



**Testimony of Rashida Tyler
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Accountability
DC Public Charter School Board
The State of Adult Education and Adult Literacy Initiatives in the District
Joint Public Hearing by the Committee of the Whole and Committee on
Education**

September 24, 2015

Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson, Education Committee Chairman Grosso, and members of the Council. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Rashida Tyler, and I am the Senior Manager of School Quality and Accountability at the DC Public Charter School Board. In this role, among other responsibilities, I manage our oversight of DC public charter schools with adult education programs. I am excited to discuss our academic oversight with you today, as well as share a story about some of the life-changing work being done by public charter schools in the District. PCSB supports the following recommendations for adult education programs:

1. As you create new legislation, please respect the exclusive operational control of our schools that includes options and incentives, not mandates.
2. Transportation programs for K-12 (Kids ride free) should be extended to adult education students.
3. Any support in childcare for students enrolled in adult schools would be enormously helpful.
4. We are supportive of a statewide diploma for the GED.

5. We support the suggestions made to provide flexibility in the TANF program for students enrolled in our schools.
6. We support payment reform, so that payment systems reflect the enrollment patterns and demands of adult charter schools. We are working with the DME on recommendations for you.
7. We support funds for schools to support students obtaining industry-approved certifications.

In my written testimony, I've included a PowerPoint presentation that provides more data and information about adult public charter schools. I'd like to begin by telling you about Harry a student who enrolled at Community College Prep PCS last year.

Harry grew up in the Barry Farms community in Ward 8. Like other youth in the District, he describes his childhood as being chaotic because of a number of family challenges. To improve his technology skills, he enrolled in Community College Prep PCS to earn his A+ computer certification. He remained committed to improving these skills and his quality of life and earned the certification last year. And shortly thereafter he received an offer letter from Verizon for a job opportunity that would not have been available to him without the computer certification.

Harry's story is representative of the experience of many of the students attending adult education public charter schools in DC.

Today, we have eight adult public charter schools in the District, serving more than 4,000 students from every ward in the city, with another adult public charter school, Goodwill Excel Academy, slated to open next school year, which will offer the city's first competency-based program. Nearly 70% of our adult students are over the age of 24. Nearly half of the students participate in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs to learn speak, read, and/or write the English language.

As you can see in slide 3 (attached), the number of students attending adult education public charter schools has increased every year. And by school year 2018-19 public charter schools will have an additional projected growth of 1,700 more adult student seats.

Adult education public charter schools fill a vital need in the community. 12 According to the DC Fiscal Policy Institute, 12% of DC's adult population does not have a high school diploma¹. And 36% of DC residents age 16 and over function at the lowest level of literacy². 11% of DC's working age residents age 16 and over are neither in school nor employed³. DC's eight adult public charter schools each take their own unique approach to meet the varied needs of this population.

I'd like to talk with you briefly about each of our public charter schools and tell you more about who they serve, where they're located and what makes them unique. Our schools offer career certifications in a variety of industries, including

¹ Source: DC Fiscal Policy Institute

² Source: State of Adult Literacy Report, 2007

³ Source: US Census, 2010

- Architecture and Construction, Education and Training, Health Sciences, Hospitality and Tourism and Information Technology.

At **Academy of Hope PCS**, 256 students across two campuses are offered adult basic education courses, culminating in earning a GED or National External Diploma Program (NEDP). They also offer a variety of certification courses, including Computer training.

Briya PCS offers a unique program educating both adults and their preschool children. The focus of the adult program is English as a Second Language, family literacy, adult basic education and medical assistant certification. They also offer the NEDP.

At **Carlos Rosario International PCS**, nearly 2,000 students take classes in English as a Second Language, culinary arts, nurse's aid training, and computer support specialist training. The school also offers an adult basic education course that leads toward a GED in either English or Spanish, as well as classes to prepare students for the US citizenship examination.

Community College Prep PCS serves 273 students. As the name indicates, the school's focus is on preparing students to enter community college without remediation.

LAYC Career Center PCS serves 190 at-risk youth between the ages of 16 to 24 with GED preparation, and career preparation for medical assistants and computer hardware technicians.

Maya Angelou PCS- Young Adult Learning Center focuses on disconnected young adults. It prepares their students for the GED, the NEDP, and offers career internships with the Homebuilder's Institute. They serve roughly 150 students.

The **Next Step PCS**, was DC's first adult public charter school, offers almost 400 students age 16-24 engaged in GED preparation, in English or Spanish, as well as English as a Second Language.

And at **YouthBuild PCS**, students aged 16-24 also receive GED preparation in English and Spanish, as well spending 40% of their time working at a construction site or attending vocational classes.

PCSB holds all programs to the highest standards, with the goal of overseeing the replication of quality adult education programs. We've taken significant strides toward this goal with the implementation of the Adult Education Performance Management Framework (PMF). While each school is still held accountable to their own charter goals and academic expectations, we now have a common framework for accountability that includes measures that are comparable across all adult school programs. Just as with our PK-12 schools, each adult school will be placed in one of three tiers. We will be publicly sharing our adult education PMF results this December.

But adult education at public charter schools in DC is best told through the stories of the individual students.

Anabel Cruz, a mother of three originally from Mexico, began her educational journey at Briya PCS in 2006. Her first child, Dante, was 9 months old, when she started in the Intermediate ESL/Family Literacy class. With her teacher's encouragement Anabel progressed from intermediate to advanced classes and then entered the National External Diploma Program to begin working toward her high school diploma. After receiving her diploma she enrolled in the Medical Assistant Program. She recently passed the exam and has become a Registered Medical Assistant. Briya's family literacy focus also helped Anabel, support her children's education. Now her children attend Mundo Verde PCS, and Anabel can help them with their homework far better than she could have back in 2006.

This is the promise of adult education public charter schools, and we look forward to discussing today how we can all work together to create more public options like this for all who are in need. I am happy to take any questions you may have.

Thank you.