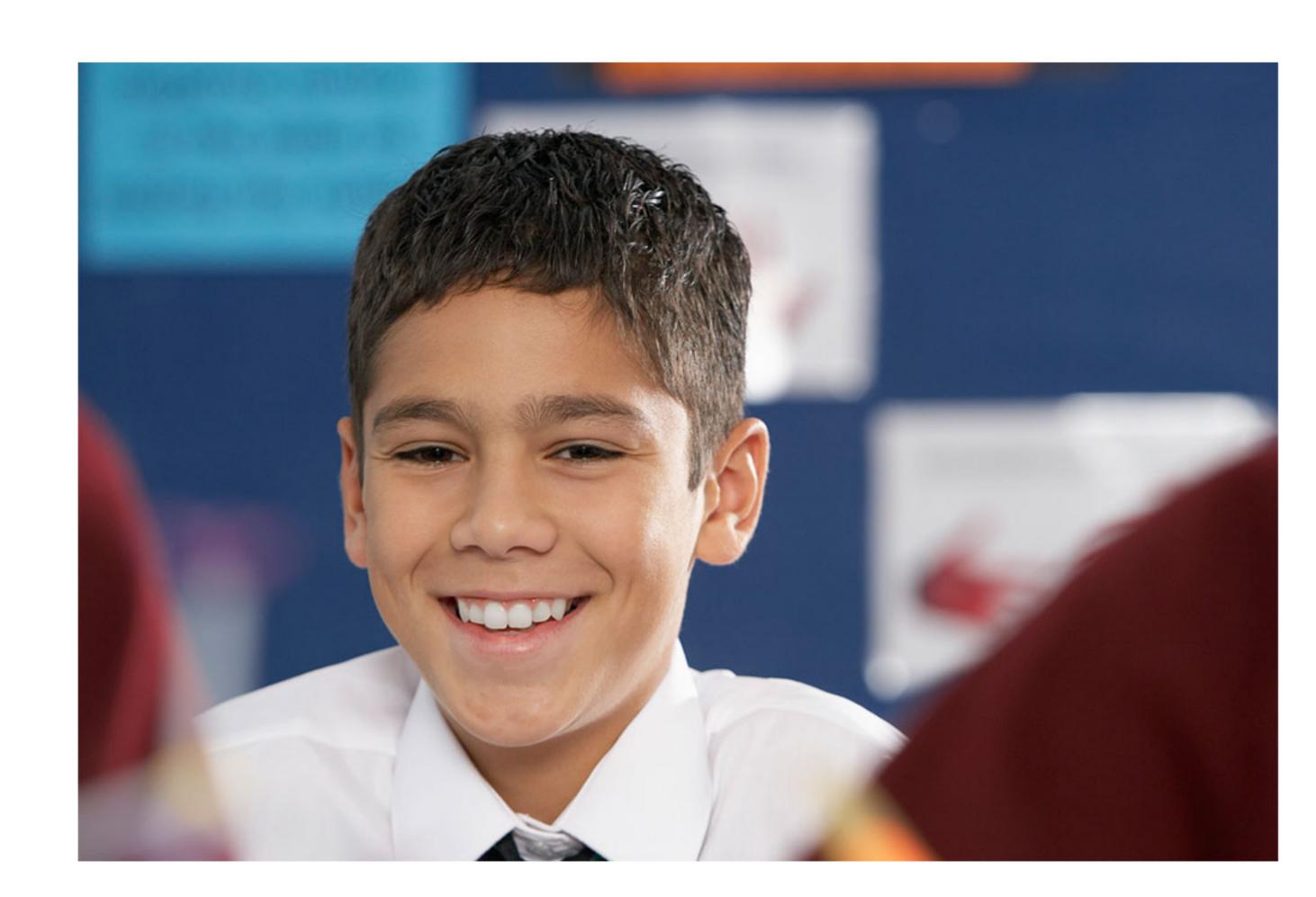
FOCUS SCHOOL SERVICES



FOCUS provides critical services to D.C.'s public charter schools at every stage of their development.

