



**Testimony of Rick Cruz, Board Chair
DC Public Charter School Board**

**DC Council Committee on Education
Confirmation Roundtable
Monday October 15, 2018**

Chairman Grosso and members of the Education Committee, I want to thank you for holding this hearing today and allowing me to testify in support of the nomination of Lea Crusey to join the DC Public Charter School Board. I am Rick Cruz, chairman of the DC Public Charter School Board.

As you well know, at the PCSB, we provide oversight to 123 public charter schools and we're recognized nationally as being a top authorizer. Under our oversight, public charter schools in DC educate nearly half of the city's students. The experiences of these students and their parents - and the data - suggest that we are helping to create conditions for the transformation of lives and of DC's educational sector. Lea, as a new member of our Board, will be a great asset in helping us fulfill our mission to provide quality educational choices to families in the District of Columbia. Her experience and expertise as a teacher, as a policy maker, and as a parent will be of great value to our Board and, most importantly, to the work ahead of us in the city.

Lea saw firsthand what goes into high quality student learning when she began her career as a teacher. And, through the course of her teaching career, she participated and led professional development for school staff, worked with emerging bilingual learners in English language courses, and was appointed a curriculum coordinator at her school. I strongly believe that this background will offer an important perspective informing our decisions around accountability standards for public charter schools.

In addition to classroom experience, Lea worked at the US Department of Education, where she focused on PK-12 policies, teacher training preparation, and where she designed an inter-agency program called the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative. That initiative helped schools partner with other agencies to address some of the barriers students encounter outside of the classroom. That initiative certainly reflects the realities we encounter in DC in supporting students across many dimensions and often possessing of many

challenges. Here again, Lea's work shows her deep understanding of PK-12 education and the issues students face both in and out of the classroom.

Through her current role, Lea sees what it means to be a social entrepreneur, to run a business both from a management and financial perspective. As the leader of a group that engages stakeholders to improve educational outcomes for students in DC and beyond, Lea and her organization are dedicated to ensuring all students have access to a quality education no matter their zip code. The experience running an organization will prove an asset as our Board closely monitors school operations and financials.

Lea's extensive experience in education, strategic planning, and financial management - and her personal commitment to the city and its students, as a resident and as a parent - make her impressively qualified for a position on our Board. These qualifications will help us further our work to provide high quality educational opportunities to students in DC. I urge you to support her nomination to the DC Public Charter School Board. Thank you again for allowing me to testify before you today; I am happy to answer any questions.