful academic programs, the extent of the inconsistencies and inaccuracies in DCPS facilities data we were able to review prompts me to question whether the Trustees have enough solid information at their disposal to make critical facilities decisions at this time.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathy Patterson".

Kathy Patterson  
Councilmember, Ward 3



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

KATHY PATTERSON  
COUNCILMEMBER, WARD 3

OFFICE: (202) 724-8062  
FAX: (202) 724-8118  
AFTER HOURS: (202) 537-5037

**Analysis and Recommendations on  
*District of Columbia Public Schools SY 1996-1997 School  
Closing Candidates*<sup>1</sup>**

**Executive Summary**

- ▶ Successful schools should not be closed. DCPS should build on success
- ▶ The effects of implementing the current plan include:
  - More students housed in overly-large facilities
  - More students attending open-space schools
  - Fewer early childhood education programs
  - Fewer opportunities for school choice
- ▶ We continue to need additional information including an accurate student count
- ▶ The demographic data in the plan are inadequate
- ▶ The proposals are based on inconsistent and faulty data
- ▶ Other options for reducing space should be considered
- ▶ It is recommended that eight elementary schools meeting criteria for successful schools remain open: Harrison, Hearst, Lewis, Nalle, Patterson, Peabody, Stevens, Woodridge
- ▶ The Petworth program should be permitted to move to Burdick as proposed by the school community

---

<sup>1</sup>Councilmember Patterson's analysis was prepared with information gathered from PTA/HSA leaders and other parents, school faculty and staff, and DCPS facilities reports.

### Overview

Decreasing excess space now used by DCPS education programs is a necessary step to reduce operating and repair costs and to generate funds for renovating operating schools. The process should not result in closing successful schools, should not rescind or restrict the established policy in favor of school choice, and should not result in resegregating the few racially diverse schools in the city. In short, *the process by which excess space is reduced should not undermine public confidence in the quality of public education in the District.*

The goal of a strategic facilities plan for DCPS should be to reduce excess space, while furthering the educational goals of the school system. The plan should establish a course of action for consolidating space, using it more efficiently, and reducing per pupil facilities costs. But it should not be primarily a plan for capturing economies of scale or for maximizing the real estate value of DCPS-operated facilities. Educational mission should drive facilities decisions. Unfortunately, the current recommendations appear to have facilities and real estate decisions driving the education plan.

A guiding rule for decision-makers in closing and consolidating schools should be: *"First, do no harm."* If a school is successful within DCPS – often against incredible odds – it should not be a candidate for closing. Extensive research has identified the conditions that are necessary to successful schools, and school consolidations should not destroy these conditions in a misguided attempt to force operating efficiencies on the system. Successful school characteristics include:

- ▶ high academic expectations for students
- ▶ small class sizes and low student-teacher ratio
- ▶ small school size
- ▶ clear goals and priorities
- ▶ staff empowerment, professionalism and competence
- ▶ effective instruction
- ▶ parent and community involvement
- ▶ high attendance
- ▶ safe and orderly environments

There are a number of schools recommended for closing and consolidation that are successful schools as evidenced by such measures as students' high or increasing standardized test scores, high promotion and attendance rates, high level of parental and community involvement, and popularity as a school of choice. These successful schools should not be closed and merged into other school environments, destroying the climate which has proven successful.

### Analysis of Plan's Effects

An analysis of the impact the closing and consolidation plan produced by DCPS would have on elementary school students reveals a number of patterns with disturbing implications for the education of the District's young children:

- ▶ More students would be housed in larger schools
- ▶ More students would attend open-space design schools
- ▶ Fewer children would attend schools with dedicated early childhood education programs
- ▶ Fewer children would attend schools selected for them by their parents

Each of these effects is discussed separately below, followed by an assessment of the information *not yet gathered* that is critical to all of these decisions.

