

February 3, 2017

OPEN LETTER

Honorable Anthony Williams, Mayor Emeritus of the District of Columbia
CEO & Executive Director, Federal City Council

Dear Mayor Williams,

As CEO and Executive Director of the Federal City Council and former DC mayor, you are in an excellent position to influence the improvement of the D.C. Public Schools. As CFO, you put the D.C. Government's fiscal house in order. But promoting vouchers is no solution.

Instead of promoting proposals with a mixed history, at best, you should use your standing to demand transparency of all performance metrics across sectors. Don't accept self-promoting claims as gospel, including claims about the terrible days before mayoral control, when you were mayor. Federal NAEP results show that improvement, especially by black children, was much faster from 1998 to 2007 than from 2007 to 2015 ([summary of each test attached](#)):

Table 13. Test Gains (in scale scores) Combined: 1998/2000 to 2007 v 2007 to 2015

<u>Year Spans</u>	<u>All</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>His-panic</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Free-lunch Eligible</u>	<u>Not Eligible</u>
Gains 1998/2000 > 2007	+58	+57	+81	+57*	+59	+11
Gains: 2007 > 2015	+49	+22	+20	+12	+25	+147

(*Combined gains for White students use 2005 scores for Grade 8 math & reading; None reported in 2007)

You will recall that I exposed altered student records and social graduation in 2002 and 2006 at Wilson High School. Independent reviews (2003: contract; 2007: IG) confirmed them; the 2003 review included all DCPS high schools: mismanaged student records in all. In 2008, Michelle Rhee and most charters started using Credit Recovery to boost graduation rates. In 2016, the State Board replaced the Carnegie unit, a substantive standard of a graduation credit (120 or more classroom hours) with "competency-based credit," an ambiguous invitation for each local education agency to create the appearance of achievement. Does the FCC agree?

In 2013, Mr. Donald Hense, former CEO of Friendship Public Charter, the largest DC charter, [submitted redacted transcripts](#) of three "successful" 2011 Friendship Collegiate (FC) Academy graduates in testimony before the DC State Board of Education (SBOE) (see [the attached analysis](#)). Two show no U.S. History; 42 took it at a previous high school. The Parent/Student Handbook on the FC website lists no U.S. History under Graduation Requirements. None have taken the 2nd year of world history (inflating the credit of AP World History to 2.0 is invalid). All three show inflated credit values. These three transcripts and no evidence that these 2 courses are required suggest that Friendship Collegiate students have been graduating out of compliance with DC Municipal Regulations. Will you use your standing to insist on an independent and thorough audit

of students passing all graduation requirements, including the number of students requiring credit recovery (or online credit recovery) to fulfill requirements at Friendship Collegiate - and all charter & DCPS high schools - with publicly posted results?

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Erich Martel, retired DCPS high school teacher (1969-2011: Cardozo, Wilson, Phelps ACE HS)

ehmartel@starpower.net

cc: Cross Sector Task Force