

1 DCPS PUBLIC FISCAL YEAR 2015 BUDGET HEARING

2 Tuesday, November 26, 2013

3 6:00 P.M. -- 8:00 P.M.

4

5 Langley School

6 101 T St., N.E.

7 Washington, DC

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10 The public budget hearing, pursuant to notice,
11 convened at 6:16 p.m., Lisa Runa co-chair of the
12 budget hearing.

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1 Fiscal Year 2015 DCPS

2 Public Budget Hearing Speaker List

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4 Lisa Runa--Department Chancellor for Operations

5 Kaya Henderson -- Chancellor DCPS

6 Christopher Rinkus--Manager Critical Response Team

7 Office of the Chief of Staff
8 Laura Marks
9 Rene Wallis--Representing People Who Love
10 Animals/Expanding OSTP Funding
11 Erich Martel -- DCPS budget
12 Elizabeth Bacon- Representing Stuart Hobson
13 Eboni-Rose Thompson
14 Gina Hall
15 Donna Glover-McKinley PTSA/MicKinley Tech EC's Budget
16 & Resources
17 Melissa Bryant -- Stanton
18 Steve Smith
19 Landon White -- Astute Magazine - College/Career
20 Readiness
21 Nancy Smith
22 Robin Hall

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1 CHAIRMAN RUNA: Good evening everyone.
2 Alright if you don't have a seat already please do
3 grab a seat. If you want to come closer, I don't
4 bite, contrary to popular belief. My name is Lisa
5 Runa, I am The Deputy Chancellor of Operations for
6 DCPS. I'm going to walk us through a little bit of
7 what tonight's agenda is going to look like and get
8 then we'll get into a conversation with our
9 Chancellor Kaya Henderson and my colleague Chris
10 Rinkus. If you don't have it already please make
11 sure everyone has a power point copy, hard copy?
12 Yes, no? I think, you know what, a lot of -- if I
13 could ask my colleagues from DCPS, school or
14 otherwise to put your hand up? So they're some good

15 folks I'm going ask Carrie in the back if you would
16 grab a handful of power points and if you don't have
17 one, we will get it to you and we will go ahead and
18 get started.

19 All right so tonight's agenda is pretty
20 straight forward, we are doing, we are officially
21 starting, we are going to talk briefly about where we
22 are with our budget, what we're hoping to do this

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1 year. It's going to be a little bit different than
2 past years and then we are going to dive right into
3 the public comment section. What you are going to
4 hear over and over tonight is that tonight is the
5 kickoff of our public engagement around our FY15
6 budget. Okay, it's not the end point, it's the
7 kickoff. We are going to spend the next forty-five
8 days or so trying to get as much input from you as
9 humanly possible so that when we turn the calendar to
10 2014 and the Chancellor is ready to announce her
11 final budget priorities, those priorities are
12 informed by what's important to you and what's going
13 to continue to make you want to invest in DCPS by
14 sending your children to be with us each and every
15 day.

16 So let me ask by a show of hands other
17 than my DCPS colleagues who has been to a budget
18 hearing before okay, I'm going to ask my friend here
19 who didn't have a power point -- if you are thinking
20 of a word to describe the budget hearing what would
21 you describe it as? You can be brutal.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Contentious and

1 fighting cuts.

2 CHAIRMAN RUNA: Got it. So my friend said
3 it's about fighting cuts, contentious which to me,
4 it's like something is put out there. And you're
5 forced to react and kind of fight for what's ours or
6 what's important, but not a real partnership on the
7 front end. Anyone else?

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's a chance to
9 make your case.

10 CHAIRMAN RUNA: It's a chance to make your
11 case. It's a chance to make the case. It's about
12 advocacy it's about what's important to you. Anybody
13 else have words to describe the budget hearings? You
14 can say it come on.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It can be very
16 frustrating it can really hurt the people performing.

17 CHAIRMAN RUNA: Awesome. All right, so if
18 you're really heard if you are just coming to us
19 because there is actually a law that requires you to
20 come to us and yell at us. What I am going to tell
21 you is this year you have to do something different.
22 We have a few things -- in fact, we want to do a

1 couple things very differently this year.

2 First and foremost we wanted to tell you
3 what we are seeing now, okay if you flip the clock
4 back to prior budget years normally what happens is,

5 in about February, sometimes January, my Chancellor,
6 whoever the Chancellor is will come out and say
7 here's what we are funding or sometimes even you find
8 out when you get your school budgets and you see the
9 allocation sheets and it says that we must have a
10 foreign language, right, and that's a surprise right,
11 you find out late in the game and what normally ends
12 up happening is you only have a second or two to
13 build your budget at your school, to access the
14 change -- what it means to you and in some cases,
15 what my friend said advocate for what you think you
16 need at your school. especially what it means to you
17 and in some of those instances my friend said
18 advocate for what you think you need for your school
19 because guess what, I'm the first to say what my boss
20 has said, sometimes we don't know what's best for
21 your school and we need to hear from you what makes
22 more sense within some of the parameters we've set,

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1 but first and foremost we can even prep for you to
2 hear what we are thinking. So tonight unlike any
3 other hearing, my Chancellor's going to stand up and
4 tell you what she is hoping to invest in for our FY15
5 budget. And then we are going to take the next
6 forty-five days and we are going to have a whole
7 bunch of vehicles. You could then respond back to her
8 and say Chancellor Henderson that's a good idea,
9 that's not such a good idea, this is what we need
10 this is what we don't need.

11 Dare you to go back to any other budget
12 year. We've never sat with you in November and say

13 here's what we are thinking. So that's going to be
14 difference number one. Difference number two with
15 this is going to be that we will hear from you and
16 not just in a council hearing in March or April, when
17 you're doing exactly what you said which is
18 advocating for your school, fighting for whatever you
19 need. We want to hear now before we make any final
20 decisions. Okay so that is the second thing, we want
21 to hear from you about this tonight but also over the
22 next forty-five days.

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1 And then the other piece we are going to
2 do is -- I don't know if you've been on our website
3 before but we have a whole bunch of data. You can
4 find data on how many teachers are at a school and
5 how much a school spends on the computers. You find
6 information on how much we spend on extracurricular
7 activities but what we've learned more and more,
8 that mountain of data sometimes isn't really helpful.
9 First and foremost a lot of the data is in pdfs.
10 What the pdf basically means is you can sort or spend
11 the data around in a way that is actually useful for
12 you. And second is something because we are part of
13 the city budget, we use some budget codes that the
14 school level donated to us. And so this year one of
15 the charges the Chancellor has given myself, my
16 colleagues is we figure out how to make it work user
17 friendly.

18 So three things, you're going to hear from
19 my Chancellor her list of priorities, we want to hear
20 from you whether those priorities make sense. The

21 third thing is we are going unveiling some data over
22 the next couple of weeks that hopefully will give you

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1 a bit more transparency in terms of what our school
2 budgets actually look like. And I said there were
3 four things, the fourth thing is, I actually brought
4 some candy tonight because the truth of the matter
5 is, if you took some time, in a really really busy
6 week, to come and be with us, to come and say what
7 you thought and what you meant. So we have plenty to
8 pass around -- but a little something from us to say
9 thank you for coming out on this rainy night right
10 before Thanksgiving.

11 Where we should spend a second is the
12 calendar and this is probably a slide that is
13 actually worth looking at in your power point because
14 this one is very important and I apologize for the
15 white lettering it is very hard to hear. So tonight
16 is the kick off of the budget and then what you'll
17 see happens is, there are three sections that look
18 like they're in a salmon or a pink new this year.
19 Those are new and those are a really big deal.

20 The first thing that you are going to see
21 on December 16th is the launch of what we are
22 calling the common lottery. It is a web application

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1 called My School DC and it's a way to try to make
2 life easier for parents who want to come to DCPS or

3 charter schools. Let me tell you how that is
4 connected with school budgets, that's connected with
5 school budgets because to have a lottery in December
6 so people pick seats at schools for next August, you
7 got to know your grade configuration for next year.
8 You have to know are we going to offer him seventh
9 grade, are we going to offer a twelfth grade. All
10 of those decisions have to be set by December 16th so
11 that's where get the grade configurations.

