

**Testimony from Tom Carpenter to District of Columbia State Board of Education  
Regarding Proposed Rulemaking on Compulsory Education**

**February 20, 2013**

Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony regarding the proposed rulemaking on compulsory attendance. My name is Tom Carpenter and my wife and I home school our three children here in the District of Columbia.

We, like the many other home schooling families in DC, greatly appreciate the forethought and care with which this body thinks through all the complexities of education in our city. Between public schools, the myriad of charter schools, co-ops and homeschooling; education in the District of Columbia looks very different depending on the context. In this, it is clear that a one-size fits all approach will almost never meet the needs of all education models in our city.

My wife and I also appreciate the way the State Board of Education has worked through and promulgated comprehensive home schooling regulations in DC Municipal Regulation 5200. While the development of these regulations in 2008 came before my time as a home schooling parent, I have learned from others in community that they came about through countless interactions between DC-based home schooling families and the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent. While not perfect, DC Municipal Regulation 5200 takes great care to balance the unique needs of home schooling with the need for rigorous standards for education in DC .

All that said, I am concerned about the inclusion of home-schooled instruction in the new regulation regarding compulsory attendance. I am hopeful that this is simply an oversight since the proposed rule does seem to have contradictory paragraphs - 2100.3(b) exempts home schooled children and their parents from the attendance recordation requirement while paragraph 2101.1 adds them back in. However, if there is a desire by the Board to apply these rules to home schooling, I would urge this body to reconsider its position.

Given the hard work it took to achieve DC Municipal Regulation 5200, it would be unfortunate to see that law picked apart by including home schooling in an otherwise unrelated regulation. As many

other home schooling families can attest, new attendance requirements would contradict the very nature of home school instruction. At its core, home schooling involves learning and education at all times, not just during a standard school day or during set hours.

While I applaud this body's desire to improve attendance in District of Columbia schools, I urge you to please recognize how fundamentally different home schooling is from the traditional schooling for which this proposed rulemaking is so obviously intended and to please remove "home-schooled instruction" from paragraph 2101.1 of the new Rule.

Thank you.