

**Testimony of Donald L. Hense, Chairman, Friendship Public Charter School
DC State Board of Education
Public Meeting on Proposed Graduation Requirements
Wednesday, January 23, 2013**

My name is Donald Hense and I am the Chairman of the Friendship Public Charter School. Friendship serves nearly 4,000 students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12 in Wards 5, 6, 7 and 8. Of those students, we enroll over 1000 in grades 9-12 at the Friendship Collegiate Academy located in Ward 7 and approximately 370 students in grades 6-10 at the Friendship Technology Preparatory Academy in Ward 8. At full capacity, the Technology Preparatory Academy will serve up to 620 students primarily in Ward 8. Annually, Collegiate graduates nearly 250 students and the Technology Preparatory Academy will graduate about 100 students. With our Collegiate Academy and partnership with Anacostia Senior High, Friendship is responsible for 43 percent of the total on-time graduates in Wards 7 and 8.

We applaud the Board's efforts to review graduation requirements and agree wholeheartedly that this is important. Our commitment is demonstrated foremost through our results -- graduation and college acceptance rates that exceed the state average, outperform open enrollment schools and rival, if not exceed, rates of selective enrollment traditional public schools. Collegiate Academy has a 91 percent cohort graduation rate, which is 35 points higher than the DCPS average and 14 points greater than the higher performing charter average. One hundred percent of Collegiate Academy's graduating seniors are accepted to college and graduates have earned nearly \$40 million in scholarships. We have: 24 Posse

Scholars; over 500 DC Achievers and three Gates Millennium Scholars. We get these results through our Career Academies, which provide early career exposure and certifications, and our Early College, which offers students two years of college credit and a relentless focus on coursework and character skills necessary for our students' future success.

Through years of service to our students and discussions with colleges and universities, we have shaped our graduation requirements. Our program offers students exposure to college and career experiences that are essential to their continued engagement in high school and ultimate college and career success. It is with that in mind that I offer the following feedback and recommendations:

The set of graduation requirements do not reflect what is needed for preparation for college and career. A common practice across states has been to align high school graduation requirements to college requirements. Although there is an appearance of rigor in terms of the sheer number of requirements, the proposed increases miss the mark. As an example, the University of Maryland requires:

- Four years of English
- Three years of math, including algebra I or applied math I & II, formal logic or geometry, and algebra II, with a strong recommendation for a fourth year
- Three years of history or social science

- Three years of science in at least two different areas, with at least two lab experiences
- Two years of a foreign language
- To stand out, you should exceed that minimum, taking several honors and/or Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses and additional academic electives.

Our review of college requirements revealed an emphasis on academic rigor defined as participation in advanced academic coursework, which is not reflected in the Board's proposed increase in course requirements, namely physical education and performing arts. Also, with regard to career preparation, the proposed requirements do not entirely align. Students at Friendship would potentially have to forego career academy courses in exchange for satisfying these requirements. To put this in concrete terms, a Friendship Collegiate student could lose the opportunity to take a Cisco certification course due to additional physical education and performing arts requirements.

The proposed requirements instead reduce academic rigor for students on an accelerated track. The increase in course requirements monopolizes valuable time for students who could potentially take additional Advanced Placement or other college prep courses. For Friendship Early College students, it means potentially sacrificing students' opportunities to earn college credit or to take Advanced Placement courses and potentially test out of college courses.

Conversely, the proposed requirements may go so far as to depress graduation rates, in particular, among students performing below grade level. Likewise, for the many students requiring additional support to catch up, the trade-off of having to satisfy a physical education or performing arts credit instead of strengthening basic skills hinders their chances of reading and mathematics proficiency, high school success and ultimately graduation. The Board should therefore reduce the proposed additional credits in performing arts and physical education.