Getting Started

FOCUS is the only D.C. organization that offers expert school-design and application-writing help to local and out-of-state individuals and organizations hoping to launch new public charter schools in the District.

Increasing School Quality

FOCUS provides ongoing help to address the many challenges public charter schools face. Working directly or through our many partners, we provide up-to-date information and consultation on both academic and operational matters, including academic standards, effective use of student data, facilities, governance, and legal and regulatory compliance. Among the many programs we sponsor are the annual D.C. Data Summit, the D.C. Data Community of Practice, and the D.C. Real Estate Council.

Helping High-Performing Charters Grow

FOCUS helps high-performing schools evaluate whether they're ready to add grade levels or campuses and, if they are, how to do so in a way that will not undermine their academic success or financial health. FOCUS also can provide the leaders of expanding schools with access to local and national experts in all areas of the expansion and replication process.

GET INVOLVED



President Obama visits Capital City Public Charter School

"An example of how all our schools should be"—President Obama at a D.C. public charter school.

There are many ways you can stay connected to D.C.'s growing public charter school community. To get all the latest news, subscribe to the FOCUS daily News Wire by going to www.focusdc.org/join-movement.

FOCUS can also be found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/focusdc, Twitter @focusdc, and Linkedin at https://www.linkedin.com/company/focus-friends-of-choice-in-urban-schools-.

For more information, please visit www.focusdc.org or email us: focus@focus-dc.org

Friends of Choice in Urban Schools
1436 U Street NW
Suite 204
Washington, DC 20009
202-387-0405

Driving public school reform in the District of Columbia in partnership with D.C.'s public charter schools



Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS) was founded to make the promise of education reform a reality in the District of Columbia. Incorporated as a D.C. nonprofit in 1996, FOCUS is the principal advocate and school performance resource for D.C.'s highly successful public charter school movement.

