

Testimony of  
Steve Bumbaugh, Nominee, DC Public Charter School Board  
DC Council Committee on Education  
April 22, 2015

Thank you, Chairman Grosso and Councilmember Allen, for the opportunity to testify today. I want to thank the City Council for considering my nomination to the Public Charter School Board. I also want to thank Mayor Bowser, for nominating me for this exciting opportunity. I am honored by the prospect of contributing to the improvement of public education here in DC.

I have been invested both personally and professionally in public education in Washington, DC for much of my life. As a child my family ultimately settled in Alexandria in no small part because the public schools in DC were inadequate. In fact the public school I attended in Alexandria served as an entry point for droves of families fleeing what was then perceived to be a dysfunctional public education system just across the Potomac River. In Alexandria I immersed myself in Advanced Placement courses with classmates for whom college was a foregone conclusion. For my counterparts in DC public schools, graduation from high school was often aspirational.

The unfairness of it all gnawed at me, even as I attended Yale and absorbed the benefits of a world-class college education. In fact, it was during my time at Yale that I decided I wanted to do my part to correct these injustices, by teaching in DC public schools. One of the advantages of receiving an excellent education, is that one is filled with a sense of boundless possibility. This is the sense I took with me as I began teaching in an “I Have a Dream” Program at Kramer Junior High School in Southeast DC, shortly after graduating from college. I expected that I would be able to infuse my students with a similar sense of boundless possibility.

I was not prepared for the depth of the challenges my students faced both in the classrooms at Kramer and in the streets of their neighborhood. The sense of unfairness that gnawed at me in college blossomed into a life long commitment to do my part in undoing such an obvious wrong. Over the course of the past 26 years I have continued to work at the intersection of poverty and education---as a teacher, a consultant, a foundation executive and in other roles. Serving on the Public Charter School Board would allow me to actively participate in the creation of a system of schools that the children and families in DC deserve. It would be an honor and frankly, a thrill to have this new opportunity to help expand access to quality educational options for DC students and families.

I ask for your support for my nomination to the DC Public Charter School Board, and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.