12 The second piece is if you look where it
13 says mid-January it says school leaders review and
14 approve projected Student Enrollment, what we do is
15 we give each of our principals grade by grade
16 enrollment projections -- so by January you will know
17 how many students we think are going to be at your
18 school next year. So middle of January you know your
19 schools grade configuration -- you also know how many
20 students we think are going to be in each grade and
21 there's an opportunity with your principal to say no
22 that's wrong, we are going to have an influx of

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1 fourth graders cause a new development is coming down
2 the street and we need to have good dialogue about
3 that.

4 The third piece which is really I think
5 very important is where it says late January we are
6 simply calling it our Budget Planning Templates to
7 Schools, we usually give schools their preliminary
8 personnel budget so when we tell school and plan to
9 tell schools in January how many teachers are you
10 going to receive funding for. Now you as a school

11 can make a decision whether they want to use that
12 funding for teachers or you want to use it for
13 something else, but by the time you get to January
14 you are going to know your grade configuration --
15 you're going to know how many students you have and
16 you're going to know how many teachers and staff
17 members we are going to fund.

18 That's a huge amount of information, and
19 it gets you about ninety percent -- ninety five
20 percent of the way to your school's total budget.
21 So I want you to see those three milestones up there,
22 those are the three very important pieces of data

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1 which we will have at your schools, we will have on
2 your web, and which you can certainly talk to your
3 principals about. But those pieces of information
4 get you really down the road.

5 I want to just say another piece very
6 quickly is there is a magic date in the middle of
7 February it's in the yellow, that is called the city
8 revenue projections come out. That is not a DCPS
9 issue that is a citywide projection that the Mayor
10 uses to determine how much money he's able, not that
11 he wants, cause he always wants to do more college
12 funds, but how much he is able to give each agency
13 for DCPS, the Chancellor works very hard with the
14 Mayor to try to get that information as soon as
15 possible because when you think about your own
16 lives, you want to know how many money you make in a
17 given year so you can make some decisions about where
18 you live, whether you have a car or not, where you

19 send children to school. Chancellor needs that same
20 amount of information to decide how much money she
21 needs to keep at a minimum, to maintain some of our
22 key functions whether it be security or food but then

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1 also how much money she can give to schools.

2 That is a really big deadline and one that
3 for us is very difficult to move because it is a
4 citywide projection but what we want to highlight is
5 we don't have to wait until the middle of February to
6 start our budget work. We don't have to wait. We've
7 designed a process to do it a little bit differently,
8 we can actually start sharing information tonight
9 through December and into January so that when we do
10 get our revenue projections and we know how much
11 money we are able to provide to our schools. We've
12 made a lot of really important decisions regarding
13 what our budget priorities are, we just have to align
14 our spending to that.

15 The other piece I want to highlight in
16 late February which is a new piece is that need to
17 attend -- when was it Chancellor last month at
18 Cardozo? Anyone come to the State of The Schools
19 Meeting? Awesome, thank you, Chris, thank you.

20 What I thought was a great conversation we
21 had -- non turnout from the community we heard from
22 the Chancellor about what was important, where we are

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1 at DCPS and where we are going. The Chancellor is
2 asking if we have the same kind of public
3 presentation public speech at the end of February
4 around the time of the budget. That is something new
5 and that really is designed to be a stake in the
6 ground to say hey I put some priorities out there in
7 November, I've heard from everybody in December and
8 January and here is where we need to make the
9 investment for the upcoming fiscal year. The items at
10 the bottom in the black are what you know every year.
11 Every year you know there is a push for a week or two
12 to actually create your budget, load your budget,
13 LSAT meetings, good things happen. That will still
14 be the case. Final budgets have to be in by April 1,
15 there is a push at the end taking all of this to
16 actually loaded for your school, but what we want to
17 highlight is the process doesn't have to start this
18 year in late February, we want to start it now.

19 We think by sharing information with you,
20 particularly the items in the light case salmon color
21 so that you can start to work with your individual
22 schools right now to make some decisions about where

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1 you need to direct resources so that your school can
2 continue to be successful. We don't have to wait
3 until the end of February to start that process.

4 This calendar please keep referring to it
5 as we go through the next couple of months, this is
6 very important. I do want to briefly highlight our
7 FY13 and our FY 14 budget, I apologize one our
8 colleagues one our good partners with the office of

9 the chief financial officer had an emergency this
10 evening, they were going to be here they couldn't and
11 so we wanted to share some information to give you a
12 sense of where our budget is, what we know at this
13 point FY13 which is the school year that was just
14 completed, so it was the 12, 2012-2013 school year.
15 Our budget was just under 800 million dollars, okay.

16 We are still in what's called the process
17 of closing the fiscal year, of taking our budget
18 against what we actually spent out the door to get
19 some final numbers, but we looked at about an 800
20 million dollar budget last year. This year is the
21 fiscal year, the school year that started in August
22 we are looking at a budget of about 821-822 million

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1 dollars so it is an increase over last year but you
2 also got to remember, the cost of teachers, the cost
3 of labor, the cost of utilities that goes up, I
4 always like to talk about a gallon of gasoline, the
5 same gallon of gasoline that you got yesterday costs
6 a difference five years ago, with the same, so there
7 is an inflationary cost that's built in, so kind of
8 looks like we're getting more money, it is actually
9 allowing us to keep at the level of service that we
10 are at.

11 We don't get what we call our total budget
12 for fiscal year 2015, that happens after the revenue
13 projections we talked about a couple of minutes ago
14 that come out in February. I am going to flip it
15 over to my boss to briefly talk about a capital
16 commitment and where her head is right now, relative

17 to what we should spend our money on in fiscal year
18 15. Kaya Henderson.

19 CHANCELLOR HENDERSON: Thank you Lisa and
20 thank you everybody for coming out tonight. As Lisa
21 said we really want to ensure that this here budget
22 process is different from last year. Last year was

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1 especially painful, we got out very, very late in the
2 day and we had a very short turnaround and so we had
3 to make a number of policy decisions that we had no
4 real way to communicate broadly, or no real way to
5 engage with school communities -- literally we just
6 have to make the time and it was painful for lots of
7 school communities and it was also painful for us.

8 None of us want to prep schools no one
9 wants to not give schools the resources that they
10 need to be successful. We were dealing with the
11 particulars of reality and so my challenge to my
12 staff was how can we do this differently? We value
13 your input in fact I could tell you even at the time
14 of this budget hearing, or while do don't know
15 anything we are hearing things from the community
16 that we actually do take into consideration the input
17 in our budget process but we couldn't do that and so
18 I challenged my staff to come up with a process where
19 we are not waiting until the eleventh hour to the
20 mark, to figure out what we are going to do. We are
21 actually going to plan to set up some contingencies.
22 If we go up or we go down, what do we get -- what

1 should be do and school communities can begin to have
2 that conversation now so that when the mark comes we
3 have already reasoned out together, the best set of
4 circumstances for our students to be successful.

5 We remind you that we have laid out a set
6 of very ambitious goals to achieve by 2017 called a
7 Capital Commitment, just quickly our goals are to
8 improve our overall achievement rates in reading and
9 math and we are well on our way. The second goal is
10 to invest our forty lowest performing schools, so
11 that they know the forty points over the course of
12 the five year curriculum. Our third goal is to
13 increase our graduation rate to 75% -- our four year
14 graduation rate. Our fourth goal is that 90% of our
15 children will like their schools and of course our
16 fifth goal is to increase enrollment and what those
17 strategic goals have allowed us to do is really be
18 disciplined and focused about organizing our
19 resources and focusing our strategies on how we get
20 to these outcomes and so as we think about what goes
21 into the school year 14-15 and fiscal year 15, let me
22 start by just reviewing a couple of the big

1 investments that we made for this school year and the
2 school year 14.

3 So, first as you know what we did with the
4 savings that we realized through consolidations was
5 we helped to set a standard for what academic
6 programs needed to be across every single elementary

7 school. One of the things that we heard in the
8 consolidation process from some of our communities
9 were how come other schools have foreign language or
10 how come other schools have art and music and we
11 don't. And there's an equity, there's a
12 conversation about what we want every single one of
13 our elementary schools to have that we engaged in
14 last year, so we made huge investments in all -- and
15 insuring that every elementary school had art, music
16 PE, foreign language, and library across every single
17 elementary school. That was one of our big
18 investments.