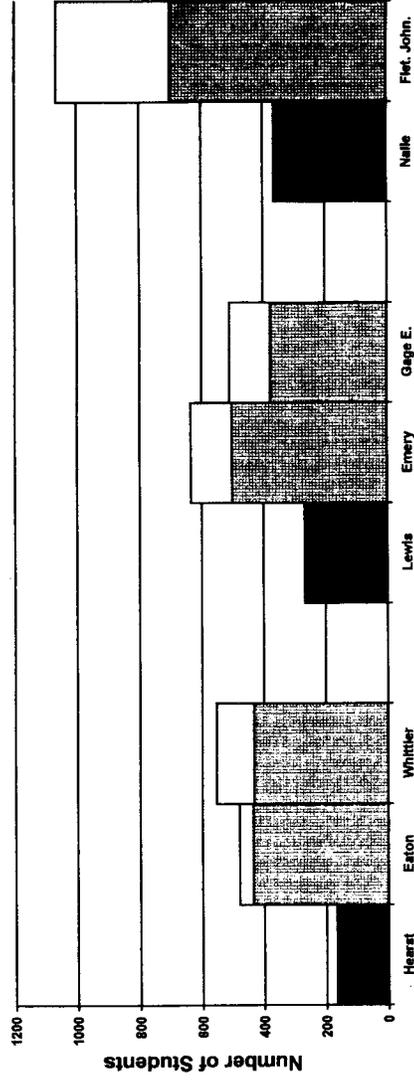
#### More students would be housed in larger schools

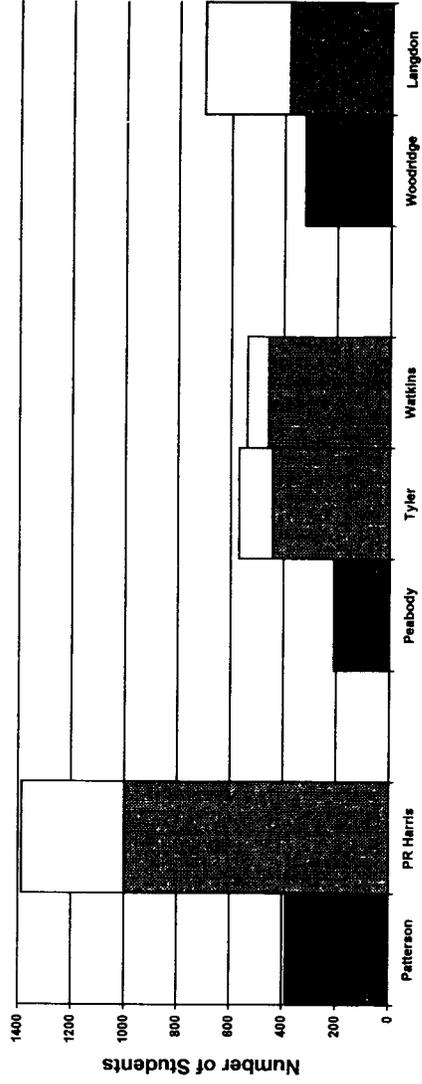
Research teaches that school climate is critical to student achievement. A recent report issued by *Education Week* in collaboration with the Pew Charitable Trusts entitled "A Report Card on the Condition of Public Education in the 50 States," (January 22, 1997) states that schools should be "small enough for teachers to know their students and work effectively with their colleagues." The report cites research from the Consortium on Chicago School Research and from the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools at the University of Wisconsin, showing the ideal school sizes to be: elementary schools -- 350 or fewer children; middle school/junior high -- 400 to 800; high school -- 600 to 900.

The late Ernest Boyer, in the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching publication, *The Basic School, A Community for Learning*, points to the considerable body of research linking small school size with student success. Dr. Boyer quotes educator Winifred Gallagher favorably in saying, "If all the research on the best environments in which to...educate children could be boiled down to three words, they would be Small Is Beautiful." Research also consistently demonstrates that small school size has the most positive results among urban students. (See *Mary Anne Raywid, Education Research Information Clearinghouse [ERIC] Digest No. 112*).

