Brandon Nicholson
Social Scientist, Social Policy Research Associates (SPR)

www.mathematica-mpr.com

March 22, 2012
RTT/SIG – 06844X 02772

Ms. Naomi Rubin DeVeaux
Deputy Director
DC Public Charter School Board
3333 14th Street, NW
Suite 210
Washington, D.C. 20010

Mr. Lamont Brittain
Director of Information Technology
DC Public Charter School Board
3333 14th Street, NW
Suite 210
Washington, D.C. 20010

Dear Ms. DeVeaux and Mr. Brittain:

Thank you for speaking with me about the *Impact Evaluation of Race to the Top and School Improvement Grants.* As you know, the evaluation is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and is being conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (Mathematica) and its subcontractors, American Institutes for Research (AIR) and Social Policy Research Associates (SPR).

The purpose of this letter is to summarize our communication thus far and to describe the responsibilities of both the evaluation team and the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (PCSB) over the course of the evaluation. If you feel that any aspect of the plan described in this letter is inconsistent with your understanding of the evaluation, please contact me at (510)763-1499x629 or brandon_nicholson@spra.com to explore possible revisions.

Study Background. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provided an unprecedented level of federal funds for education in an effort to lessen the effects of the nation's economic recession and make a lasting investment in schools. The federal government used this opportunity to fund a new wave of innovation and to support comprehensive efforts to turn around the lowest achieving schools. Race to the Top (RTT) grants fund a broad array of reforms that are designed to affect all levels of the education system. Title I School Improvement Grants (SIG) support the implementation of school turnaround models in the lowest achieving schools. Both programs look to spur systemic change with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes. Determining whether these unprecedented investments achieve their intended goals is critical. Therefore, ED requires that grantees participate in federal evaluations of these programs (per SIG

Final Requirements, Section IIIB (Federal Register, Vol. 75, No. 208, pp. 66371) and The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (34 C.F.R. § 76.591)).

ED has therefore launched a national evaluation of RTT and SIG programs funded under ARRA. The evaluation will collect information from states, districts, and schools to examine how RTT and SIG programs are implemented and whether they improve student outcomes. The evaluation's primary research questions are:

- How are RTT and SIG implemented at the state, district, and school levels?
- Does receipt of RTT and/or SIG funding to implement a school turnaround model have an impact on outcomes for low-performing schools?
- Are RTT reforms related to improvement in student outcomes?
- Is the implementation of school turnaround models, and strategies within those models, related to improvement in student outcomes?

Data Collection. To answer the evaluation research questions, Mathematica and its partners will interview state and district administrators, conduct a survey of school administrators, and examine administrative data. This agreement outlines district and school activities only; Mathematica will also complete agreements with each participating state and Local Education Agency (LEA) (in particular, Friendship-Woodson (Collegiate) Campus Public Charter School, Hospitality Public Charter School, and Hyde Leadership Public Charter School). Specifically, the evaluation will collect the following data from PCSB:

- **Interview data.** To document how PCSB has implemented school turnaround models, we will conduct semi-structured telephone interviews with representatives from the PCSB. Interviews will cover topics such as standards and assessments, school turnaround, and improving the effectiveness of school leaders and teachers. These interviews will take a total of approximately one and one-half hours to complete.

- **Administrative data.** To examine the impact of SIG-funded educational reforms on student outcomes, the evaluation team will collect administrative data for students in the district in specific grades, subject to OMB approval. Mathematica will obtain relevant administrative data from District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education, where possible. PCSB will provide only those data elements which the state is unable to provide and which the PCSB has collected and has the authority to provide on behalf of the public charter schools. The outcomes of interest for this evaluation include student standardized test scores (state assessments); high school graduation rates; average daily attendance rates; and (to the extent data are available) college enrollment rates and completion of at least a year of college credit. Before collecting data, Mathematica will provide PCSB with a complete list of required data elements and the specific grades that will define the set of students for whom we request data. In addition to the data directly

collected from PCSB, Mathematica will reach out to specific public charter schools (or LEAs) to collect data that PCSB does not collect, and, therefore, cannot provide.

Administrative data files should be sent to Mathematica in electronic format. Prior to preparation of these files, Mathematica staff will provide the appropriate contact person at PCSB with detailed information on the specific data elements that are needed for the evaluation, electronic file types that Mathematica can work with, and procedures for securely transmitting the files.

- **Survey of school administrators.** We will conduct a web survey of school administrators (principals, assistant principals, or other staff knowledgeable about school turnaround activities). To ease burden on respondents, we will limit the length of the survey to between 45 and 60 minutes.

