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(via email)

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Dear Members of the Selection Committee for the DC RPP:

Thank you for your hard work in considering our proposal to become the research partner for DC education. I would like to provide two potentially important updates, which I believe are relevant to the concerns that were raised during the recent online meetings of the Committee.

First, some good news about money. American Institutes for Research, our Consortium partner, has generously increased their funding commitment to the RPP by \$250,000, bringing their total contribution to \$750,000 over ten years. (With the additional AIR contribution, the Consortium is providing \$1,801,500 over the first ten years.) Most importantly, AIR has restructured the timing of their contribution and will “front-load” \$300,000 during the first two years of operation. Both the amount of additional funding and the timing will alleviate short-term financial pressures and enable us to truly hit the ground running. It goes without saying that we fully understand the City’s current financial constraints, given the health and economic crisis of COVID, and we are deeply grateful to AIR for responding so nimbly. Knowing that the pandemic is having profoundly disparate impacts on the education system, we and our Consortium partners are ever more determined to provide useful evidence to improve practice in our City’s schools and advance opportunity for all our students.

Second, a note of clarification. We applaud the desire of the selection committee to promote preregistration as one of the mechanisms to ensure rigor and transparency in the new RPP. I want to underscore again our plan to post research methods and analysis plans – for large-scale experimental designs as well as more qualitative and observational studies – and submit them to a registry at the start of each study (using sites such as Open Science Framework or ICPSR). We view this as essential to making the results credible and, therefore, useful to practitioners, and thank the Committee for highlighting this issue during the recent conversations.

Finally, to reiterate what we think is distinctive in our approach. Our commitment to the Washington community is to conduct relevant research at the highest standards of scientific inquiry and objectivity, and to work closely with decision makers to unpack the meanings of the research and what it tells us about potential consequences of different courses of action. In other words, we come to this project with a desire to facilitate productive uses of research, not to simply broker studies but also to take responsibility for working with educators and leaders in making good use of them. High-quality research is the first step, but the key to real partnership is “engagement,” in its two senses: making sense of the evidence and using it to connect with educators and policy makers.

We are ready, willing, and able to become a real partner in the continuous pursuit of improvement.

My best wishes for good health and a successful 2021 (and beyond).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Feuer".

Michael J. Feuer, PhD
Dean and Professor

C: Justin Tooley
Elizabeth Grant