We have analyzed the impact of the current plan on the school size of six of the elementary schools that should be considered successful. These schools currently range in population from 165 to 364. When consolidated with the receiving schools under the plan, the total populations would jump to between 550 and more than 1300 children! It takes little imagination to see how they will get swallowed up by their receiving schools (see following chart, *Impact of Closures on School Size*). Each one of these schools would well exceed the "small school size" criteria cited by the above researchers. In the process, they would lose many of the characteristics that have made them effective, successful schools.

# IMPACT OF CLOSURES ON SCHOOL SIZE





Note: Data from DCPS Office of the Chief Operating Officer/Director of Facilities, March 1997

This pattern of closing small- to medium-sized schools and consolidating them into large schools holds true for virtually all of the schools on the proposed closing list. In light of the research findings on the benefits of small schools to student achievement and the goals established by the D.C. Goals 2000 Panel, this is not the direction in which the District should be going.

**More students would attend open-space design schools**

School configuration should be a factor in school consolidation decisions. Over 30 open-space schools and additions were built in the District in the 1960's and 1970's. Many have excessively large total capacity, including P.R. Harris with a design capacity of 2,204, and Fletcher-Johnson with a design capacity of 1,219. Research and experience have shown that many children do not function well in large open-space environments.

Many of the schools recommended for closing are traditionally designed schools being consolidated into large open-space designed schools. Children from Nalle and Patterson Elementary Schools, for example, are now working successfully in traditionally designed school buildings. If Nalle and Patterson are closed and consolidated, the children will have to accommodate not only to schools that are much bigger and include older students, but also to the open-space design of Fletcher-Johnson and P.R. Harris, the receiving schools. Teachers will also have to accommodate their teaching.

Ironically, these open-space buildings can be much less efficient to run than traditional buildings. Many open-space buildings in DCPS are no longer being used in the manner for which they were designed (*i.e.*, lots of flexible space for team teaching and small groups of children using many different spaces all the time). By superimposing more traditional class structures on these spaces, the classroom-size rectangles render much space useless for instruction. As a result, the '95-96 DCPS Utilization Survey and Capacity Review usually recommends significantly lower capacities for these open space buildings and additions than they had been designed to hold. This means the space per student available in these buildings is far greater than in traditional school buildings, resulting in higher operating costs and repair costs per student.

**Fewer children would attend schools with dedicated early childhood education programs**

Five of the elementary schools slated to be closed or "moved" are early childhood education centers: Hearst, Peabody, Petworth, Woodridge and Nalle. These nationally acclaimed programs are successful, in part, because of their small size and separation from upper elementary grades. Their single focus recognizes the importance of these early learning years. These schools should not be closed and merged into large, traditional elementary schools.

**Fewer children would attend schools selected for them by their parents**

More than 11,000 DCPS students currently are enrolled in schools not within their neighborhood school's boundaries according to DCPS records. (See following chart, *Percent DCPS Enrollment w/Special Permission by Ward*) The parents of these children have exercised their right to school choice under established school system policy -- policy advocated most recently by Trustee Chairman Bruce M. MacLaury in correspondence with Councilmember Patterson.

The proposed school closings will have a crushing effect on school choice, sending hundreds of children "back" to their neighborhood schools. For example, approximately 160 out-of-bounds students at Hearst E.S. and at Eaton E.S., one of the Hearst receiving schools, would be sent back to their neighborhood schools. Another 70 children now attending Gage-Eckington would be sent back to their neighborhood schools to make room for children from schools proposed to be closed. It is consistent with past experience to predict that some parents, when told their child must attend the neighborhood school they sought to avoid, will opt to move out of the District instead.

A corollary effect of sending out-of-bounds students "back" to their neighborhoods is more racially segregated schools. Both Hearst and Eaton are two of the most diverse elementary schools in the city. If Hearst is closed, and out-of-bounds students ejected from Eaton to make room for in-boundary Hearst children, the District will lose two of its best examples of voluntary desegregation resulted from the policy of school choice. This is a social policy implication that should not be lost on decision-makers.

