

**TESTIMONY**  
**DC STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**MEETING ON GLOBAL EDUCATION**  
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Presented by  
Sally Schwartz

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Good evening, Mr. Trabue, Ms. Slover, and other members of the State Board of Education. My name is Sally Schwartz. I am Founder and Executive Director of the DC Center for Global Education and Leadership (or CGEL), a local nonprofit organization which works to promote and support high quality, systemic global education in our DC public schools. This organization grows out my previous work as DCPS Director of International Programs from 1999-2008.

I applaud your decision to focus this meeting on global education in the District of Columbia. This is an issue which to date has not received adequate attention on the part of our city's or schools leadership. Given all the other urgent educational needs and priorities, the excellent global education work that is being done (and has been done for many years) by DC educators, students, and community partners tends to fly under the radar, and is too often unrecognized and is certainly underappreciated. I am really pleased that tonight you will have the opportunity to hear firsthand about some of the great programs that are taking place throughout the city.

On behalf of the members of this panel, I also wish to express our appreciation for your invitation to us to speak with you about the status of DC Chinese language and study abroad programs, and to share information about a very exciting new opportunity – the “100,000 Strong Initiative” -- that has the potential to dramatically expand our capacity to send DC students and educators on study abroad experiences in China. I am very pleased to be joined on this panel by the Director of the “100,000 Strong Initiative” at the US Department of State, Carola McGiffert, who will share details of this program. I believe you will agree that this represents a tremendous opportunity for our city, and I am

personally very grateful and impressed that DC has been included in the program's vision from the outset. This is quite unusual. Before Ms. McGiffert speaks, you will hear from students who have benefited from DCPS Chinese language and study abroad opportunities. My own role on this panel will be to help provide some context and observations regarding the state of global education in DC, and then more specifically to offer some background information on DC's relatively recent involvement with Chinese language teaching and China exchanges.

Over the last 10 years, and particularly in the aftermath of 9-11, government, business, and education leaders have paid increasing attention to the importance of providing our nation's K-12 students with the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and experiences that will equip them to successfully compete and participate in our increasingly globalized and interconnected 21<sup>st</sup> century world. A series of reports and position papers calling for internationalization of K-12 education and improvement of world language education have been issued by such groups as the National Education Association, Council of Chief State School Officers, Asia Society, NAFSA and the Committee for Economic Development. They identify economic competitiveness, national security concerns, the need to address increasingly complex global challenges, and the growing diversity of our nation's communities and workplaces as compelling reasons to promote "global competence" for all students.

At the same time, a new paradigm for K-12 global education has emerged, in large part thanks to the leadership of the Asia Society. Global education is no longer seen as a subject (such as social studies or foreign language), but a rather as a perspective or prism through which teachers teach and students learn. Global awareness and understanding can no longer be viewed as an elective or supplement to the core curriculum, or as a set of isolated, extracurricular experiences for a select group of privileged or academically advanced students. Instead, global education must be embedded in all grades and all subjects for all students. It must be relevant to their lives, and designed to help them understand their place in the wider world, their connection to it, and their power to contribute to making their world a better place. A globalized system requires globally competent educators and globally aware and committed leadership. And very importantly for our own local context, global education is not something you do after you've fixed all

the other problems; global education has an important role to play in engaging students, raising achievement, and increasing college and career success.

We in Washington, DC are in an absolutely unique position. We live in an international city, with an unparalleled concentration of resources and partners (embassies, federal agencies, global businesses, universities, museums and cultural institutions, international organizations, and nonprofits), who over many years have provided incredibly rich learning opportunities for our students and high quality professional development for our educators – usually at absolutely no cost. We have a growing international population in the city. We have many globally experienced as well as international teachers. We are clearly well positioned in DC to be a national leader in K-12 global education. And yet we have not taken advantage of this potential. Great global teaching takes place in individual classrooms, but not necessarily as a consistent part of a school's curriculum. Much of the global education work is generated from outside the system, and so even great programs often end up being random, intermittent, discontinuous, uncoordinated, and inequitably available. DCPS's three World Cultures Catalyst Schools have represented an encouraging step forward in developing globally themed schools. But for the most part, it has been difficult to move beyond a random, non-strategic approach to global education to a more systemic, intentional approach.

This is why CGEL was created – to take this work to the next level. As part of this effort, we have created a Partner Collaborative to promote better coordination and collaboration between partners, to share information and best practices, to facilitate connections with schools, and to work to build more effective, strategic, and sustainable relationships with schools and school leadership.