19 We also added additional wrap-around
20 service staff, psychologists, counselors and social
21 workers because a number of our young people are
22 facing all kinds of social and emotional issues and

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1 we need to be able to deal with those and so we were
2 able to make greater advancements in those areas and
3 we also provided funding for librarians across all of
4 our schools.

5 Again some of the comments that you are
6 able to realize through the consolidations allowed us
7 to make that a benchmark. And then finally we
8 actually enjoyed that at our receiving schools, there
9 was more robust academic programming at the schools
10 that children were leaving and schools were closing.
11 Those were king of the big ticket items for FY14.
12 The other really big ticket item was for or around
13 our academic investment in literacy. We have spent
14 millions upon millions really towards the goals --

15 goals one and goals two, of ensuring that we have a
16 school district where our children know how to read
17 write and think correctly. We train our teachers to
18 do that with our young people, we purchase materials,
19 books, not even textbooks, but books that you have in
20 your library, I have in my library to create a
21 culture of reading and a culture of literacy across
22 district and we are beginning to see huge payoffs in

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1 that.

2 So as we go into fiscal year 15 actually I
3 guess, I think the recent DC path scores but more
4 importantly recent DC NAEC scores, the National
5 Assessment of Educational Conference which is an exam
6 that given across every state, including the
7 District. While we have a long way to go, our
8 proficiency rates are still very low. We grew more
9 than any other state in the country and that's one of
10 the indicators that lets us know that we are on the
11 right track. That the investments that we are making
12 are actually paying off.

13 In addition I think that besides NAEC we
14 also put the gains that we are seeing are not at the
15 side of gains, they're a system at gains -- so it's
16 moving across all neighborhoods, we are seeing them
17 across all of what we call subgroups or special
18 groups, African Americans, our Latinos students or
19 our English language learners, our special education
20 students, are all seeing all kinds of growth and so
21 we know that moving the bar for teachers and moving
22 the bar for students, we've set the bar higher -- we

1 actually needed and we have seen tremendous results.

2 So for our 15, what are we thinking? We're
3 thinking -- the first thing that we are thinking is
4 we have done a lot of work around our 40 lowest
5 performing schools, as many of you know, we piloted
6 the Google What's Possible grant program two years
7 ago and our schools had access to ten million dollars
8 to innovate around the time, talent or technology.
9 We learned some things through that process. We
10 learned that in many cases in extended day or an
11 extended school year, helped students tremendously
12 and we've expanded our work on experiment time and we
13 want to actually work to take some of that work to
14 scale.

15 We also did a great intervention -- part
16 of the intervention, where we actually know what each
17 kid is struggling with and provide them with the
18 support and resources that they need and it makes a
19 difference for younger students. And so what I hoped
20 to prioritize in this budget was a deepening of the
21 work across our 40 lowest performing schools. We've
22 started some great work and want to continue that.

1 The secondary focus really picks up off of
2 the work that we've done around ensuring a particular
3 level of equity across elementary schools and it
4 moves us up to our middle grades so in the same way

5 we asked ourselves what does that elementary school
6 need to have in place in order for us to feel good
7 about the elementary education we are providing. The
8 next question is what do all of our middle grades,
9 and I say middle grades because it is not just in our
10 schools but it's also in our education campuses like
11 Langley. What, and I emphasize what Langley was, what
12 is it that all of our all middle grade programs need
13 to have in place for us to feel good about the middle
14 grades education that we are offering and in a
15 preview into next year's budget it will be what do
16 all of our high schools need to have in place right,
17 so that the elementary schools last year -- we are
18 looking closely at middle schools this year and we
19 will look at high schools next year.

20 I would like to take a moment to, I guess
21 highlight the fact that we did do a lot of work for
22 the middle schools, in fact, middle schools are

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1 actually the places where we have shown the most
2 improvement over the last six years, so we have
3 examples of Jefferson, McFarland and Kelly Miller,
4 which all three had double digit gains in reading and
5 math. Why? Because we put great leaders in those
6 buildings. We gave them academic support that they
7 needed, because we put wrap around services in place
8 in our middle schools, three or four years ago and we
9 are starting to see really pay offs there.
10 Eliot-Hine, Deal, Johnson and Kramer are also showed
11 nice gains in both subjects and if we can keep that
12 going and ensure that families see the kinds of

13 academic programs that they want to see across the
14 schools we believe that we can keep -- we can keep
15 growing the enrollment that we've been experiencing
16 in our middle grades. Kelly Miller's enrollment is up
17 over 150 students. Kramer almost 100 more students
18 than last year, Hardy almost 50 new students so we
19 know that we are doing a great work in the middle
20 grades. We also know that we have a long way to go.

21 We want to guarantee one, that families
22 see the same potential that we see in our middle

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1 schools and we want to make sure that when the
2 children leave our schools that they are fully
3 prepared for high school.

4 The third area of focus and priority that
5 we are thinking about for our next fiscal year is
6 around student satisfaction so in fact the 40/40
7 priorities when gets around or to the middle school's
8 priorities it's really about setting the table for a
9 nice high school graduation rate and the increasing
10 enrollment for students in the system. The student
11 satisfaction focus is really focused on Code 4, that
12 90% of our young people like the schools that they
13 are in.

14 We did a student satisfaction survey this
15 past Spring and learned that 78 % of our young
16 people liked the school that they are in which is
17 great. The large majority is satisfied -- but our
18 goal is 90% . I'd love for us to meet that goal and
19 we wanted to know why are students are not happy with
20 their schools and what can we do to improve that.

21 Students affectively said three things they said they
22 had concerns about bullying. They said they had

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1 concerns about unclean buildings and they said the
2 food was not good. In part because we have moved to
3 a healthier set of offerings and so I said to my
4 staff when the quotes came out, I said hmm, if the
5 food is healthy but the kids are not liking it, it
6 defeats the purpose so figure out how we can have
7 healthy food taste good and the food services
8 department is working to improve that, we are working
9 with our custodians. I have a meeting with to have
10 our custodial union today to figure out what we need
11 to do to improve the conditions in our buildings, but
12 we literally want the children to love the place that
13 they go all day every day and so what we will see is
14 a priority around getting schools additional funds to
15 do whatever they think will increase students
16 satisfaction at their school.

17 That's what we are committed to doing.
18 Those are the big three things that we are thinking
19 about and of course every year we do more than three
20 things, but I wanted to know at least, in a way that
21 we haven't before, at least we sit here and listen to
22 you say we want x, we want y, we want z, we don't

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1 give any feedback.

2 I want to let you know where my head was

3 going into this budget process but I also want to
4 admit to you that we will listen and we listen in the
5 consolidation process and made changes that
6 essentially came from your great ideas. We have
7 opened up a window to be able to engage with you to
8 get to the best ideas. We don't believe that we have
9 the only ideas or the very best ideas about what our
10 schools need, we know that you have great ideas as
11 well and so the next forty-five minutes, we are
12 committed to hearing from you to incorporate your
13 ideas and getting to a budget season that I hope we
14 can all be proud of, where we can say we worked
15 together, where we can say made the right investments
16 to be able to reach these goals and where we're not
17 fighting each other, we're actually working together.
18 So, at this point I guess I will focus on a couple of
19 things that I want you to have in your mind as you
20 reflect on the priorities that I laid out, right?
21 These are the questions that I want you to
22 think about how you want to answer. Engage your

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1 communities around these questions. If I am looking
2 and I'm thinking about my forty lowest performing
3 schools -- what do you think is the investment that
4 would actually provide the greatest benefits to our
5 lowest performing schools? Again, your ideas are as
6 valuable as ours so we want to hear from you. So we
7 can teach the lower performing schools and see
8 amazing things happen. Some of you are parents that
9 are really knocking it out the park. What should we
10 be doing to really push that? And what would you like

11 to see change at our lowest performing schools?

12

13 The second piece, which is really around a
14 number of schools, we know that there are a number
15 families who still do not trust DC Public Schools
16 Administrators. What would it take, what would you
17 need to see in middle schools in order to enroll your
18 student or to keep your student in DCPS or middle
19 school? What's the greatest success that we can make
20 at the middle school level?

