

Media Advisory: Public Education Reform Advocates File Amicus Brief in Support of D.C.’s Motion to Dismiss Charter Lawsuit

October 27, 2014

Amici Contacts: Mary Filardo 202-285-8947
Victor Reinoso 202-308-0366
Ebony-Rose Thompson 202-460-3498

Counsel to Amici: Jeffrey D. Robinson,
Lewis Baach PLLC 202-833-8900

Washington, DC –Fourteen public-education reform advocates and two long-standing public-education reform organizations (the “Amici Curiae”) filed an [Amicus Brief](#) in support of the [Washington, D.C. Attorney General’s motion to dismiss](#) the lawsuit brought by the D.C. Association of Chartered Public Schools, Washington Latin PCS, and Eagle Academy PCS. These individuals and organizations with representatives from across the city came together out of grave concern that, if successful, the [charter-school lawsuit](#) would even further eviscerate civic influence and local control of public education for District residents.

The basis for alarm is that the lawsuit argues that the School Reform Act of 1995, which established charter schools in D.C., can only be changed by Congress. But the Amici Curiae agree with the Attorney General that the District clearly has authority to legislate on quintessentially local issues such as the way in which its children are educated.

Victor Reinoso, former Deputy Mayor for Education and one of the Amici Curiae, said, “I am a strong proponent of charter schools, but the idea that a federal judge could bar District residents from having a role through their elected representatives in managing how and at what level their schools are funded should deeply offend every District resident.”

[D. C. Public Charter School Board \(PCSB\) audits](#) show that the charter-school sector as a whole as of June 30, 2013 had nearly \$200 million in unrestricted cash at the end of the 2012-13 school year.

Mary Filardo, Executive Director of the 21st Century School Fund points out that “While the rhetoric is for ‘fair’ funding, the charter schools did not say they do not have ‘adequate’ funding. If charter schools need more funding in order to effectively serve the children in their schools, I will be right there with them. But, when charter operators insist on simple parity through a flawed formula, and at the cost of undermining our already limited home rule, then I question whose interests are being advanced.”

Ebony Rose Thompson, a SEED charter school graduate, Ward 7 Council on Education chairperson, and one of the Amici Curiae, said, “The issues of fairness and adequacy, equity and efficiency in public schools should absolutely be examined, but these should be done as part of our local community-based democratic system. They were never fully satisfied by the School Reform Act, and they rightly belong to the people of the District of Columbia.”

Hyperlinks are provided here to the Complaint, the AG's Motion to Dismiss, the Motion for Leave to file an Amicus Brief and the Amicus Brief.

The Amici Curiae

Organizations participating as Amici Curiae are:

The 21st Century School Fund is a nonprofit organization founded in 1994 on the premise that communities are responsible for creating healthy, safe, and educationally appropriate learning environments. The organization is dedicated to building the public will and capacity to modernize public school facilities so they support high quality education and community revitalization. The organization is a well-respected and relied-upon force in the District of Columbia on public education, particularly related to facility planning and capital budget issues.

S.H.A.P.P.E. is an organization of public high school parent-leaders, concerned educators, and principals in the District of Columbia. S.H.A.P.P.E. works to promote an equitable standard of resource distribution amongst District of Columbia schools; expand educational opportunities for teenagers; develop comprehensive approaches to safety and health in schools; and modernize facilities aligned with sound educational practices.

Individuals participating as Amici Curiae are:

Mary Filardo, [21st Century School](#) Fund Executive Director
Ward 1 resident

Matthew Frumin, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners 3E Chair, former District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Parent
Ward 3 resident

Terry Goings, School Reform Now board member
Ward 4 resident

Ron Hampton, Family and Community Resource Center Director, Roosevelt High School PTA former President
Ward 4 resident

Faith Gibson Hubbard, Parent, Ward 5 Council on Education President
Ward 5 resident

Cathy Reilly, S.H.A.P.P.E. Executive Director, Ward 4 Education Alliance
Founding Member
Ward 4 resident

Sharona Robinson, Ballou High School PTSA President, Ward 8 Education Council
Secretary
Ward 8 resident

Victor Reinoso, former Deputy Mayor for Education, DCPS Parent
Ward 4 resident

Pedro Rubio, D.C. Latino Caucus Board Member, Ward 4 Education Alliance Founding
Member
Ward 4 resident

Nancy Sarah Smith, Takoma Education Campus PTO, Ward 4 Education Alliance
Founding Member
Ward 4 resident

Stephen Smith, Takoma Education Campus LSAT and PTO Treasurer, Ward 4
Education Alliance Founding Member, DCPS Grandparent
Ward 4 resident

Eboni-Rose Thompson, Ward 7 Education Council Chair, Advisory Neighborhood
Commissioners 7F Chair
Ward 7 resident

Martin Welles, Esq., Amidon-Bowen PTA President, DCPS Parent, Public Charter
School Parent
Ward 6 resident

Suzanne Wells, Capitol Hill Public Schools Parent Organization Founder, DCPS Tyler
Elementary Parent
Ward 6 resident