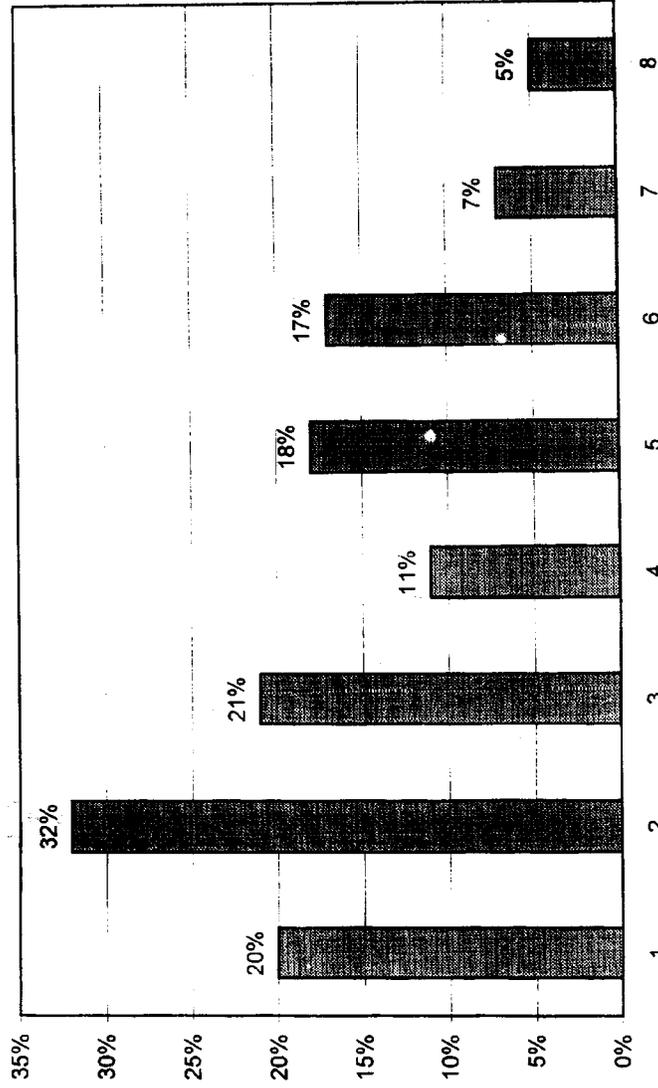
**Outstanding Data Needs/Faulty Data Presented**

The school system has not yet conducted an accurate student enrollment census. (For more information, see Councilmember Patterson's 1996 letter to Congressman Tom Davis, Appendix). Therefore, the exact number of students attending DCPS schools, the number of those who are District residents, and the distribution of these students throughout the system are not known at this time. *Without this information a major school closing effort should not be undertaken.*

Another issue not yet addressed in any significant way relates to student-teacher ratios and the desirability of returning to smaller class sizes. Research shows that the ideal class size for the first three grades is about 17 children; for grades 4-6, a class size of 21 or 22 is most effective. Research shows that primary students in classes of 19 or smaller achieve at significantly higher levels. When class sizes climb to 23 and above, achievement tends to decline (from *US Report Card*).

In addition, much of data in the school closing and consolidation plan is incomplete or inaccurate. Examples are given below.

Percent DCPS Enrollment w/ Special Permission by Ward



Data from School by School Profiles, DCPS Draft Master Plan, February 28, 1997

**There is a lack of accurate demographic data underpinning school closing decisions**

School reconfiguration requires analysis of demographic trends within small areas and neighborhoods within the city. While the city as a whole has lost population, there are areas of growth, predominantly in the central and western parts of the city. There is growth in much of Ward 1, largely due to increases in immigration. Some areas of Wards 2 and 3 show continued growth, as do pockets such as Fort Lincoln and around Catholic University in Ward 5.