21 And then finally what changes should be
22 made help our students enjoy school more. What

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1 investment at your particular child's school, do you
2 think would make kids happier, help us get to this
3 90% of our students liking school. Those are the
4 questions that I hope you will consider and send us
5 information on the website, we will have many
6 opportunities for you all to weigh in, those are the
7 things that can help us think through the big
8 priorities that we are working on, but we are also
9 excited to hear about the other priorities that you
10 think we should be working on so I want to turn it
11 over to Chris Rinkus to talk a little bit about how
12 we are going to conduct this meeting and we can hear
13 from you, thank you.

14 MR. RINKUS: Thank you Chancellor. So now
15 it's your turn. We are going to take the opportunity
16 tonight to take testimony from the folks in this
17 room, and those who brought their information in
18 writing. The other thing that I think we want to

19 make sure folks know is that we are going to try to
20 get through as many of you as possible, but in order
21 to do that we are going to ask the folks to try to
22 limit their comments around five minutes. If you go

30

1 over, that's fine, but ultimately we want to make
2 sure we hear from as many of you as possible so if
3 folks you are ready you can go ahead and begin your
4 testimony.

5 And as I call folks names, I am going to
6 say the person who is up right now to testify and the
7 person who will be up next -- so when I call your
8 name to come up, if you are next up, please have a
9 sit by one of the microphones. I just want to make
10 sure that we run this relatively quickly. The first
11 person that is going to testify tonight is Laura
12 Marks and then after we'll have Laura Rene Wallis.

13 MS. MARKS: Thank you both for that
14 introduction and the explanation of the changes to
15 the budget process this year. I think a lot of those
16 are very welcome and I am going to be excited to see
17 how this season is different than previous ones and
18 my testimony tonight reflects on that process. Last
19 year, and I hope that this coming season is going to
20 play out differently.

21 My name is Laura Marks, I am a resident of
22 Ward 6, the parent of two children in DCPS, a third

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1 grader at Watkins Elementary which is part of the
2 Capitol Hill Cluster School and a first grader at
3 School Whitman School. I'm a neighbor of
4 Stuart-Hobson Middle School which is the third campus
5 of the Capitol Hill Cluster School. I am now at my
6 sixth year of the children in the DCPS and I have
7 reluctantly come to expect that every spring you find
8 your schools embroiled in a fresh round of crippling
9 budget cuts. This certainly has been the case at the
10 Capitol Hill Cluster School.

11 Just last year we were faced with the loss
12 of a 12.5 full time staff in the proposed FY14 budget
13 so Cluster parents once again found ourselves
14 fighting DCPS for just the bare essentials to keep
15 the doors open.

16 Looking ahead to FY15 there is clearly
17 much we can do to improve both the process and the
18 outcomes. To create budgets that build successful
19 schools we should consider the following:

20 1. Strengthen planning efforts to align
21 programs and resources. Our schools desperately need
22 a long term vision that clear articulates a DCPS plan

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1 to achieve excellence at all levels and in every
2 word. Without that kind of vision it is impossible to
3 know how and where to invest. We need a strong
4 citywide education plan that builds programmatic
5 continuity across viewer patterns.

6 2. Budget stability and principal
7 autonomy are crucial. Putting schools on a moving
8 bus budget roller coaster is destructive. Arbitrary

9 eleventh hour changes like the small school
10 designation are hugely disruptive to programmatic
11 stability. Restricting principal's budget
12 flexibility may turn out cookie cutter programming
13 but it certainly doesn't facilitate innovation.

14 3. Increased transparency across the
15 board. I strongly support efforts to require full
16 transparency of all publicly provided and privately
17 raised funds spent by DCPS. All budget and test data
18 should be made easily available to the public to the
19 extent consistent with privacy requirements.

20 4. Fund the Ward 6 Middle School Plan.
21 The recent focus on approving DCPS middle schools is
22 a good reminder of Ward 6 has a perfectly good mostly

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1 unfunded middle school plan that has languished
2 largely unimplemented since 2010. Stuart Hobson
3 continues to plead for a museum magnet program while
4 Eliot-Hine and Jefferson wait the investments needed
5 to offer truly top notch programs. These schools are
6 poised to compete strongly with the charters but only
7 if DCPS will invest in their success.

8 5. Strengthen LSATs. Revise the budget
9 timeline to link them to LSAT review period and I'm
10 glad to see that some of these changes appear to be
11 in the works. LSATs play an important role in the
12 budget process and should be supported throughout.
13 Improved comprehensive planning should allow LSATs
14 additional time to consider budget possibilities,
15 budget trainings and resources for LSAT, would help
16 members better understand the process with their

17 schools options, thanks.

18 MR. RINKUS: Next up is Rene Wallis.

19 MS. WALLIS: Thank you for the opportunity
20 to testify tonight. I really appreciate it and I
21 want to start off before I start my written
22 testimony, one concern I have is what is the one

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1 thing we should do to improve our schools, and you
2 know I've been at Stanton for five years, it's not
3 one thing, it's all of those things. If you try to
4 pick out one thing to save kids it won't work, so
5 maybe rather than what is the one best thing, what
6 are the five best things, or seven best things.

7 I'm the executive director of People
8 Animals Love, a non-profit that works in partnership
9 for private elementary schools. DC follows Stanton.
10 So we provide the after school program and we are
11 currently serving about 230 students a day, that's
12 45% of the student population -- at Stanton or until
13 we blend them with DCPS. I think that all private
14 schools need a program like Stanton. So this year I
15 hope that you will put on the priority list to give
16 your voice to the key folks and remind me to look at
17 the issue of after school. It's not right that some
18 kids get to have a convenient path when we're raising
19 \$400,000.00 and right down the street other kids get
20 nothing and I think this is a big parent issue in DC,
21 so this is a valuable program because the kids need a
22 place to go, the parents need a place for their

1 children, working families need it, the school needs
2 the support and some schools are getting it, but very
3 few and other schools have nothing.

4 When Powell got there five years ago it
5 was the lowest performing school in the District.
6 Then you guys made a great decision -- you hired
7 Scholar Academies, they came in and they turned that
8 school around. We are working very, very closely with
9 them and there are a lot of us there in that school
10 working. One of the reasons Scholar Academies has
11 been successful is that they are open to partnerships
12 with groups like ours who work very closely with them
13 but it's not just us alone. So right now we have
14 Powell, Seaton, Flamboyan, all of us are working
15 together and this is what I mean it is not either or,
16 it's both and.

17 So now at this point I would say for us,
18 the biggest issue in after school is reading. We
19 know right now that half of the kids who come to
20 Powell -- about 120 of our kids are going to make an
21 additional three month gain, the other half are those
22 are kids who are on grade level. The other half are

1 making one year gain but those kids are two or more
2 years behind in reading, so if we don't do something
3 they are going to graduate or leave Stanton without
4 getting to grade level. So my suggestion -- because
5 your wonderful OSTP person told me don't ask for
6 more money, but I think you should look at the issue,

7 I don't think that DCPS necessarily should carry this
8 but you guys should take a position on it at the
9 extent of learning so that as a city we could look at
10 the issue, because every kid needs this service and
11 we really do have a great opportunity, after school,
12 to focus on reading because the school isn't as busy.
13 So thank you again for the opportunity to testify and
14 I look forward coming to many more hearings.

15 MR. RINKUS: So next up is Erich Martel
16 and after that will be Elizabeth Bacon.

17 MR. MARTEL: Good evening Chancellor
18 Henderson my name is Erich Martel, I'm a retired DCPS
19 high school teacher. You have the opportunity to
20 construct a fiscal 15 DSPC budget to align student
21 educational needs with an educational plan. You must
22 first accept responsibility for DCPS's six year loss

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1 of students, teachers and school facilities. Your
2 statements that most of the kids go to traditional
3 middle schools and K8 campuses have failed to attract
4 families and that charters know how to do schools
5 really well, it's the classic passing the buck. It
6 is not the failure of the middle schools. It's the
7 failure of the poor philosophy that blames teachers,
8 principals for the failures that have occurred and
9 for the deficiencies that are in the school.