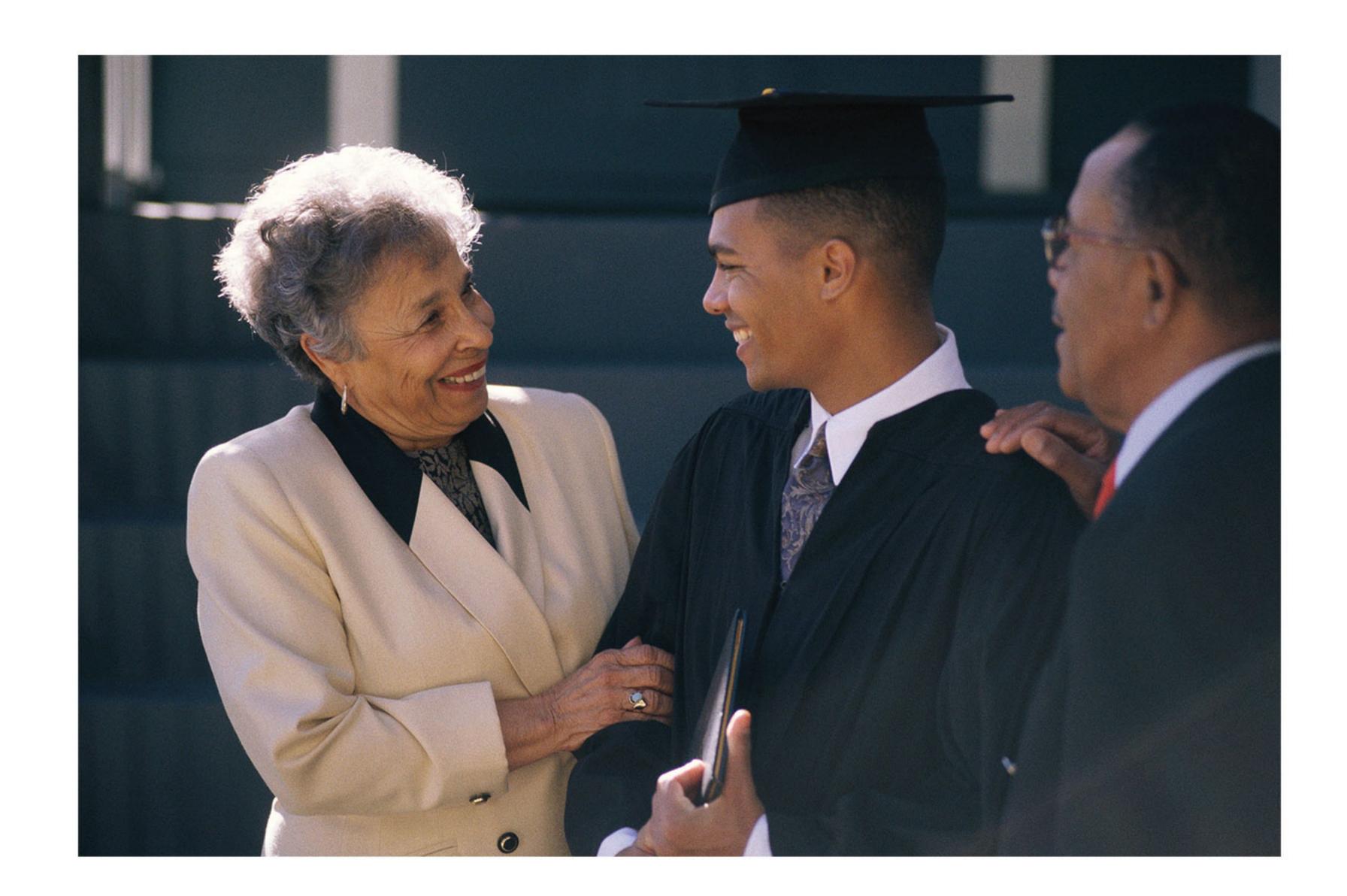


BRINGING HOPE TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Back in 1996, when D.C.'s charter law passed, public education in the District was in a state of collapse. Enrollment had plummeted and many school buildings had become derelict. The students who remained, overwhelmingly from disadvantaged homes, were trapped in schools with dismal academic standards and rock-bottom graduation rates. But when the first two charter schools opened in 1996 with 160 students, change was in the air.



Today, tens of thousands of these children attend public charter schools in their neighborhoods and around the District. The charters' high-school graduation rate is significantly higher than that of the traditional system, enabling a greater share of their students to gain admission to college. And charter students—especially those east of the Anacostia River where the need is most acute—greatly outperform their school system peers on standardized tests.