The proposed school closings do not accurately reflect future growth patterns in the District. In fact, there is an alarming lack of data on housing trends in the closing and consolidation plan. For example:

- there is a proposal under consideration today to build 250 houses for working class people in the Fort Lincoln neighborhood. Thurgood Marshall E.S. (formerly Ft. Lincoln) will be to capacity in a few years and the closest school is Woodridge E.S., slated to be closed.
- Five hundred sixty four housing units are to be renovated in the neighborhood around Nalle E.S., also slated for closing.
- While the Hearst neighborhood census indicates a recent decline in population, the area is going through a demographic transition. As older families who populate this area retire and leave, housing will become more available, resulting in a younger population with children.
- Finally, major housing is being built behind Harrison E.S., another school on the closing list. The closing and consolidation plan fails to take into consideration that declines in the census tracts around Harrison are attributable to Metro construction which has been completed. This community is undergoing growth and a school will most likely be needed in the near future.

**Inconsistent and faulty data are driving the recommendations for closings**

In many instances, the recommendations on school closings are based on inconsistent and faulty data. First, we must lay to rest the myth that DCPS is currently designed to accommodate 160-170,000 students as facilities staff have stated. Fifty-four school buildings have been closed by DCPS since the mid-1970's, when student enrollment was at its peak. Using the official DCPS recommended design capacities, there are 106,000 seats in the currently operating schools. If the Goals 2000 standards are used, there are approximately 110,000 seats when operating at 100% capacity. Undisputably, there is excess space in the school system; but there is nowhere near double the space needed.

*The physical condition and cost to repair analyses for many of the schools recommended for closing are incomplete and inaccurate.* Here is just one example of

data missing from the closing and consolidation plan: At Nalle E.S., Freddie Mac has spent over \$100,000 on facilities, including replacing the auditorium floor and putting air conditioning units in each classroom; floor tile is now being replaced. Nalle eliminated its fifth and sixth grades in order to become an early childhood school, which helps to explain why the school's enrollment is down. In addition, until fairly recently, Nalle housed administrative offices for DCPS. A second example: at Harrison E.S. the cost estimate calls for plumbing upgrades to renovate four toilet rooms, then lists under "ADA improvements" the same renovations, but counts the same cost twice.

#### **Program and design capacity data are inaccurate**

Throughout the closing and consolidation plan capacity figures do not reflect reality. For example, the six resource rooms that DCPS claims could be converted to classrooms at Eaton E.S. to accommodate students from Hearst are not, in fact, convertible. Four of these rooms are already functioning solely as classrooms. Other rooms are used for art classes and ESL classrooms.

#### **Options for Reducing Space**

While this analysis has focused on elementary schools, the same problems exist for the junior and senior high schools recommended for closing. Inaccurate and incomplete data, transportation problems, open-space configuration limitations, and the lack of vision for what we really want our schools to look like plague the methodology used to make school closing proposals. In addition, the closing recommendations do not take into account the expected increase in population in these age groups and the eventual need for more space.

To better match school space with changing population dynamics and to increase choice programs while preserving flexibility to meet future needs, the following options are recommended:

- Close an entire building if demographic trends justify it, if appropriate space is available in a nearby school without significant transportation barriers, and if the education program won't be disrupted.
- Rent or lease a wing or section, if it can be separated appropriately from the on-going education program (to help defray operating and capital costs); build a smaller new school on an adjacent or nearby site and then close, lease, or raze the old building.
- Selectively demolish a wing and/or an addition if the neighborhood needs a school of smaller size for the foreseeable future as has been done in other jurisdictions, since reducing space is the goal and not necessarily reducing the number of buildings.

### Recommendations

As stated above, decreasing excess space now used by D.C. schools is necessary to reduce operating and maintenance costs and to generate funds to improve existing schools. The larger political environment requires that at least six schools be closed by September. The purpose of this analysis is to highlight schools that should not be among the six selected for closure by the Trustees.

Using the characteristics of successful schools enumerated above such as strong test scores and community/parental involvement, plus demographic projections, it is recommended that the following schools remain open in their current buildings:

- ▶ Harrison Elementary School
- ▶ Hearst Elementary School
- ▶ Lewis Elementary School
- ▶ Nalle Elementary School
- ▶ Patterson Elementary School
- ▶ Peabody Early Childhood Center
- ▶ Stevens Elementary School
- ▶ Woodridge Elementary School

*This is not to say that each and every other school recommended for closing should, in fact, be closed.* The fact before us, however, is that the D.C. Financial Responsibility Authority has directed DCPS to close six schools by September 1997. Given that directive and the short turnaround time between the proposal and the decision on school closings, it is the goal of this analysis to caution Trustees against the "worst case" scenario: closing and not replicating successful schools.