We support the removal of the Carnegie Unit from the graduation requirements for all subject areas. We applaud the board's efforts to move away from seat hour requirements to a competency based system, joining numerous other states including Maryland. However, the proposal as outlined does not go far enough. Without the inclusion of all academic subjects, including core, students are held captive to meeting seat hour requirements, limiting their ability to accelerate learning and stay on track to graduate within four years. For students who are struggling, binding them to the archaic Carnegie Unit measure will continue to push students to drop out of school. While we are excited about the District of Columbia moving toward competency based education, the work already done by many states in this area as well as lessons learned should propel us forward at a much faster rate than what the current proposal provides.

Finally, I submit to you actual transcripts of students who are now successful high school graduates and attending college. One student currently attends Columbia University while another is a Posse Scholar and the third is a Gates Millennium Scholar. Each benefitted from rigorous advanced placement coursework, career

prep electives and early college programming -- graduates who under your proposed system would have been forced to forgo more rigorous coursework for irrelevant requirements and would have been much less competitive for the selective colleges they attend and the competitive workplace programs where they will seek employment upon graduation. Surely, the Board does not intend through its proposal to diminish the life chances of students such as these.

The Board must reconsider this proposal. It would be beneficial to all, most importantly the students, if the individuals who actually graduate them are included in the discussion from the beginning and not as an afterthought.



Friendship
Public Charter School
OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT

Friendship Collegiate Academy
4095 Minnesota Avenue
Washington, DC 20019
Tel: 202-396-5500 Fax:

Grade: 12	Birthdate: 05/24/1993	Gender: F
Entry Date: 09/11/2007	Exit Date: 06/17/2011	Graduation Date: 6/7/2011
Cumulative GPA:	4.027	
Total Credits Earned:	37.00	
Class Rank:	Not Ranked	
Community Service:	167.75	

Year	School/Course	Sem 1		Sem 2		Summer		Year		Cumulative Summary			
		GR	CR	GR	CR	GR	CR	GR	CR	Grade Level	Earned Credits	Attmpt Credits	GPA
10-11	Friendship Collegiate Academy									Grade Level	Earned Credits	Attmpt Credits	GPA
	(AP) Calculus AB	A	1.00	A	1.00					9th Grade	9.00	9.00	3.833
	(AP) Psychology 11/12	A	1.00	A+	1.00					10th Grade	9.00	9.00	3.972
	(EC) Eng Literature and Adv Writing II			A	0.50					11th Grade	9.00	9.00	4.074
	(EC) Eng Literature and Adv Writing	A	0.50							12th Grade	10.00	10.00	4.213
	Art			A+	0.50			A+	1.00	Overall	37.00	37.00	4.027
	College & Career Prep	A+	0.00	A+	0.00			A	1.00	Course Work in Progress Grading Scale: A+ = 4.0 A = 4.0 A- = 3.75 B+ = 3.25 B = 3.0 B- = 2.75 C+ = 2.25 C = 2.0 C- = 1.75 D+ = 1.25 D = 1.0 D- = .75 F, I = 0.0 P = Pass *(H) Honor courses received .25 added GPA points *(AP) Advanced placement/(EC) Early College courses receives .5 added GPA points			
	Convergent Media	A	0.00	A+	0.00			A	1.00				
	Environmental Science	A-	0.00	A	0.00			A	1.00				
	Music	A-	0.50										
Spanish II	A	0.00	A-	0.00			A	1.00					
09-10	Friendship Collegiate Academy												
	(AP) Government & Politics	A	0.00	A	0.00			A	2.00				
	Algebra II	A	0.00	A+	0.00			A	1.00				
	ECON 201: Macroeconomics	A	0.50										
	ECON 202: Microeconomics			A	0.50								
	ENGL 111: English Composition I	B+	0.50										
	ENGL 112: English Composition II			A	0.50								
	Health 11/12	A+	0.00	A	0.00			A	1.00				
	Physics	A	0.00	A+	0.00			A	1.00				
	Spanish I	A+	0.00	A+	0.00			A+	1.00				
Web Design	A+	0.00	A+	0.00			A+	1.00					
08-09	Friendship Collegiate Academy												
	(AP) World History	A-	1.00	A+	1.00								
	(H) World Lit	A+	1.00	B+	1.00								
	Chemistry (10)	B+	1.00										
	Foundation of Arts & Communication			A	1.00								
	Geometry (10)	A	1.00	A+	1.00								
	Intro to Computers (AS)	A	1.00										
	07-08	Friendship Collegiate Academy											
		(AP) Human Geography	B+	1.00									
		(H) Literary Genres	B-	1.00	B+	1.00							
Algebra I		A+	1.00	A+	1.00								
Biology		A+	1.00										
DC Hist/Amer Govt				A-	1.00								
Physical Education 9			A	1.00									
Transitions (Y)	A+	0.50	A+	0.50									

