Total number of complaints represents a 27% increase compared to the same period of time in previous years:

- SY 2015-16: 144 cases in Quarter 1*
- SY 2014-15: 113 cases in Quarter 1

(Quarter 1 is defined as August 1-October 31st)

*Please note that after December, we will lose two of our fellows in part of Quarter 2, and in Quarters 3 and 4. Thus, our staffing levels will drop while we are currently experiencing a 27% increase in our overall caseload.
Top Complaints

- Enrollment problems
- Special education
- School choice/transfer
- Discipline
- Bullying

Graph showing percentage of complaints for each category for different time periods: 2015-2016 Q1, 2014-2015 Q1, and 2014-2015 full year.
Ward Breakdown of Quarter 1 Complaints
### School Type

**2015-2016 Q1**
- DCPS: 60%
- Charter: 28%
- Nonpublic: 2%
- Other/blank: 10%

**2014-2015 full year**
- DCPS: 63%
- Charter: 32%
- Nonpublic: 1%
- Other/blank: 4%
Referral Sources

2015-2016 Q1

- Blank: 22%
- SBOE: 17%
- Website: 14%
- DC govt agency: 13%
- PTO/community org: 3%
- Parent: 6%
- School: 6%
- DC Council: 4%
- Other: 15%
Trends and Systemic Issues

Notable trends:
• We are still observing enrollment problems for students with disabilities.
• We are also continuing to observe students with disabilities being subjected to harsh punishments that do not take their disabilities into account, especially push-out practices by charters.

Systemic issues we are currently working on:
• Discussing concerns with a charter school that appears not to understand responsibilities for special education evaluations.
• Discussing concerns with an adult education program that appears not to provide meaningful due process before withdrawing students.
• Providing feedback to DCPS on Chapter 25 revision.
Community Engagement Efforts in SY15-16

• Panelist on a panel entitled “Parents vs. Bullies: Understanding the 2012 Youth Bullying Prevention Act.” Fox5 News featured our bullying panel during an evening news segment on October 29.

• Panelist on a panel entitled “Moving to the Left on the CADRE Continuum: New Early Dispute Resolution Processes in DC.” This panel was part of the CADRE Conference held in Eugene, Oregon on October 22. I joined this panel to discuss special education dispute resolution across DC.

• Invited to moderate panel entitled “Engaging Families as Partners in Education” with the Carnegie Institution for Science; DC STEM Network on November 5.

• Invited to be a Co-Chair of the Education Committee of the United States Ombudsman Association.
We welcome SBOE assistance with raising awareness and convening roundtables around some of the annual recommendations mentioned in our 2015-16 annual report. Some of our suggestions include:

- Encourage use of alternatives to suspension:
  - Possibly recommend state-level discipline regulations for OSSE to adopt (OSSE has had draft state level discipline regulations for a number of years now, but has failed to adopt the regulations).
Annual Recommendations: What’s Next?

• Educate parents about their new special education rights, in partnership with Ombudsman and Chief Student Advocate.
  • State Board member Tierra Jolly has taken the lead in this initiative by co-hosting a special education panel for parents with the Office of the Student Advocate. This event will be held on November 9.

• Hold a roundtable regarding the needs of homeless families-inviting families and service providers to discuss issues around access to education.

• Encourage OSSE and DME to develop a centralized website with information about schools’ policies, academic programs, and special education offerings.
Questions?