Finally, it is recommended that Petworth Early Childhood Center be kept intact and moved to the building formerly occupied by Burdick. Petworth is a neighborhood school with strong parental support and community partnerships. It houses a before- and after-care center, a bilingual special education program as well as a satellite program from Mamie D. Lee. Petworth's CTBS scores have increased significantly and it is becoming a multicultural population. The school community recognizes that its school needs physical improvement and is willing to relocate to Burdick. Not only is Whittier, the slated receiving school, a great distance for their young children to travel, even by bus, Whittier itself is also in danger of becoming overcrowded with students from other schools.

**Appendix Items**

1. 1996 Letter from Councilmember Patterson, joined by Councilmembers Brazil and Lightfoot, to Rep. Tom Davis (R-Va.) requesting GAO assistance in producing an accurate enrollment count at DCPS and the necessity for such a count as a basis for policy decisions.
2. February 1997 letter from Councilmember Patterson to DCPS Chief Operating Officer Charles Williams raising concerns about proposed school closing criteria and, specifically, the deletion of academic criteria.
3. March 1997 letter from Councilmember Patterson to members of the Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees raising concerns about the proposed school closing criteria.



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

May 20, 1996

The Honorable Tom Davis  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Davis:

We write to ask you to request that the General Accounting Office assist in the 1996-97 enrollment census for the District of Columbia Public Schools. This is an issue that needs immediate consideration, as we note below.

As you are most likely aware, because the District of Columbia is not within the jurisdiction of any state, it is the only school district in the country that both performs *and* audits its annual student enrollment. It is therefore not surprising that questions have been raised from time to time about the validity of the D.C.P.S. enrollment census.

There are many reasons why an accurate census is essential. Without it, the Council, Mayor and Board of Education cannot determine a per pupil funding formula for D.C.P.S. as mandated by the recently-enacted D.C. appropriations act. Without it the system cannot make sound decisions on which schools to close and consolidate, or where to expend its limited capital improvement money. Without knowing how many and *where* students are enrolled, teachers are not allocated correctly.

There is evidence today that D.C.P.S. is not counting its population accurately. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, for example, there were approximately 67,000 students in D.C. public schools, and another 12,000 District children in private schools. Yet, again, D.C.P.S. claimed 80,382 students in the fall of 1990, and counted 79,802 in the fall of 1995. The steady enrollment figures are questionable given the Census estimates that the District has lost more than 50,000 residents since 1990. The statistical discrepancy between the 1990 Census data and the 1990 D.C.P.S. enrollment count is 20.6% -- that is, D.C.P.S. assumes the census "missed" more than 20% of students. While it is true that the census undercounts minority populations, comparative discrepancies for other cities range only as high as 8.8% in Atlanta -- other figures are: Detroit, -4.5%; Los Angeles, -1.6%; Chicago, 4%; Baltimore, 4.4% and Philadelphia, 4.4%.

The school system recently audited its enrollment count, and school officials claim

the audit, by F.S. Taylor and Associates, confirmed a current-year enrollment of 78,591 -- even though the audit firm itself counted only 68,000 students in D.C. classrooms, leaving the questionable assumption that more than 10,000 students were absent when the count was conducted. The D.C. Auditor is reviewing that audit and we expect a report on that review within the next week. We would anticipate asking, publicly, for a GAO enrollment count if the D.C. Auditor's review raises additional questions about the system's audit.

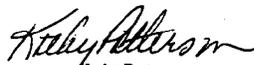
We believe, based on all of the above information, that it is necessary and appropriate that the federal government perform the enrollment auditing function for the District that is normally fulfilled by a state. We feel the GAO is the government entity best equipped to do the job.

