



Dear OSSE members,

I am a Duke Ellington School of The Arts parent addressing the residency issue regarding my daughter. Recently, my family has been the victim of a false finding in regard to proper residency establishment. Frankly, I feel the issue should have been addressed in a more appropriate manner rather than sending a notification to a residence my family no longer reside at in the District. I, along with many other families enrolled my child with the documentation OSSE deemed acceptable for enrollment during the acceptance process. Once my child received her acceptance notification from Duke Ellington after the rigorous audition process, I later changed my residence from my original lottery process. This whole ordeal has not only been extremely stressful for me and my family and all the other families involved, but it's been more personal because we made the decision to move to the District of Columbia to deal with my baby sister's health issue.

In 2014, my only sister who worked for this same agency OSSE, was diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer. With all of her leave time exhausted and personal finances depleted, I made a decision to move from my original established residence to my sister's apartment in early 2016, not only to help take care of my sister with doctor's appointments, taking her 5-year-old to school and attend various school meetings and activities when she was too weak to do so, but also to be a financial relief for her and her children as well when she was unable to work because she was sick from chemotherapy and radiation treatments.

It was not a burden for me because my daughter was already attending a private school in the District of Columbia and we were living with my parents at the time my sister's health started to deteriorate. A lot of planning and decisions were made around what would be in the best interest of my family as a whole, not just my child. I painted this picture to show that you don't know what any family circumstances are, and if there were any discrepancies regarding residency other than what was required, then the measured thing to do was to follow your own protocol and request additional proof as needed. I am equally confident that all the other 164 families would have accepted the request to provide any further documentation of verification.

I have not once complained about how many times I have had to move, due to life challenges regarding my sister's health in 2016. Her apartment caught fire and we were all displaced for a few months until a new place was found. One year later February 6, 2018, my sister lost her battle against cancer and passed away. Guess who had to move again and find residency in the District for her children and grandchildren? I would like the right to a fair appeal regarding residency and an action plan from DCPS of where our children are supposed to attend school next year with these false findings.

Respectfully submitted,

Ward 8 resident