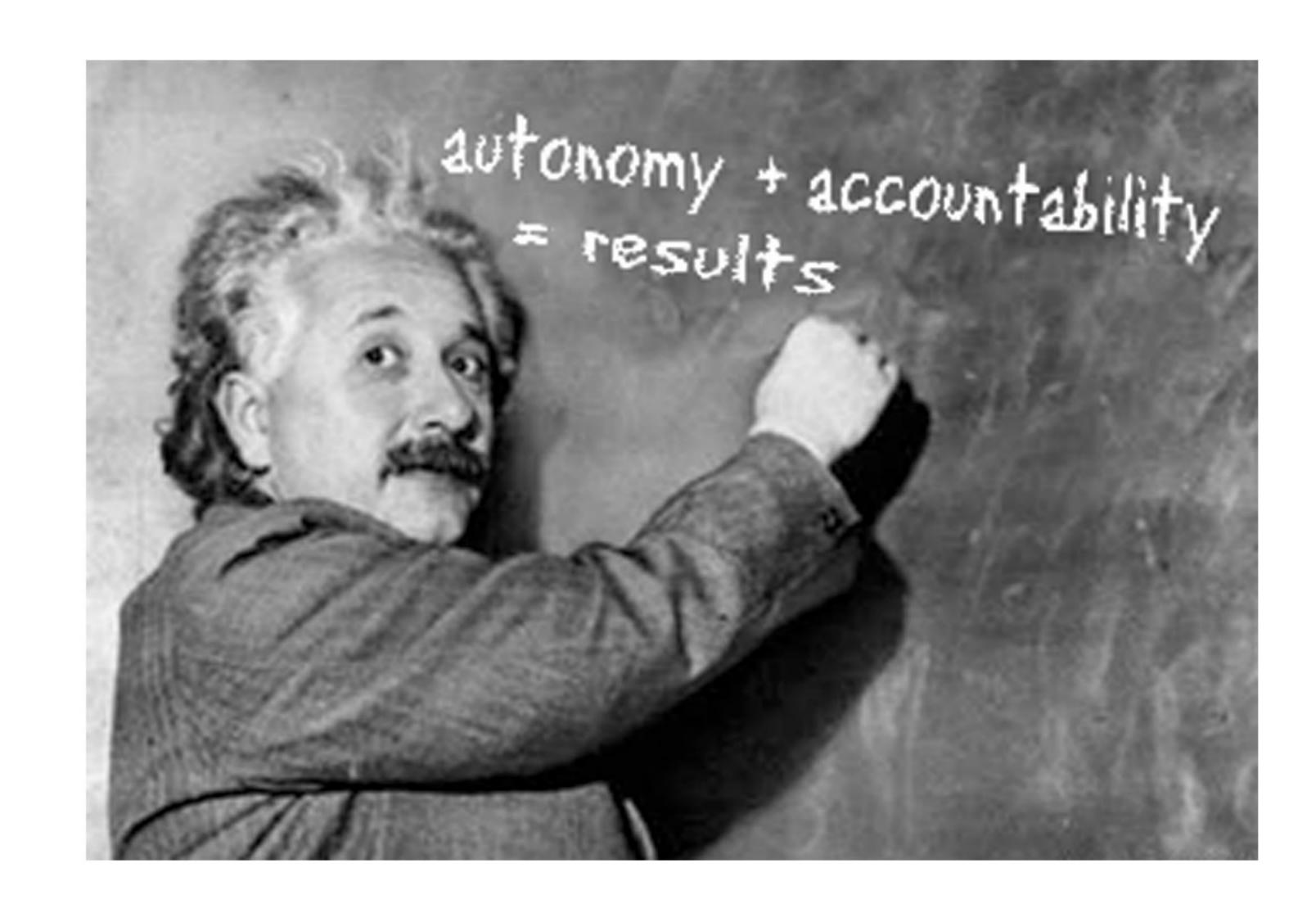


"Charters have been particularly successful with low-income children" – The Washington Post

Publicly funded, free from most of the regulatory burdens that make it so hard for traditional public schools to succeed, and held strictly accountable for improved student performance, D.C. charters are leading a renaissance in public education that is benefiting the children who need it most.



FOCUS ADVOCACY



In spite of their academic success and enormous popularity with D.C. families, public charter schools in the District still face significant challenges that must be met if the movement is to continue to thrive:

- Government officials frequently propose laws and regulations that would inhibit the charters' freedom to provide schooling that meets their students' needs.
- The government ignores the charter school law and greatly underfunds public charter school students compared to their school system peers.
- The government limits the charters' ability to serve all the parents and students who are eager to attend. Thousands languish on waiting lists because charters can't gain access to the many empty and under-enrolled DCPS school buildings.

From the beginning, the charter schools have depended on FOCUS to take on these challenges. Our advocates are a constant presence at City Hall, pressing for equitable access to school buildings, funding, and city services and fending off attempted intrusions into charter school autonomy. Our public communications efforts are equally vigorous, bringing the facts about charter school success to every corner of the District. The leaders of FOCUS are regularly quoted in The Washington Post, and their opinion pieces frequently appear in the Post and other newspapers. And reporters, policy makers, and the general public turn to our online data dashboards for up-to-date, accurate, and easily-accessible information on individual school and comparative charter school-school system performance.