10 Principals do as you allow or direct they
11 know what they are supposed to do. Please stop
12 accessing teachers with developing effective highly
13 effective evaluations. If you decide to change the
14 stamping model because you believe the one thing you

15 have put into place needs to be admitted that you are
16 responsible for placing every teacher with these
17 evaluations in existing vacancies according to their
18 certifications. The policies that you have
19 established needs to be replaced and now we have an
20 example of what would work. The method that I have
21 studied published a few days ago in slate should
22 replace the present expensive and failing excess and

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1 bonus policy in the elementary schools.

2 According to the study in 2006 successful
3 teachers who volunteered to teach in high need
4 schools for a \$20,000 bonus significantly outperform
5 the teachers in the elementary grades, raising
6 student achievement four to ten percentile just who
7 are these teachers? These transfer teachers quote,
8 were far from the Teach For America archetype or the
9 young transient Ivy League grad. Their average age
10 was 42 and they had an average of twelve years
11 experience in the classroom and they were more likely
12 to control these teachers to be African American to
13 be role models, to hold a Master's Degree, be sure
14 that they were stable adults with deep ties to the
15 city in which they worked.

16 In other words, they were very much like
17 teachers who have been fired recently. The budget at
18 the middle school and high school and the education
19 campuses upper grades, sixth grade and up and in the
20 high schools and middle schools need to be funded in
21 a manner that takes into account the fact that the
22 teachers have planning periods. The formula should

1 take that into account. If you have a school with
2 forty teachers you have to calculate it as if you
3 have thirty teachers, thank you.

4 MR. RINKUS: Elizabeth Bacon. After that
5 it will be Donna Glover.

6 MS. BACON: Hi there, like Laura, I'm with
7 the Capitol Hill Cluster School, I'm on the PTA and
8 the LSAT representative on the PTA. I'm here to
9 speak on behalf of the Cluster School and our
10 experience last year with the budget process, I'm
11 looking forward to sort of a smoother process as you
12 have described this year.

13 We are a school with three campuses, early
14 childhood, elementary and middle school and we draw
15 students from all over the city with about 1300
16 students, so last year our proposed budget costs us a
17 loss of about 12 1/2 full time staff members so these
18 cuts would have destroyed our Spanish language
19 program at the middle school, we lost several
20 resource teachers at the elementary school because of
21 the equalization requirements, it felt like that
22 flexibility taken away from us, allowed us not to be

1 able to do what was best for our community and it
2 wasn't until council member Catania restored some of
3 the lost funding that we were able to restore some
4 of this programming.

5 So going forward we feel like we need
6 budget stability, transparency, fair funding and
7 investment. We would like to see budget stability
8 from year to year so these swings because of small
9 fluctuation in numbers of students throw us off, it
10 doesn't allow us to plan long term. We don't feel
11 like our budget should be cut significantly because
12 of changes and funding formulas, from 300 to 400 that
13 it qualifies as a large school or because of a small
14 change in a projected number of students.

15 Other metrics should be considered. The
16 space at the school, how much can a school hold, what
17 kinds of students are at this school akin to the fair
18 funding bill, the piece that factors in other money
19 for different kinds of kids and sort of tweaking this
20 arbitrary small school designation which we feel like
21 really hurts middle schools which hurt Stuart Hobson.
22 Of the eleven DCPS middle schools, only four have

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1 more than 400 students so that cut-off really hurts
2 middle schools.

3 Number two, increase the transparency.
4 You mentioned a lot of the budget numbers would be
5 available this year but we really need to know where
6 all the money is going, including staff, facilities,
7 central administration. We could use more
8 transparency at the Cluster, this year Watkins our
9 elementary school, campus type were last among the
10 DCPS elementary schools, receiving the lowest per
11 pupil funding.

12 It is hard for us to figure out how we can

13 sort of crunch the data, that's where we end up.
14 Number three, we need investment in our
15 programs and our facilities. We are heartened to
16 hear that middle schools is a priority, we are doing
17 all we can to invest in Stuart Hobson and we want the
18 District to do that too. Attending to the Ward 6
19 middle school plan, the teachers at Stuart Hobson are
20 very committed to a museum magnet and we would really
21 like to work with DCPS to make that a reality and at
22 Watkins, one of the largest elementary schools in the

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1 city, we have to wait until 2019 to finish our full
2 renovation. We are falling apart a the seam, with
3 duct tape holding the windows closed and meanwhile
4 the renovation at Stuart Hobson we are still waiting
5 for that to be completed. The initial plans still do
6 not have full funding and the addition that was
7 originally slated we don't have ground breaking for
8 that so we feel that our facilities could really use
9 investment in order to attract families and meet the
10 metrics that you talked about the kids liking
11 school, feeling good about their school facilities
12 and not having things fall off the walls and being in
13 a cramped space, so we are heartened to hear about an
14 expanded timeline for the budget and be able to give
15 input. Thank you for listening.

16 MS. GLOVER: Hello good evening. My name is
17 Donna Glover and I am the PTSA President for McKinley
18 Tech Education Campus. First of all thank you for
19 having this forum. And again as many others have said
20 hopefully this will definitely be a forum I guess to

21 ask as to how budgets were done in the past. So let
22 me know if I need to slow down if you want to take

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1 some notes. I see you got your pad there.

2

3 CHANCELLOR HENDERSON: We have a reporter.

4 MS. GLOVER: You have a reporter. Awesome.

5 So just to start off that I believe, or we believe,
6 that the LSAT worked on last year, was not the budget
7 that was turned in, or asked of by Mr. Pinder so
8 that's one thing that we are concerned with. In
9 addition to that, we gained a middle school and with
10 gaining a middle school we found out that our budget
11 was slashed. Now we're kind of confused as to how the
12 budget is slashed even though I guess the projection
13 of the middle school students was such that they
14 didn't need us to be the teachers but then we had to
15 share the budget with the middle schools so how does
16 that get slashed, when you have another whole school
17 that's coming into play. Now we have our teachers
18 like music and art. We are sharing those as well as
19 social workers, our counselors and AP's. When I come
20 into the school I see that they're running back and
21 forth from the schools and we would like to have the
22 middle school and you guys were saying that there's

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1 two separate schools because the middle school is not
2 application and tech and high school is. I don't like

3 to see our administrators running back and forth. It
4 tires them out. I just don't think it's affective for
5 the school and I'm not only speaking as a parent, I'm
6 speaking as an educator as well, that's educated and
7 licensed in Texas. In addition, the middle school has
8 full scale labs, so computer and science labs but our
9 high school doesn't, so we know that McKinley Tech
10 High School was one of the first to get renovated
11 about ten years ago. I think it's a disservice to
12 open up a middle school as fabulous as it is and then
13 didn't do the same for the high school because
14 Cardozo is outstanding as you know, you did your
15 speech there last month. So, I'm hoping we can get
16 some funds to make Tech as fabulous as the middle
17 school. And not only in appearance but also in
18 bandwidth because the computers are running slow, the
19 computers are old and we don't have a thorough
20 computer lab. I say we I mean the high school on this
21 part. In addition, we would like to get information
22 as to how students are being recruited for the middle

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1 school, so in talking with the Ward 5 Council on
2 education, we were kind of -- we didn't feel as if
3 the middle school was being promoted or being
4 advertised in a way that it would draw students to
5 our class 1 or class A facility, so we'd like to see
6 that. So again, if we could really just take a look
7 at how the budget is, or what funds are given and how
8 the budget is allocated to those -- to those
9 teachers. Then also the middle school has more IUP,
10 other things of that nature, which would require for

11 more personnel and very specialized and trained
12 personnel. So, we need those funds. Thank you so
13 much. I appreciate it.

14

15 MR. RINKUS: Ok, next up we have Ward 7 Ed
16 Council followed by Melissa Bryant with Stanton.

17

18 MS. THOMPSON: Good evening. I'm Eboni-Rose
19 Thompson and in preparation for this testimony I
20 looked back at my testimony from last year to see I
21 guess how far we have come and in some of the stuff
22 we have not come. Especially since it's what two

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1 days before Thanksgiving, so I am thankful for a
2 unified lottery because ever since we spoke about it
3 last year and I am thankful for the funding for the
4 council, I am also thankful for the fact that the
5 council allocated additional funding to H.D. Woodson
6 last year. However, I also looked back at my
7 testimony from last year and some things still
8 haven't quite been accomplished, so I think there is
9 some progress that needs to be made.

