



**Testimony of Abe Clayman**  
Director of Education Initiatives  
Federal City Council

**Committee of the Whole**  
Chairman Phil Mendelson

**Public Hearing on the “State Superintendent of Education Dr. Christina Grant Confirmation Resolution of 2021”**  
November 12th, 2021

Dear Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee of the Whole,

My name is Abe Clayman, I’m a Ward 4 resident, and I work at the Federal City Council on education initiatives. The Federal City Council is a business-led, non-profit, civic organization dedicated to the improvement of the District of Columbia. The Federal City Council was founded in 1954 to harness the resources and creativity of the public, philanthropic, and private sectors to address the District’s biggest problems. Vibrant and strong cities need successful education systems. With that goal in mind, we support the nomination of Dr. Christina Grant to be the next Superintendent in the District of Columbia.

We believe that Dr. Grant is well suited to the challenge of leading OSSE, supporting learners in the District, and fulfilling the agency’s critical oversight role. Dr. Grant has gained the necessary leadership experience while working at other large, urban public school districts. For six years, she was in a leadership role in the Philadelphia public school system. She also has experience leading a charter management organization. She was a public school teacher and has multiple advanced degrees. And finally, she understands what it takes to lead. Dr. Grant has been the acting Superintendent for the past five months, supporting schools and students through this fall’s reopening and working closely with DC Health and other partners to navigate the education system’s response to COVID-19.

Under the leadership of the previous Superintendent, Hanseul Kang, OSSE expanded access to childcare for children and families across the District, led the development and implementation of DC’s Every Student Succeeds Act plan, and instituted the DC School Report Card which helps families learn about each public and public charter school in the District. OSSE also collaborated with dozens of partners to conduct research into educational practices and better understand how students succeed in school. This point about data collection is critical - the new DC Education Research Collaborative will collaborate closely with OSSE as it engages in its research to understand what works for students in DC.

While the question of governance structure is not under consideration today, we do want to take this opportunity to reiterate our position from the recent hearing - OSSE as an agency functions best and can most effectively support students when it is integrated with the rest of the government. We urge the Council to leave the current system of Mayoral leadership and Council oversight intact.

As we said at the recent hearing, there is still so much work to do. Our city needs a competent leader like Dr. Grant to help students complete unfinished learning, to help our schools recover from the pandemic, and to support the work of best-in-class researchers. The Council should speedily confirm Dr. Grant and allow her and her team to continue to provide the stable leadership and support that students deserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I’m happy to answer any questions.