  A sample of schools of interest was selected based on a review of information related to the state SIG application. The sample potentially includes schools that are and are not implementing SIG-funded school turnaround models. Administrator surveys will be conducted with staff from the following schools:

  - ➤ Friendship-Woodson (Collegiate) Campus
  - ➤ Hospitality Public Charter School
  - ➤ Hyde Leadership Public Charter School

  To the extent possible, PCSB will help Mathematica establish relationships with these schools.

Evaluation Timeline. Mathematica plans to interview district administrators during the spring of 2012, 2013, and 2014, and plans to collect administrative data in the fall of 2012, 2013, and 2014. The timeline in Attachment A outlines the dates of activities required for implementing the study within the district. Specific dates will be determined by Mathematica and the district once we coordinate calendars.

Data Confidentiality. The evaluation team will not identify any individual respondents interviewed for the evaluation, and all interview data will be used for research purposes only. Any student-level data provided to the study team will be kept strictly confidential, except as may be required by law, and will be used only for research purposes. The evaluation team shall, as appropriate, comply with: The Privacy Act of 1974, P.L. 93-579, 5 USC 552 a; the 'Buckley Amendment,' Family Educational and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 USC 1232 g; The Freedom of Information Act, 5 USC 522; and related regulations, including but not limited to: 41 CFR Part 1-1 and 45 CFR Part 5b. Mathematica will strip any student identifiers from the data and will replace them with randomly generated numbers prior to analyzing the data. In addition to these data

safeguards, the study team will ensure that no students, schools, or districts are identified in publicly available reports or findings produced for this evaluation, and if necessary, the study team will mask distinguishing characteristics.

Staff working on this project will securely maintain all data files and access to data files will be tightly restricted to only those project staff who are specifically authorized to view the data.

As with other studies sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, a restricted-use dataset (RUD) will be produced as part of this study to allow other researchers the opportunity to replicate the study's findings or pursue additional analyses. However, to maintain compliance with FERPA and other applicable privacy requirements, the RUD will not include individual student-level data collected from state or district administrative records. Additionally, the RUD will not include any student, school, or district names. The data files making up the RUD will be submitted to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which will serve as the custodian of the data. These files will consist of data collected for the study, such as school administrator survey responses and variables used in the analysis that were derived from administrative data. Direct identifiers, such as district names, school names, and student names, will not be included in these files. Further, access to these data is limited to only those researchers licensed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to use the data for research purposes only. NCES loans restricted-use data only to qualified organizations in the United States. Individual researchers must apply through an organization (e.g., a university, a research institution, or company). To qualify, an organization must provide a justification for access to the restricted-use data, submit the required legal documents, agree to keep the data safe from unauthorized disclosures at all times, and to participate fully in *unannounced, unscheduled* inspections of the researcher's office to ensure compliance with the terms of the License and the Security Plan form. Licensed researchers are subject to NCES standards for conducting research and protecting data confidentiality. Specifically, the use of these data is protected by Federal statutes and regulations; authorized researchers are subject to the laws, regulations, and penalties that apply to use of confidential data held by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES, an office of ED). Researchers who utilize the data in ways contrary to these statutes and regulations, such as attempting to identify respondents, face penalties of fines and jail terms.

Research Approval. Mathematica will comply with all federal and state requirements for participation in research. Mathematica's study protocols have been submitted to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval.

Communication. I will be your primary contact on the study team. Please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or e-mail if you have any questions about the evaluation. The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board has named Jeremy Williams as the primary contact for the evaluation.

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Payment for Data. PCSB will receive $135.00/ hour in each year of the three-year study (2012, 2013, and 2014) for providing administrative data, covering three school years (2009/2010 to 2011/2012) in 2012, one school year (2012/2013) in 2013, and one school year (2013/2014) in 2014. The data collection for the third study year is planned, with a final decision to be made by September 1, 2013. If PCSB projects that the cost for providing data will exceed $4,000.00 in any of those years, it will notify Mathematica and obtain Mathematica's approval before proceeding with the data extraction.

PCSB will invoice Mathematica for these costs. Invoices will be submitted on the PCSB letterhead, include the signature and title of an appropriate official certifying to the work performed, and reference this agreement number RTT/SIG 06844X-02772. The invoice must specify the number of hours provided and the total labor charge for compiling and delivering the administrative data. Invoices may be submitted electronically in PDF file format to: Subinvoices@mathematica-mpr.com. See Attachment C for a sample invoice.