AP Exam	Score	SAT Scores	Verbal	Math	Writing
		Test Date	520.0	540.0	670.0
		10/1/2010			
		ACT Scores	ACT: Composite Score		
		Test Date	0.0		
		00/00/00			

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Signature
Print Date: January 23, 2013



Friendship
Public Charter School
OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT
Friendship Collegiate Academy
4095 Minnesota Avenue
Washington, DC 20019
Tel: 202-396-5500 Fax:

Grade: 12	Birthdate: 01/26/1993	Gender: M
Entry Date: 08/27/2007	Exit Date: 06/17/2011	Graduation Date: 6/7/2011
Cumulative GPA:	4.034	
Total Credits Earned:	37.00	
Class Rank:	Not Ranked	
Community Service:	277	

Year	School/Course	Sem 1		Sem 2		Summer		Year		Cumulative Summary			
		GR	CR	GR	CR	GR	CR	GR	CR	Grade Level	Earned Credits	Attmpt Credits	GPA
10-11	Friendship Collegiate Academy									Grade	Earned	Attmpt	GPA
	(AP) Calculus AB	A	1.00	A+	1.00					Level	Credits	Credits	
	(AP) Psychology 11/12	A-	1.00	A	1.00					9th Grade	9.00	9.00	3.792
	(EC) Eng Literature and Adv Writing II			A	0.50					10th Grade	9.00	9.00	4.083
	(EC) Eng Literature and Adv Writing	A	0.50							11th Grade	9.00	9.00	4.059
	Art	A+	0.50							12th Grade	10.00	10.00	4.188
	College & Career Prep	A+	0.00	A+	0.00			A+	1.00	Overall	37.00	37.00	4.034
	Music			A-	0.50			A	1.00	Course Work in Progress			
	Nutrition	A+	0.00	A-	0.00			A	1.00				
	Physics	A	0.00	A+	0.00			A	1.00				
	Spanish II	A	0.00	A	0.00			A	1.00				
	09-10 Friendship Collegiate Academy												
	(AP) Government & Politics	A	0.00	A	0.00			A	2.00				
Algebra II	A-	0.00	A	0.00			A	1.00					
Chemistry (10)	A-	0.00	A	0.00			A	1.00					
ECON 201: Macroeconomics	A	0.50											
ECON 202: Microeconomics			A	0.50									
ENGL 111: English Composition I	A	0.50											
ENGL 112: English Composition II			A	0.50									
Health 11/12	A-	0.00	A-	0.00			A-	1.00					
Medical Terminology	B+	0.00	A	0.00			A-	1.00					
Spanish I	A+	0.00	A	0.00			A	1.00					
08-09 Friendship Collegiate Academy													
(AP) Biology	A-	1.00	B+	1.00									
(AP) World History	A+	1.00	A+	1.00									
(H) World Lit	A+	1.00	A+	1.00									
Geometry (10)	A	1.00	B+	1.00									
Intro to Computers (AS)	A+	1.00											
07-08 Friendship Collegiate Academy													
(AP) Human Geography	A-	1.00											
(H) Literary Genres	B+	1.00	B+	1.00									
Algebra I	A	1.00	A	1.00									
Biology			A+	1.00									
DC Hist/Amer Govt			A-	1.00									
Physical Education 9	B	1.00											
Transitions (Y)	B+	0.50	A+	0.50									