The relatively young Chinese language program in DCPS is a good example of the critical role played by external partners. In 2006, with significant support from the Embassy of China, DCPS signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Hanban, the Chinese government agency that promotes Chinese language learning abroad, to bring experienced language teachers from China to teach in DCPS schools.

In 2007 five full-time Chinese teachers were placed at six DCPS schools across the city – Eaton ES, Deal MS, Wilson SHS, Thomson ES, Aiton ES, and Kelly Miller MS. The

original intent was to use these Hanban teachers, paid by the Chinese government, to seed new DCPS Chinese language programs, which would generate student and teacher interest, and ultimately be funded through the local school budgets. This in fact has happened, in most, though not all cases. Eaton's Chinese program is flourishing. It has become a World Cultures Catalyst School. Chinese also continues at Deal, Wilson, and Thomson. In subsequent years, new Chinese programs have been established at Oyster-Adams, Emery EC, Brent ES, School Without Walls, and Phelps ACE HS. The Aiton program flourished for three years, but did not continue this year. Kelly Miller's Chinese program did not continue after the first year. I also believe that some fee-based afterschool programs have been established to provide another Chinese language option.

To my knowledge, Yu Ying Public Charter School offers the only public Chinese language immersion program in DC. Chinese language has also been taught in community-based settings, such as the Chinatown Cultural Community Center and the H Street CDC. DC high school students in these two language programs have also participated in study tours to China.

Opportunities for our high school students to travel to China at no cost – for short and long term study – have increased in recent years, due in large measure to federal government initiatives designed to produce speakers of critical languages, including Chinese. For the last three summers, DCPS students from schools across the city have participated in an intensive Chinese language program organized by Americans Promoting Study Abroad (APSA). Other students have participated in similar summer language programs in China through the federally funded National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y). We currently have a Wilson graduate who is spending his gap year in China through this program. This fall two other students from Wilson traveled to China to participate in a China Bridge competition, funded through Hanban. All of these are educationally rewarding, transformative opportunities for the students involved, although probably fewer than a dozen or so students from DC travel to China each year.

In addition, teachers and school administrators have also had the opportunity to travel to China through a number of educational programs. Several years ago, a professor at Howard University's School of Education led a Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad summer study tour to China for DC and PG Country teachers. Another teacher group

traveled to China through a US Department of Agriculture program. Hanban has also invited DC educators to China. I was part of a team of nine DCPS administrators who traveled to China at the outset of our Hanban partnership in 2007; just last week a leadership team from Eaton ES traveled to China through the University of Maryland's Confucius Institute and Hanban.

One other important piece of information to help flesh out our DC China picture: In 2007 DCPS signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Beijing Municipal Education Commission, Beijing's large K-20 public school system, to promote exchanges and collaborations between the two cities. This agreement has never been implemented, but it remains a potential vehicle for future educational programs.

So where does this leave the District in terms of Chinese? Chinese language is without doubt taking root in K-12 schools in DC, as it is across the country, and interest is clearly growing. But we are just at the beginning stages. As with all foreign language programs in the District, there are challenges with quality, administrative support, and resources. We have teacher certification issues to resolve, and challenges with granting credits for students studying Chinese abroad. A Chinese language pipeline has developed in far NW (Eaton, Oyster Adams, Deal, Wilson), but nowhere else in the city. There are problems with continuity of instruction (as students move from school to school), and most importantly, lack of access to Chinese language for most students in the city. To help address this issue, CGEL is currently working on a proposal to develop a Chinese language afterschool/summer program for interested DCPS high school students.

As with other areas of global education in DC, external partners and resources have played a critical role in seeding, supporting, and enriching our school-based programs. But I would suggest that these relationships have developed in a piecemeal fashion, and are not yet part of a comprehensive, strategic, long-term plan for developing a high quality, Chinese language program for DC, taking full advantage of public and private funds. This is the approach we need to take, especially as we consider the opportunities for significantly expanding student travel to China.

My primary message today is that we need our city's education officials – from the State Board, DCPS, OSSE, the Mayor – to recognize the importance of equipping DC's young people with the global competencies they will need to thrive in the globally interconnected world they will inherit. Your leadership, support, and involvement are essential in moving beyond our current constellation of wonderful, worthwhile programs to a “world class” global K-12 system. There is only so much external partners – no matter how committed or innovative – can do from the outside. We believe that the beginning of a new administration offers a great opportunity to think big, create high expectations, defy stereotypes, and embrace a global vision – for our schools and for our students. This is do-able, and we look forward to working with you in any way we can.