



**Written Testimony of
Dr. Michelle Walker-Davis, Executive Director
DC Public Charter School Board
Statewide Data Warehouse Amendment Act of 2021**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Statewide Data Warehouse Amendment Act of 2021. DC PCSB supports efforts to reduce teacher and principal turnover and retain the District's new and veteran talent. We must continue our work as a city to ensure educators can have sustainable and fulfilling careers. We support considering creative solutions to assist teachers as we emerge from the height of the pandemic. However, we have concerns about the legislation. OSSE has made great strides in recent years to collect meaningful and comprehensive data, and this bill would create unnecessary redundancy and cause potential administrative burdens on schools and agencies. Additionally, the bill does not substantially address the issue of turnover, and it will not solve the concerns around retention that public charter schools express. There is abundant data already available, and the city needs solutions.

We encourage the Council to consider enacting policies supporting teachers and principals. Educators cite housing costs as a major reason for leaving the District. Innovative policies geared toward reducing housing costs and offering more opportunities for educators to live in, not just teach in, our city should be a priority. The District should investigate the potential for workforce housing and rental or mortgage assistance for teachers. Another option would be to add an educator weight in the Inclusionary Zoning Lottery to increase the chances a teacher could receive a home in a new development.

Another challenge many teachers face is student debt. Tuition and tax reimbursement programs for educators could be a solution. Many teachers earn masters' degrees or additional credentials to improve their instruction and learn the newest evidence-based teaching strategies. However, these investments come with additional financial stress. We should consider devoting resources to take some of that stress off our workforce.

There is no question that the education of DC children is among the most fundamental and important services the District must provide. Every child deserves the best schools and dedicated teachers, and that cannot be done without the best educators and school leaders. While the District needs data to inform policies and decision-making, we should focus on the data DC already collects and has available.