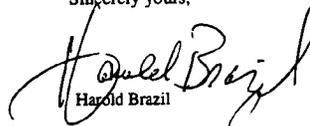
Because the enrollment figures on record are unreliable, we recommend that in this initial year, GAO actively assist the school system in undertaking its 1996-97 census rather than merely auditing the results of the system's own census. By participating in the conduct of the census, GAO will be able to collect much more reliable data on which to perform an audit.

Finally, we urge that the GAO take preliminary steps toward this end immediately. We suggest a letter be sent to the parents of all currently enrolled D.C.P.S. students in June, 1996 (schools ends the week of June 17) informing them that the GAO will oversee the student census in the fall and that proof of residency in the District of Columbia will be required in order to enroll a child in the D.C. Public Schools. We suggest this letter also inform parents, as well as school system employees, that falsification of any enrollment documents may be grounds for prosecution under federal law. We think that such a letter is necessary to signal that the 1996-97 enrollment count will not be "business as usual" and to ease the task of verifying residency in the fall.

Additional suggestions for the conduct of the 1996-97 enrollment census are contained in a memorandum to you dated May 14, 1996. Our staff is available to work with your staff and with GAO auditors. We have shared with the D.C. Financial Responsibility Authority our concerns and our intent to make this request, and believe the Authority is supportive of this approach. We look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Sincerely yours,

  
Kathy Patterson

  
Harold Brazil

  
Bill Lightfoot



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

KATHY PATTERSON  
COUNCILMEMBER, WARD 3

OFFICE: (202) 724-8062  
FAX: (202) 724-8118  
AFTER HOURS: (202) 537-5037

February 10, 1997

General Charles Williams  
Chief Operating Officer  
D.C. Public Schools  
Washington D.C. 20004

By facsimile and mail

Dear General Williams:

I write to follow up on our discussion at the Committee on Education, Libraries and Recreation meeting last week on your draft criteria for closing schools. I want to share my grave concern at one item missing from your list, and elaborate on my concerns with some of the other criteria included.

The important criterion missing from your list is the current success of an individual school. School success should be a positive indicator, and should keep a school off any list of schools considered for closing. A school that is working for students, as evidenced by test scores; active participation of parents, teachers, and others in the community; and waiting lists for other students to attend, should be the very last school considered for closing. This gets to the very heart of what the D.C. Public Schools exist to accomplish: the education of children. And where education is flourishing, any policy decision that interrupts that success should be avoided at all costs.

I continue to have concerns about how you may be interpreting "out of boundary students" as a criteria, though I appreciate your acknowledging my point Thursday that a high proportion of out of boundary students usually indicates a school's success. You should know that this criteria was considered four years ago, with very negative impact on several schools that, while located in my ward, serve a large number of students from across the city. This background may be useful for you to understand as this decision making process goes forward, and I look forward to a more thorough discussion.

I also continue to be concerned about the use of a school's potential for sale as a criterion in closing decisions. Again, it is important to constantly remind ourselves why schools exist; and why we have sought throughout history to provide neighborhood schools for children and families. As I indicated on Thursday, once a preliminary list of

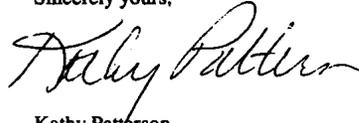
schools has been completed based on educational criteria, it may be relevant to look at a facility's potential value if put to other use -- but that should never be a "first tier" criterion.

I look forward to a more thorough discussion of these and other issues when we talk later this week.

I enclose, for your information, responses provided to me by Fire Chief Otis Latin concerning the recent fire code inspections, and I would direct your attention specifically to a response that indicates that Lieutenant Matthews is to continue to be the fire department's chief contact, along with Chief Bullock, which is somewhat different from your statement to me last week that you and Chief Bullock will be the principal contact persons.

Thank you for your commitment to the District's children.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathy Patterson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Kathy Patterson

Encls.

cc: Councilmember Kevin Chavous



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

KATHY PATTERSON  
COUNCILMEMBER, WARD 3

OFFICE (202) 724-8062  
FAX: (202) 724-8118  
AFTER HOURS: (202) 537-5037

March 5, 1997

Peter A. Gallagher  
1800 K Street, NW Suite 910  
Washington, DC 20006

By facsimile

Dear Mr. Gallagher:

I write, and am writing to each member of the Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees, from (1) the knowledge that you are planning to consider criteria for closing schools at a meeting tomorrow night and (2) a concern that critical educational issues I had anticipated seeing in the *Long Range Facilities Master Plan* draft I received earlier this week are, in fact, short-changed in the current draft.