Agreement to Proceed. If the plan described in this letter is acceptable to you and consistent with your understanding of your district's participation in the evaluation, please sign the bottom of this letter, keep one copy for your files, and E-mail one signed PDF copy of the letter to me at brandon_nicholson@spra.com or fax it to me at (510)763-1599. We appreciate your assistance with this important study, and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Brandon Nicholson
Social Scientist
Social Policy Research Associates (SPR)

Signed:
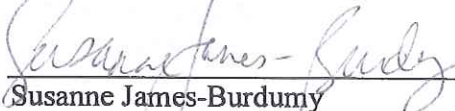
The plan described in
this letter accurately
describes our plan for
including District
Columbia Public
Charter School Board
in the *Impact
Evaluation of Race to
the Top and School
Improvement Grants.*
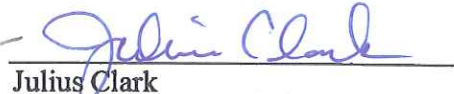
Scott Pearson
Executive Director
District of Columbia Public
Charter School Board

Naomi Rubin DeVeaux
Deputy Director
District of Columbia Public
Charter School Board

Susanne James-Burdumy
Project Director
Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

Julius Clark
Deputy Director of Contracts
Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

Attachment A: Schedule of Planned Evaluation Activities

Evaluation Activity	Period
Conduct District Administrator Interviews	Spring 2012; Spring 2013; Spring 2014
Conduct Survey of School Administrator	Spring 2012; Spring 2013; Spring 2014
Collect Student Outcomes Data from Districts	Fall 2012; Fall 2013; Fall 2014

Attachment B: DRAFT Data Request

Thank you for participating in the Impact Evaluation of Race to the Top (RTT) and School Improvement Grants (SIG), a study that Mathematica Policy Research and its subcontractors American Institutes for Research (AIR) and Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) are conducting for the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The goal of the evaluation is to examine how RTT and SIG programs are implemented and whether they are associated with improved student outcomes. The study will provide valuable information on whether these unprecedented investments through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act achieve their intended goals. This memo outlines our request to the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (PCSB) for the first round of data collection for this important evaluation. We will make additional requests for similar information after the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.

A. DISTRICT-LEVEL DATA

Table 1 lists the district-level data elements we will be requesting, and the years for which each item will be requested. When we submit the final data request we will fill in many of the cells with publicly available information from EDFacts, the Common Core of Data (CCD), and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). We ask that DCPS fill in the missing cells.

Table 1. District-Level Data Requested

High School Graduation Rate[a]									
	Data Needed for Spring of:								
Student Group	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
All Students									
English Language Learners/ Limited English Proficient Students									
Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch									
White, non-Hispanic Students									
Black, non-Hispanic Students									
Hispanic Students									
Number of High School Graduates and GED recipients[b]									
	Data Needed for Spring of:								
Student Group	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
All Students									
English Language Learners/ Limited English Proficient Students									

Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch	
White, non-Hispanic Students	
Black, non-Hispanic Students	
Hispanic Students	

Number of College Freshman who Graduated from High School OR Received a GED in the Previous 12 Months[c]									
	Data Needed for Fall of:								
Student Group	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
All Students									
English Language Learners/ Limited English Proficient Students									
Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch									
White, non-Hispanic Students									
Black, non-Hispanic Students									
Hispanic Students									

[a]The data already entered in the table will come from EDFacts. Please provide the data for other years in a manner consistent with what you provide to EDFacts. Specifically, the high school graduation rate is defined as the percentage of students measured from the beginning of high school who graduate from public high school with a regular diploma (not including a GED or any other diploma not fully aligned with the State's academic standards) in the standard number of years, or another definition developed by the state/district that more accurately measures the rate of students who graduate from high school with a regular diploma, which is approved by the Secretary in the state plan. This count does not calculate a dropout as a transfer. This count is different from the averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR), which is an estimate of the percentage of public school students in an entering high school freshman class who graduate within four years.

[b]The data already entered in the table will come from the Common Core of Data (CCD). Please provide the data for other years in a manner consistent with what you provide to the CCD. Specifically, we are looking for the total number of high school diploma recipients plus the total number of GED recipients ages 16-19 plus the total number of other high school completion certificate recipients as of the end of the school year, This count is reported by the CCD in the State Dropout and Completion Data File.

[c]The data already entered in the table will come from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Please provide the data for other years in a manner consistent with what you provide to IPEDS. Specifically, we are looking for the total number of first-time, degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students at public or private colleges who graduated from high school or received their GED within the past 12 months, as reported on Part C (Residence of first-time undergraduate students) of the Fall Enrollment survey screen. Please calculate enrollment as of the institution's official fall reporting date.