Grading Scale:
 A+ = 4.0 A = 4.0 A- = 3.75
 B+ = 3.25 B = 3.0 B- = 2.75
 C+ = 2.25 C = 2.0 C- = 1.75
 D+ = 1.25 D = 1.0 D- = .75
 F, I = 0.0 P = Pass
 *(H) Honor courses received .25 added GPA points
 *(AP) Advanced placement/(BC) Early College courses receives .5 added GPA points

AP Exam	Score	SAT Scores	Verbal	Math	Writing
		Test Date	490.0	480.0	610.0
		12/19/2010			
		ACT Scores			
		Test Date	ACT: Composite Score		
		00/00/00	0.0		

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Friendship Collegiate Academy
4095 Minnesota Avenue
Washington, DC 20019
Tel: 202-396-5500 Fax:

Grade: 12	Birthdate: 01/18/1993	Gender: M
Entry Date: 09/08/2009	Exit Date: 06/17/2011	Graduation Date: 6/7/2011
Cumulative GPA:	3.911	
Total Credits Earned:	35.00	
Class Rank:	Not Ranked	
Community Service:	412	

Year	School/Course	Sem 1		Sem 2		Summer		Year		Cumulative Summary			
		GR	CR	GR	CR	GR	CR	GR	CR	Grade Level	Earned Credits	Attempt Credits	GPA
10-11	Friendship Collegiate Academy (AP) Calculus BC	A+	1.00	A+	1.00								
	Art	A	0.50										
	College & Career Prep	A+	0.00	B+	0.00			A-	1.00	9th Grade	7.00	7.00	3.750
	Entrepreneurship	A-	0.00	A	0.00			A	1.00	10th Grade	7.00	7.00	3.786
	Environmental Science	B+	0.00	B+	0.00			B+	1.00	11th Grade	9.00	9.00	4.111
	Independent Study DC History	A+	0.00	A	0.00			A	1.00	12th Grade	12.00	12.00	3.927
	Independent Study World Literature	A+	1.00	A+	1.00					Overall	35.00	35.00	3.911
	Music			B+	0.50					Course Work in Progress Grading Scale: A+ = 4.0 A = 4.0 A- = 3.75 B+ = 3.25 B = 3.0 B- = 2.75 C+ = 2.25 C = 2.0 C- = 1.75 D+ = 1.25 D = 1.0 D- = .75 F,I = 0.0 P = Pass *(H)Honor courses received .25 added GPA points *(AP)Advanced placement/(EC)Early College courses receives .5 added GPA points			
	Programming I	A+	1.00										
	Programming II			A	1.00								
	Weight Training	A+	0.00	A	0.00			A	1.00				
09-10	Friendship Collegiate Academy (AP) Government & Politics	A	0.00	A-	0.00			A	2.00				
	Algebra II	A	0.00	A	0.00			A	1.00				
	British Literature	A	0.00	A	0.00			A	1.00				
	Health 11/12	A	0.00	A	0.00			A	1.00				
	Introduction Engineering Design	A	0.00	A+	0.00			A	1.00				
	Physics	A	0.00	A	0.00			A	1.00				
	SAT Prep	A+	0.00	A+	0.00			A+	1.00				
	Web Design	A-	0.00	A+	0.00			A	1.00				
08-09	St. John's College High School 221 Geometry							A	1.00				
	Amer Lit							A	1.00				
	Chemistry							A	1.00				
	Jesus and Church							B+	1.00				
	JROTC 2							A	1.00				
	Spanish 2							A	1.00				
	US History							B+	1.00				
07-08	St. John's College High School Algebra I							A	1.00				
	Biology							A	1.00				
	English 9							B	1.00				
	JROTC 1							A	1.00				
	Scripture							B+	1.00				
	Spanish I							A	1.00				
	World History							A	1.00				

AP Exam	Score	SAT Scores	Verbal	Math	Writing
		Test Date	560.0	580.0	540.0
		5/1/2010			
		ACT Scores			
		Test Date	ACT:Composite Score		
		00/00/00	0.0		

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