

Testimony of Sandra Moscoso – DCPS Oversight Hearing
Parent at Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan
February 23, 2017

Good Morning, Councilmembers. I am Sandra Moscoso, the parent of a 5th grader at Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan, the parent of an 8th grader at BASISDC Charter School, and member of the Capitol Hill Public Schools Parent Organization.

I'm here to:

- 1) describe our school and remind you why Montessori is an opportunity for DCPS,
- 2) ask for support in giving our teachers the autonomy to deliver instruction via the Montessori framework,
- 3) encourage you, DCPS, Chancellor Wilson, and OSSE to support our students with an accountability framework that meets student and family demand, and
- 4) to advocate for authentic parent-school partnerships based on transparency and sharing of data

When I enrolled my son in 2006, I didn't know much about Montessori, other than that I liked the idea of a school where an energetic three year old could move, explore, and learn.

Today, I know the Montessori values of grace and courtesy create an environment where children focus on learning and community; I know the materials used in the pre-K enable children to have physical experience with concepts they'll learn in elementary and middle school; and I know that giving students the space to choose work until they master it, produces kids who love of learning, think critically and are engaged members of any community.

In a city that values choice, Montessori represents DCPS' willingness to give it. Montessori meets parent demand for child centered, time-tested approaches to learning. It's worth noting the Charter School Board has responded to this demand by opening 4 Montessori schools. But don't take my word for it - in the 2015 school lottery, 1480 applications were submitted for 93 CHML seats.

This sought-after program is implemented by our insanely dedicated teachers and staff. Like their peers across the city, they face the pressure that comes with high stakes testing, while constantly bombarded by blanket initiatives and training which do not add to learning, but rather, distract and disrupt instruction. **I implore DCPS and Chancellor Wilson to give our educators the flexibility to implement common core the Montessori way.**

Similarly, we need DCPS support in shaping the city's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) framework. Parents across the city are asking for evidence of school success far beyond PARCC results – the current proposed framework does not reflect this. Chancellor Wilson, in his confirmation hearing testimony highlighted meaningful data we should consider like student mobility, discipline and suspension rates, and social and emotional development indicators. **I join fellow parents in asking DCPS and the Chancellor to engage and to urge OSSE to not rush, but give the community until September to forge a plan.**

Finally, I support Chancellor Wilson's expressed commitment to transparency. DCPS' current approach is inconsistent. Budget allocation data was released this week, for example, missing critical information like at-risk funding breakouts. Parents want to be true partners and to best support our schools, we need access to information and data.

In summary, we need DCPS to grant our educators flexibility, lead the ESSA discussion, and share data. Thank You.