B. STUDENT-LEVEL DATA

We are requesting student-level background and demographic information, test scores, and other information for all school years from 2009-2012. Table 2 presents the cohorts of students that are the focus of the data request. Table 3 lists the specific demographic, background, test score, and other data elements we are requesting, and the years for which each item is requested. We realize that some data elements might not be available. If a data element is not available, please let us know and we will work with you to determine if another, similar data element may be used instead.

LETTER TO: Naomi DeVeaux
FROM: Brandon Nicholson
DATE: March 14, 2012
PAGE: 10

In addition, we are also requesting the following: (1) for all elementary schools in the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (PCSB), what middle schools do they feed into? (2) for all middle schools in DC PCSB, what high schools do they feed into?

Table 2. Student Cohorts for Data Request

Student Cohorts	Data Needed For School Year:		
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Friendship-Woodson (Collegiate) Campus Public Charter School (LEAID: *1100008*) and Hospitality Public Charter School LEAID: (*1100010*)			
5th graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X
6th graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X
7th graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X
8th graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X
9th graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X
10th graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X
11th graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X[a]
12th graders in 2009-2010	X	X[a]	X[a]
Hyde Leadership Public Charter School LEAID: (*1100011*)			
Pre-Kindergarteners in 2009-2010	X	X	X
Kindergarteners in 2009-2010	X	X	X
1st graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X
2nd graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X
3rd graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X
4th graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X
5th graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X
6th graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X
7th graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X
8th graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X
9th graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X
10th graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X
11th graders in 2009-2010	X	X	X[a]
12th graders in 2009-2010	X	X[a]	X[a]

[a]These years of data will exist only for students who were held back.

Table 3. Student Record Data Items[a]

Variable	Description
Student ID	ID numbers should be consistent across all school years for which data are being requested
School NCES ID or school code	Number that uniquely identifies school in which student was enrolled in each year; these ID numbers should be consistent across all school years for which data are being requested
School name	Name of school in which student was enrolled in each year
District NCES ID	ID numbers should be consistent across school years for which data are being requested
Enrolled in district	Indicator for whether the student was enrolled in the district in each year
Gender	Student's gender
Year of birth	Student's year of birth
Race	Race of student
Ethnicity	Hispanic or Latino
Grade level	Grade level of the student
Free and reduced-price lunch status	Eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch
English language learner status	English language learner, limited-English-proficient, or bilingual, with level if available
Special education status	Special education status, such as having an Individual Education Plan
Math scale score [District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System]	Scale score from math section of state or district test. Scale score is preferred, but normal curve equivalents, percentile ranks, and number correct are acceptable (in descending order of preference). (Note: If a student retook the test, please provide the most recent score in each year.)
Math test description	Name of math test as shown in state/district database, test form information (such as "Stanford 9 Form S"), grade level of test taken by the student, and date that the test was administered (e.g., Fall/Spring)
Math alternate assessment	Whether math test score is from an alternate assessment
Math alternate assessment description	Name of math alternate assessment as shown in state/district database, test form information (such as "Stanford 9 Form S"), grade level of test taken by the student, and date that the test was administered (e.g., Fall/Spring)
Number of retakes	Number of times the student retook the test
Exemption code	Exemption codes for students receiving exemption for math test, if applicable
Reading scale score [District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System]	Scale score from reading section of state or district test. Scale score is preferred, but normal curve equivalents, percentile ranks, and number correct are acceptable (in descending order of preference). (Note: If a student retook the test, please provide the most recent score in each year.)
Reading test description	Name of reading test as shown in state/district database, test form information (such as "Stanford 9 Form S"), grade level of test taken by the student, and date that the test was administered (e.g., Fall/Spring)
Reading alternate assessment	Whether reading test score is from an alternate assessment
Reading alternate assessment description	Name of reading alternate assessment as shown in state/district database, test form information (such as "Stanford 9 Form S"), grade level of test taken by the student, and date that the test was administered (e.g., Fall/Spring)
Number of retakes	Number of times the student retook the test (Note: test scale score should be the most recent score)

Variable	Description
Exemption code	Exemption codes for students receiving exemption for reading test, if applicable
Graduated from high school	Whether the student graduated from high school as of MM/DD/YYYY (the end of the school year)
Enrolled in college	Whether the student enrolled in postsecondary college or institution, if available

*These variables are requested only for those students listed in Table 1.

C. JUSTIFICATION FOR REQUESTED DATA

We greatly appreciate your assistance with this data request. We want to assure you that the evaluation team and ED carefully considered this request to ensure it asks for the least amount of data necessary to conduct a high-quality evaluation. Below, we briefly describe why the requested data elements are required in order to conduct the study.