I urge you to consider the following questions as *prior questions* that should be answered before you will be able to determine which schools to close and how many schools to close in what time period.

(1) What is your vision for D.C. Public Schools in the next decade and moving into the 21st Century? Do you, for example, envision a system of small schools serving elementary school students? Ernest L. Boyer, with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, suggests 400 as a good upper limit for elementary students; our average is now 440 students. If you envision many small schools, and assume a student population of roughly 75,000 students, that would indicate a need for more schools, albeit smaller schools, at the elementary level than we now have.

(2) What is your vision of whom the D.C. Public Schools will be serving? Do you hope to strengthen the D.C. Public Schools to the point where the system re-attracts a significant number of the estimated 15,000 school-aged children now attending private schools? Do you know where those students now live? Where and how will you serve them?

(3) There has long been a desire on the part of many parents and educators to fully serve the 3- and 4-year-olds in the District with pre-kindergarten. Today the education of children under 5 is not mandatory and preschool programs are based on funding and space available. Such enrichment is enormously important to the academic success of children from disadvantaged homes. In addition, new welfare laws will move more mothers out of the home into the workforce with a commensurate need for childcare. If your educational goal is to serve all 3- and 4-year-olds, where and how do you anticipate serving them? There are roughly 3,400 more children in kindergarten than in pre-K; if we expanded pre-K to serve all 4-year-olds, that would require 174 more classrooms. Would you serve these children in their local elementary schools?

(4) A similar question with regard to junior and senior high school-age students. If your educational goals include a significant decline in the drop-out rate, we need to be thinking in terms of serving more secondary students than we now serve. Roughly 35% of the students who start ninth grade drop out. Strong career programs might retain and attract back large numbers of teens -- what is your vision here?

(5) Do you anticipate returning to smaller class sizes -- reversing the budget-driven policy decision made by the elected Board last spring to increase class size? I hope so; that is another educational issue that impacts on facilities.

These questions are obviously not exhaustive, but merely indicative of the kinds of educational issues that should form the basis for a comprehensive facilities master plan. Other concerns: we still do not have a defensible, accurate count of students, nor of out-of-District students attending D.C. schools. Census data indicates that our preschool population is growing, not declining, in spite of other District trends, another key factor.

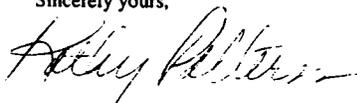
I fully appreciate that the District of Columbia is under a Congressional mandate to close six schools this fiscal year, and I do not personally take exception with that mandate. At the same time, the D.C. Public Schools, like the D.C. government generally, has long been deficient in planning -- in making specific operational decisions based on comprehensive review and analysis of goals for the future.

It is my understanding that the Trustees see the educational program, as contrasted with operational issues, as your primary concern in meeting the mandate set forth by the D.C. Financial Responsibility Authority. I raise many of these questions to make the point that you cannot easily separate the two, and that *your educational goals should be driving your facilities decisions, and not the other way around*. I am frankly concerned that educational issues are not being adequately addressed. A case in point: it's my understanding that the lead person representing the system's chief academic officer on the task force concerned with school closings is, in fact, a facilities person and not someone fully engaged in academics. A second example I raised at the budget hearing this past

Friday: dropped from the list of criteria for closing schools was the criterion, "performance indicators," which I believe should be reinstated as a criterion.

I urge you to frame your discussion of facilities issues in educational terms: in terms of mission and service. Thank you for your consideration of these concerns. If you would like to discuss any of these concerns, general or specific, I am at your disposal.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kathy Patterson", written in black ink.

Kathy Patterson

cc: Councilmember Kevin Chavous  
General Charles Williams  
Paula Perelman