10 We had a Ward 7 education council meeting
11 this past Thursday, pertaining to that and we really
12 need comprehensive planning Ward 7 and council
13 members will tell you that we really need
14 complimentary planning for the entire city and I mean
15 I would tend to agree with the residents that said we
16 really need a comprehensive plan for everyone and
17 something special for Ward 7 because a lot of things
18 we just don't have.

19 When I look at what DCPS has for its
20 marquee programs, despite the fact that we now have
21 huge numbers of students residing in Ward 7, we don't
22 have emerging programs, we don't have any language

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1 programs, no cultural programs, we don't have -- I
2 mean, I guess the list of what we don't have could go
3 on and on and on.

4 What we do have is a distinguished high
5 school in H.D. Woodson that is not fully funded. I
6 am glad that at the council made this allocation last
7 year, but it needs consistent funding and it needs a
8 commitment from DCPS to make sure that funding
9 continues from year to year in an adequate way. It's
10 not just when it's important, especially when H.D.
11 Woodson's also needs a real theater. I know we are
12 talking about damages now, but it only has one
13 theater. I want to look at it compared to Wilson,
14 west of the park -- it's half the size. Wilson
15 also has three theaters. We know that children need
16 enrollment, enrollment means dollars for schools and
17 I don't know how we can have one high school in Ward
18 7 that is supposed to fulfill the needs of the
19 children in Ward 7 and offer a student programming --
20 we just don't have it. Not only do the students
21 really need it, but the investments earlier on to
22 make sure that they're adequately prepared to

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1 participate in some program, so that's what DCPS
2 honestly needs to commit to.

3 Again, when I look back to my testimony
4 from last year, one of the things that we said that
5 we really needed was an investment in community
6 service. I know that the city council looked at it
7 before. I know that we have a wonderful school in
8 JC Morrow and they consider themselves a community
9 school. When you look at the achievement gap, or when
10 you look at the progress that we could make, knowing
11 full well the demographics of the students we have
12 in our schools, the combination of those wrap around
13 schools. The combination of those services, the
14 additional dollars that could come into that
15 legislation were truly implemented -- so I'm hoping
16 by having this budget conversation that -- but I'm
17 pushing the marks from power point but it is time to
18 be honest, from the beginning to the end, I am glad
19 you are reaching out to the community more, I would
20 like to make note that someone said, your budget that
21 you worked on before, did not feel like a budget that
22 was turned in at the end of the day and I really

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1 think that DCPS needs to revisit the roll of the SAT
2 and kind of how it factors into the decision of
3 getting into schools.

4 I would also like to -- I guess the last
5 thing that I would ask you all to look at, really has
6 to be the teacher problem, investment in teacher
7 quality, and an investment in making sure that we
8 have tenured leaders in our schools. Last year we

9 had more principal turnovers than anywhere else. We
10 had 17 principal firings last year. As of right not
11 probably two thirds of our leaders have been at their
12 perspective schools for three years or less. So I get
13 there was a lot of 'cleaning house' as I guess you
14 all would say. Sometimes it should be done but I
15 think at this point you need to look at consistency,
16 you need to look at ways to support those students,
17 support those leaders so they can do what's necessary
18 to move our children forward. That being said, I
19 actually would like to thank everybody here and I do
20 think we need to revisit the things that haven't been
21 done and I do think that we're going to need more
22 than one investment in schools and I think it's going

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1 to take a continuous investment in schools.

2 So thank you.

3 MR. RINKUS: So next up we have Melissa
4 Bryant and then it will be Steve Smith.

5 MS. BRYANT: Hey everyone. So my name is
6 Melissa Bryant and I'm representing Stanton
7 Elementary school, so I'm a fourth grade teacher but
8 I'm also the manager of Family and Student
9 Engagement. So when I'm looking at this Capital
10 Commitment to schools, how do we invest in the 40/40
11 schools and then also how do we improve student
12 satisfaction. I'm sure that probably 90% of the
13 students at Stanton said -- well the building is
14 just not ok, like the building is dirty and I think
15 one of the things that you need to do especially when
16 you're looking at these 40/40 schools is really

1 people talking about is about staffing right? So
2 when you talk about, if I had 30 kids in my class but
3 they were all on grade level, I wouldn't complain I
4 mean it wouldn't mean anything. But it's one thing to
5 put like tons of kids in a kindergarten or first
6 grade class and they have like 25 or 30 kids, that's
7 a lot. So like what are we really going to do to
8 change like how kids are improving and how we really
9 going to improve these 40/40 schools, the classes at
10 the bottom they have to stay low, like the staff it
11 has to be low that you can really make sure that when
12 kids are coming out of first grade they can read,
13 like if you are sticking 25 and 30 kids in a class ,
14 it's not helping the cause. The other thing that I
15 was going to talk about especially with Stanton's
16 enrollment, every year we get dropped down in kids
17 but we've been gaining kids every single year.

18 Every single year we get more kids than
19 year we had before, but every single year when we get
20 the budget, we're always projected as less kids when
21 we shown over many years that more and more kids keep
22 coming to our schools. And so the other thing I want

1 to talk about is turnaround, real quick, I'm trying
2 to talk fast, I only have five minutes, she's going
3 to come up here in a minute. But the other thing I'd
4 like to talk about is turnaround. When we talk about
5 turnaround, one thing that I feel we need is
6 consistency. Right? And I heard a lot of people say

7 that there needs to be consistency, consistency,
8 consistency but really in a turnaround school, the
9 things that made Stanton like really good and put us
10 on a good trajectory, sometimes you guys are to
11 trying to take that out of the budget. Like saying
12 like oh well they do great now so like now they like
13 don't need this money, or don't need this, so now we
14 find ourselves trying to run around, trying to reach
15 out to all of these partnerships to get money but
16 like if you are really going to invest in 40/40
17 schools and you're really going to make some of them
18 turnaround, then what will work is you actually have
19 to keep them there for a substantial amount of time
20 them turn, to make sure that the turnaround actually
21 reaches its goal because we are in a good place, but
22 we're not really where we want to be, right? And then

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1 the last thing that I was going to say is just when
2 you consolidate schools because I saw that like the
3 commitment to full funding, so when you consolidate
4 schools and you bring a lot of kids to one school you
5 really have to make sure that there is a lot of
6 things in place just to make sure the transition is
7 really really smooth because I feel like with Stanton
8 we were like running around to get a lot of money. We
9 could like teach kids our culture and teach them like
10 all these different things, things like we kind of
11 like do and I guess it felt like, we felt like a lot
12 of that money should have come from DCPS because you
13 are shooting these kids here and we need to make sure
14 that they're prepared. And I think that that is it. I

15 made before my five minutes.

16 CHAIRMAN HENDERSON: Thank you. I wanted
17 to take a moment to recognize the Mayor of our city
18 who stopped by, my boss, Vincent Gray I want to thank
19 you sir for being here tonight, I want to communicate
20 schools to everybody, that is important, so thank you
21 again.

22 MR. SMITH: Hi my name is Steve Smith, I

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1 am speaking on behalf of Takoma LSAT and during my
2 forty-five years here in Ward 4, we have parented
3 nine children who have attended the DCPS schools and
4 we now have grandchildren in the DCPS schools. As
5 you may know Takoma is a Title 1 school and is in
6 many ways regarded by parents as an effective,
7 successful and desirable school. Body enrollments
8 have increased over the prior year by 20% in both
9 2012 and 2013 under the leadership of Principal Ricky
10 Taylor, enrollments have increased since 2009 by 50%.

11 This is despite the devastating fire in
12 2010. Few schools in the city either traditional or
13 charter, that have increased their grade range and
14 matched the demand and intention. We have come here
15 first to comment DCPS for supporting LSATs new
16 schools and for also increasing the transparency of
17 government by publishing the school by school budget
18 information on the DCPS website.