1. District-level high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates: These are key outcome variables for the analysis. The second and third variables requested in Table 1 will be used to calculate college enrollment rates in a consistent manner across all states/districts. We will examine how the receipt of RTT grants (or non-receipt of such grants) is related to changes in these outcomes over time. We're interested in how these outcomes change for all students in each state/district but also in how they change for key subgroups, which is why we're also asking for these district-level variables by English Language Learner status, free and reduced price lunch status, and race.

2. Student test scores, high school graduation, and college enrollment: These are key outcome variables for the analysis. The study will evaluate whether receipt of RTT and/or SIG funding to implement a school turnaround model has an impact on these important outcomes.

3. Student ID, school NCES ID and name, district NCES ID: To ensure a high-quality evaluation, it is critical to analyze and account for possible changes in student mobility resulting from SIG. These variables are thus needed to uniquely identify students across schools and over time, for the purposes of knowing which students attended SIG and non-SIG schools, and which students moved into and out of SIG and non-SIG schools over time. School names are needed to check the consistency of the school NCES ID variable and investigate possible anomalies in the data, such as those caused by school closures and consolidations. District IDs are needed to distinguish between schools that have the same or similar names, but are located in different districts.

4. Student demographic information: These variables are needed to examine whether receipt of RTT/SIG funding affects student achievement for particular subgroups of interest, such as males, females, English language learners, and special education students.

5. Years of data: More recent years of data (2010-2011 and afterwards) will serve as key outcome variables in the analysis. Data from 2009 and earlier will be used to identify and adjust for pre-existing patterns in outcomes before the receipt of RTT/SIG funding.

6. Student cohorts: Student-level data are requested only for specific cohorts of students in your district (the cohorts vary by charter school). The selected cohorts are listed in Table 2, along with the years for which student-level data are needed for each cohort. Table 3 lists the data requested for the cohorts in Table 2. These cohorts were selected based on multiple criteria related to the presence of schools implementing turnaround models, the presence of similar schools not implementing turnaround models, and the SIG eligibility tiers to which these schools belong. The type of schools (i.e., elementary or secondary) and tested grade levels appropriate for the evaluation helped determine which cohorts of students were selected. Applying these selection criteria helps to enable a high-quality evaluation while sampling as few cohorts as possible.

7. Feeder patterns. Feeder information is needed to explore mobility patterns in student enrollment as they relate to schools that do and do not receive SIG.

D. DATA CONFIDENTIALITY

Mathematica Policy Research and its subcontractors AIR and SPR, follow the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). **Responses to this data collection will be used only for research purposes.** The reports prepared for the study will summarize findings across the sample and will not associate responses with a specific district, school, or individual. We will not provide information that identifies respondents to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

E. FILE FORMAT

Data can be provided in a single file or multiple files, whichever the state/district prefers. We can work with almost any file format, including Excel, plain text, SAS, Access, and SQ: server databases. Please also provide documentation of data, including definitions of variables/fields, any codes used, and contact information for someone who can answer questions about the data.

LETTER TO: Naomi DeVeaux
FROM: Brandon Nicholson
DATE: March 14, 2012
PAGE: 14

Attachment C: Sample Invoice

[District of Columbia Public Charter School Board Letterhead]

To: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.   From: DC Public Charter School Board
       Attn: Jay Style, Senior Vice President   333 14th Street, NW
       P.O. Box 2393   Suite 210
       Princeton, NJ 08543-2393   Washington, D.C. 20010

Employer Identification Number (EIN): [If applicable]

Mathematica MOU Number: 06844X02772
Invoice Date: [Date]

Payment requested for delivery of school records and administrative data.

	CURRENT RATE	CURRENT HOURS	CURRENT BILLABLE
DIRECT LABOR			
[Staff Member Name & Title]	[$]	[#]	[$]
[Staff Member Name & Title]	[$]	[#]	[$]
[Staff Member Name & Title]	[$]	[#]	[$]
TOTAL PAYMENT REQUESTED			[$]

I certify that all payments requested are for appropriate purposes and in accordance with the terms set forth in the memorandum of understanding.

_____

Signature of Authorized State Official
(electronic signature acceptable if submitting the invoice by electronic media)

_____

Name of Authorized Official
Title

NOTE: INVOICES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS MAY BE SUBMITTED BY E-MAIL IN PDF FILE FORMAT TO: Subinvoices@mathematica-mpr.com (Attn: Waleska Peña)