



State Board of Education Resolution
Calling for an Independent Investigation into Data & Accountability Practices in District
Schools
SR18-2

WHEREAS, on November 28, 2017, WAMU reported that many Ballou High School seniors in the Class of 2017 were granted diplomas despite having missed weeks and sometimes months of school, that grading policies prevented teachers from issuing deserved grades; that teachers faced pressure to inflate grades and pass students despite absences and/or failure to complete assignments; that students were placed against policy into less rigorous “credit recovery” classes, and that teachers who resisted these practices faced retaliation;

WHEREAS, subsequent reporting from multiple media outlets as well as public testimony has reinforced these allegation and suggest that they are not confined to Ballou High School but exist in other schools across the District;

WHEREAS, educating our children and preparing them for success in college and in the workforce is a paramount priority of our city and failing to do so is harmful and unacceptable;

WHEREAS, the allegations and information uncovered through the media, public testimony, and the preliminary audit conducted on behalf of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education by Alvarez and Marsal released on January 16, 2018 point to a larger problem with oversight and accountability by both local education agencies (LEA) and the state education agency (SEA);

WHEREAS, the DC State Board of Education (SBOE) approves high school graduation requirements, the metrics used to judge school quality (including graduation rates), and citywide attendance rules,

WHEREAS, in order to approve regulations and policy with fidelity, the SBOE must understand how requirements are being implemented and whether standards are being met by the staff of schools, LEAs, and the SEA;

WHEREAS, a June 2015 report submitted to the Council of the District of Columbia by the National Academy of Sciences report on the DC Public Education Reform Amendment Act (PERAA) of 2007, indicating that it questioned “whether the current oversight structure provides sufficient monitoring of the educational opportunities provided to students attending District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and District of Columbia Public Charter Schools through the city.” and called for the District “to establish institutional arrangements that will support ongoing independent evaluation of its education system”; and,





WHEREAS, the SBOE is thankful that Mayor Bowser, Deputy Mayor Niles, Chancellor Wilson and Superintendent Kang have released information uncovered in the internal investigation, but remain concerned that because those responsible for the investigation report to the same structure they are investigating, additional independent verification of information is needed.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the State Board of Education advises that the DC Auditor commission an independent review of the criteria and standards that underlie high school graduation and examine school-level execution of these policies across all state-regulated LEAs, including the role of credit recovery, grading policy, attendance, discipline and suspension policies, pressure on teachers and school administrators to raise grades and/or pass students, and allegations of retaliation against teachers and school administrators who fail to act on that pressure; that this review examine the institutional conditions and culture that have allegedly created an educational system that prioritizes appearances and outcomes data over genuine improvement; that this review be undertaken in a transparent manner that encourages public input from various sectors and stakeholders about the issues to ensure that a full range of questions are asked; and, that the findings are available to the public when completed;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the State Board of Education advises that the DC Auditor examine the effectiveness of the current oversight structure of DCPS and charter schools.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the State Board of Education shall conduct an internal examination of attendance regulations, including the implementation of the 80/20 rule and its impact on student attendance;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the State Board of Education shall formulate and submit to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education recommendations on foundational credit recovery regulations by May 2018; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT the State Board advises that the Council of the District of Columbia consider an amendment to Section 403 of the State Board of Education Establishment Act of 2007, D.C. Official Code § 38-2652, to require District agency compliance with information and data requests that aid in the effective execution of its statutory duties and authority.

Date Adopted: 1/17/18 Signed: 