19 Going forward into the new budgeting
20 process we would like to highlight new and continuing
21 concerns about the process for a normal based
22 allocation to the schools. All of the efforts

1 attributed to the process will be null if the
2 projections for each school are interactive and do
3 not present the actual formal enrollments. Our major
4 concern is that the current methodology, to make
5 these projections is flawed to the detriment of the
6 equitable funding, school planning and helping these
7 students. And as you know the active projections
8 have been significantly increased this year by the
9 likely passage of the fair funding bill which puts
10 more money at the principal's disposal with flexible
11 funding and according to the uniform per student
12 funding formal.

13 The major weakness in the methodology is a
14 failure to include in the projections more recent
15 development data of actions from the months following
16 the October audit. Currently enrollments from that
17 order used for the basis of projections, this is
18 lagging in data. More recent action among the data
19 available, are not used in every timeframe. To
20 bootstrap, as it's called in the consultant
21 community, the projections.

22 We know that there is a significant

1 movement that is to be put through. There are
2 potential reading data for enrollments on the outer
3 boundaries of this particular lottery and they are
4 not used. More significantly there are ways of

5 enrollment by inbound students in August that are
6 not captured at all in the distribution of funds for
7 that school, while the fair community tech schools
8 have declined over 5% due to data changes and
9 downsizing projections, there is no similar
10 reallocation of funds to assist in the schools like
11 Takoma which are academically, demographically on an
12 upward enrollment spot.

13 One of the goals could be to increase the
14 enrollment and if you don't fund them they can drop
15 out. At Takoma, at case in point, as I said each of
16 the last two years, October brought enrollments that
17 have been 10% greater than projected and utilized in
18 the school's budget. For example the projection was
19 only 399 and in an audit there was 443 and the school
20 was budgeted at a shortfall of roughly \$400,000.00,
21 outside the community. The current year enrollment
22 was significantly pumped up by middle school

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1 enrollments in August.

2 We are dissatisfied both with the school's
3 students that are at risk and yield out Special Ed
4 and all those programs. Unfortunately I am not
5 seeing too much of any changes here. The onus is
6 currently on principals LSATs, to complain and
7 request adjustments rather than DCPS adjusting as
8 more data becomes available. The problem seems like
9 it's going to continue for next year. We have a
10 rapidly growing population of young families, they
11 are likely to have a long lottery waiting lists in
12 addition to closing the other schools, where the

13 recipient of a new influx of students and
14 self-contained special education.
15 DCPS needs to re-examine and revise its
16 projections and chronology more accurately project
17 actual school enrollments and as a further option I
18 would hope you would consider reserving LEA funds for
19 significant normal changes that might occur in August
20 and September for late enrollment in students.
21 Additional allocations of the reserve should be based
22 on additions to the formula and not just on trying to

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1 ride the ship. Thank you.

2 MR. RINKUS: Next up is Gina Hall.

3 MS. HALL: Good evening Chancellor
4 Henderson. Thank you for listening to me and giving
5 me this opportunity to speak. My name is Gina Hall
6 and I am a senior at Luke C. Moore High School and I
7 live in Ward 8. I will speak on behalf of a critical
8 express program. We are a group of DC Students
9 working to implement restorative justice in DC. What
10 is restorative justice? Restorative justice practices
11 to reduce the need for suspension by building a
12 community within the schools that the students will
13 support. Restorative justice programs are being
14 successfully created in public school districts
15 across the country, including some schools in
16 Baltimore City, and Montgomery County Maryland.
17 Students in DC have to be pushed out of
18 schools by harden discipline. Suspensions
19 impartially limits their rights in the classroom. My
20 younger brother for example, gets suspended every

21 time he steps in the school for minor reasons. The
22 last time he was suspended for ten days because his

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1 shirt not tucked in. Another time was because he was
2 not wearing the correct uniform. In the 2011-2012
3 school year, there were more than 10,000 suspensions
4 in the DCPS school system. If we started restorative
5 justice, we can decrease that number and I think the
6 students would be well within their rights. We
7 believe the restorative justice program will also cut
8 down on fights and other incidents would decrease the
9 rate of student drop outs and increase the graduation
10 rate. It will allow students to build a healthy
11 school community that they want to be a part of. We
12 want to ask you to include funds to start a
13 restorative justice program through DCPS high school
14 for the fiscal year of 2015.

15 We would like to meet with you to discuss
16 our strategy and plan to implementing this program.
17 We have collected over 100 signatures from DC
18 residents in support our campaign, including
19 Councilman David Grosso, Monica Warren-Jones from the
20 DC State Board of Education as well as DCPS teachers,
21 parents and students who believe in restorative
22 justice. On behalf of the critical express program,

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1 I want to thank you for taking the time to listen to
2 my ideas.

3 MS. HENDERSON: Thank you Gina for a very
4 well presented argument and I would love to meet with
5 you and your group, so let me make sure that we have
6 contact, and maybe something will work out, thank
7 you.

8 MR. RINKUS: So that's about all of the
9 people that we have registered to speak. We do have a
10 little bit of extra time, so I think if there is
11 anyone that has not yet testified and you would like
12 to, now would be the opportunity. Ok could you do me
13 a favor and just state your name before you speak.

14 MR. WHITE: Landon White. Good evening
15 Chancellor Henderson. This is -- I'm a member of the
16 board -- excuse me I'm representing Astute Magazine.
17 I am here to address the student magazines roll in
18 preparing students for higher education as well as
19 careers post K through 12. College readiness is
20 extremely important to my team as well as to the
21 individuals that we represent. It's an intricate
22 part in reaching President's Obama's 2020 goal of the

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1 United States having the highest college graduation
2 rate in the world. In order to have that high
3 graduation rate, students from DCPS must be prepared.
4 The student's main beliefs are that the college
5 atmosphere starts with every student having the
6 information. Therefore we provide the entertainment
7 platform for students to engage in intellectual
8 conversation.

9 College barriers in the hallways, lack the
10 back story has substance needed to relate to students

11 in K through 12, excuse me. Getting advice from your
12 teacher happens all the time however having the same
13 advice reinforced by a pro-bowl football player from
14 the Washington Redskins or an NBA all-star is more
15 meaningful. Let me give you a little background, a
16 highly tested SAT speaker who is astute. Astute is
17 one of 500 words I had to memorize going into my
18 senior year, knowing these words not only improved my
19 SAT score by more than 400 points in two sections but
20 the work ethic in preparing for the exams, assisted
21 me with my transition into college.

22 In high school this SAT program that I was

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1 a part of, also brought in speakers. Not only do
2 they bring in executives from fortune 500 companies,
3 local politicians like the Mayor as well as
4 University Presidents. Two stories stuck with me,
5 one from a University President, Dana Wilson. He
6 spoke about how he had to, in the South, cover up
7 holes in his walls from the rain, in order for him to
8 keep the rain from raining on him while was sleeping
9 in his bed. And one of the things he talked about was
10 to look up to those magazines and say magazines allow
11 a smart child like me to dream.

12 The second story that stuck with me, is
13 young professionals would come speak to a lot of the
14 students, the reason why this touched us so much is
15 because you can speak to someone that is fifty years
16 old and they give you advice, but someone that has
17 just left the program and is 22, 23 years old and
18 they are working for top companies like Wells Fargo,

19 Northrop Grumman, as well as Pepsi-Co, GE Capital,
20 not only are you hearing the story but you're also
21 able to interact with these students. Now the
22 problem that we have in these schools are truancy,

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1 possible dropout rates, college readiness and the
2 transition. Now, if a student acts in his framework
3 for informing, inspiring and enlightening students,
4 it is assuring a following occurs in class. We
5 reinforce educational topics already discussed in
6 class. We make the connection between education,
7 employment opportunities the i.e. the why? Why are we
8 learning this, why are we doing algebra 2, why must I
9 score 3 on my AP class in order to prepare for
10 college and lastly to provide entertaining content to
11 intrigue students to read the magazine. Once the
12 student is intrigued, a student can then be educated.
13 It is important to note that the magazine is a
14 supplement to the curriculum. We make sure the
15 majority of our content deals with education or
16 employment. A student has touched on financial
17 literacy, stemmed business and politics. Many of our
18 spotlights deal with young college students and young
19 professionals, shedding light on their college and
20 work experiences.

