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Board Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am Dan Byerly, Director of Curriculum for Friendship Public Charter Schools and I would like to urge the Board to modify the graduation requirements for District of Columbia public and public charter school students, particularly in the areas of Mathematics and Social Studies. Though the requirements do not directly govern public charter schools under the School Reform Act, they are the guiding documents used by both the Public Charter School Board and OSSE to grant diplomas.

The specific course titles in these subject areas create difficulties for schools looking to adopt innovative programs and are unaligned with the current DCCAS assessment system. Modifying the language will not decrease the rigor, but will provide more room for public and public charter schools to modify their curricula to meet their students' needs and embrace innovative and effective models.

The ***DCMR Chapter 22 Revision 2203.2*** outlines the following requirements in the "core" content areas for students who entered High School since Fall 2007:

English: 4 units

Science: 4 units (including 3 lab sciences)

Social Studies: 4 units (Including World History 1 & 2, US History, US Government, and DC History)

Math: 4 units (Including Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra II)

As you can see, while the English and Science requirements provide broad flexibility, the Social Studies and Math requirements outline a detailed path of courses that must appear on a student's transcript. These proscriptive requirements – most likely designed to promote rigor and adherence to standards – actually prevent schools from innovating and accelerating students.

The explicit course titles in Social Studies – and the implied order in which they must be taught – prevent innovative course offerings and sequences. Research-based courses built around contemporary problems, humanities courses blending literature, art and history, and other engaging and valuable courses must bend and modify to show they fit these requirements.

The Common Core places a heavy burden on Social Studies to reinforce critical reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. These skills can be taught well with any Social Studies content, but require engaging and creative curriculum and instruction to grab student attention. Strict adherence to the mandated courses deprives programs of possibilities for creative integration.