21 The solution is for you to have a meeting
22 with my team, as well as to possibly set aside a

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1 budget so that every high school student can have
2 access to Astute Magazine. We featured in this issue
3 along, a member of the Redskins, as well as Angela
4 Simmons, as well as the Morehouse President as well
5 as financial literacy within this one issue. We come
6 out four times a year as well as we have tons of
7 stars, local and nationally that want to be a part of
8 this movement. I have one minute and I want to say
9 thank you again for your time and if you have any
10 questions please I have forty-five seconds, any
11 questions? Thank you.

12

13 MS. SMITH: I'm Nancy Smith. You asked what
14 it would take for our children to stay in middle
15 school, well how about giving us one? The funding is
16 so small that they cannot fund the programs properly.
17 Our kid's years ago had schools, even when they were
18 dealing with limited funding. We can't do that
19 anymore. We are losing some of our faculty in Takoma
20 we lost our PTA President this year. It's
21 unacceptable. Bragging about McFarland making great
22 grades, I mean what is your plan to give us a middle

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1 school? It would be just wonderful to have one in the
2 upper part of the Ward and one in the lower part of
3 the Ward. That way it is not is just not the way to
4 go. It's just not the way to go. And we're losing
5 right and left. We love our schools, because of our
6 kids. And that's all that I have to say.

7 MS. WALLIS: So what affect do you think,
8 are you anticipating that the legislation passes

9 today on the fair funding is that going to have an
10 impact? Or do we have a sense that I think that is
11 going to be on all your minds, how is it going to
12 impact the 2015 budget.

13 CHANCELLOR HENDERSON: It's too early to tell at
14 this point. What the market did was it added things
15 for at risk students so we don't know how much until
16 we get through the rest of this and the Mayor is able
17 to look out across all of the agencies and gives us
18 our marks, but I think we have a tremendous
19 opportunity, one, we saw an increase in enrollment
20 this year, across many of our schools, DCPS likes the
21 fact that we consolidated schools. We saw a jump in
22 enrollment that looks well for the FY14 budget. The

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1 Mayor has also completed an advocacy study which is
2 needed to understand what is the right amount of
3 money it will take -- so we will get the results from
4 that and I hope that will help support us. We all
5 want the kind of stability that some of the folks who
6 testified here earlier talked about and I think from
7 what I have heard, it's on us to try and figure out
8 how to do this. I shared the fact with you that maybe
9 a week or two ago -- currently we want our schools
10 based on how many children are in a building and
11 that's why I think enrollment for students is
12 important from year to year. I think you all have
13 laid out a very reasonable challenge, which is how do
14 we -- is there a way to stabilize I think the 5 %
15 budget. The stabilization piece that was in the mark
16 up today, I think was good. But if DCPS as a whole

17 doesn't get a 5% stabilization, if we don't get a 5%
18 stabilization, within somewhere, then there are going
19 to be cuts. So I think we have to go back -- we don't
20 know what the answers are going to be, we don't know
21 exactly how the mark up of today is going to play
22 out, but our commitment is to be as transparent as

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1 possible.

2 When we know what that -- we will share
3 that with you on our website, in our schools, as best
4 as we possibly can. But right now we'll go to our
5 next speaker.

6 MS. HALL: My name is Robin Hall I am the
7 mother of Gina Hall. I want to ask a question.
8 Chancellor Henderson when parents call your phone
9 number, to speak to Ms. William or whomever may be
10 there, do you ever receive any information as to what
11 the calls are or what the situations are at the
12 schools for the parents?

13 CHANCELLOR HENDERSON: A lot of times I
14 do, even if I am not the person who speaks to the
15 parent and what happens sometimes is that I'm not
16 there, and then I usually get a report from one of my
17 assistants. They tell me who called and what they
18 called about and what they will try to do is actually
19 put you in touch with a person who can actually fix
20 the problem.

21 MS. HALL: Because I've been calling for
22 quite some time. I've called the Mayor's call center

1 I've called any of the agencies who I feel I can get
2 an answer from. I forgot the ladies name again. Mayor
3 Fenty years ago had helped me with Special Education,
4 so I have seen some changes with the Special Ed. My
5 son is now at Anacostia. He is a Special Ed child.
6 He's struggling and he's like getting caught up and
7 getting really side track. I'm really trying to keep
8 an eye on him, trying to see what services are
9 available to get him educated. He has received
10 papers from one of the programs in Italy that's going
11 to take him overseas I think of the name of it right
12 now but it is like an internship thing, so I have
13 been working with him on that, but it's like so many
14 things have come along over the past two or three
15 school years. He started out at MacFarland, where I
16 really observed a lot of the school security, the
17 school resource officers would do things to really
18 stress him out. This is child was labeled hyper
19 active and into the depths of being emotionally
20 disturbed. When we were in the shelter at one time
21 some of the crew boys had set him up. One of them
22 told me, keep him and the other 13 year old boys away

1 from him the 15 to 17 year old boys because they
2 would see him talking to them, they were becoming
3 part of the crew, but some of the crew boys set him
4 up and the police office had locked him up and
5 charged him with assaulting a police officer, which
6 he was just walking down the street. One of the crew

7 people said hear they are and the police chased my
8 son, along with another 11 year old boy and charged
9 him with that. So from that point on it is something
10 that the DC police, school resource and everything
11 seems to be, when I told myself you need to sit down,
12 I want to hear everything. I want to hear the schools
13 side and I want to hear my son's side. And I'm
14 hearings sides where sometimes they would suspend him
15 for 45 days and then when we would come back to the
16 table, for more discussion, it's like what happened
17 but this never took place according to your records,
18 so a child is being suspended and out of school but
19 they need to investigate before they suspend the
20 child.

21 CHANCELLOR HENDERSON: Let me ask you this
22 Miss Hall, this is a particularly unique problem. We

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1 talk about your son's situation but I do want to
2 enlighten us if there are implications of a larger
3 budget process, that are some questions that you want
4 us to take it into account. Can you get those out?

5 MS. HALL: Yeah well one thing I feel too
6 that before deemed a suspended child, the principal
7 needs to be informed because of it, because I would
8 get letters from the principal and would be like, oh
9 I didn't know anything. Now I have the person who was
10 on the phone's number, I text and email or whatever,
11 well text him or call him and leave a message. So I
12 had Reverend Motley working with my son. He said he's
13 going to be his mentor, to try to get him on target.
14 Reverend Motley would say, come here, when he get

15 really out of control when he feels he was wronged.
16 He was kicked in the private, kicked in the buttocks
17 was sent to the nurse. He was there most of the day.
18 The dean and the resource officer came and said we
19 are going to suspend you for five days we found a
20 computer in your backpack, which his backpack was
21 left in the class.

22 CHANCELLOR HENDERSON: So I want to have

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1 this conversation, if we can do it over here. I want
2 to invite any other people who have not testified,
3 because if it's not about the budget and the process
4 -- so that way we can go home and run to our families
5 and get the Thanksgiving dinner on and cooking or
6 whatever -- we can talk about your problems and
7 someone will stay for as long as it takes, if that's
8 okay.

9 MS. HALL: Yes, thank you.

10 CHANCELLOR HENDERSON: Thank you.

11 MR. RINKUS: We started off by saying that
12 it's your turn. So this is your turn or your
13 neighbors turn or your turn for other parents to get
14 engaged as well. What we would like folks to take
15 away from this conversation is that one this is going
16 to be ongoing, so we have come up with a couple of
17 ways that we think are investing and reaching out to
18 you and out to those fellow parents and the
19 community.

20 First and foremost if you look up at
21 screen, right now you will see that there is a
22 survey. What that survey is designed to capture is

1 your feedback specifically about this process, so if
2 you have any questions, we want to know what your
3 thoughts are, what you think is working right, what
4 could work better, again by virtue of you coming out
5 here, please fill out that survey, please let us know
6 what you think. Every response is going to be looked
7 out, and particularly if you have other parents that
8 just didn't make it out because of the holidays,
9 weather, the hour, please have them fill that out.
10 We would love to hear what you and fellow parents in
11 the community are thinking.

12 The second thing is that you would be
13 watching an online discussion platform. Now what
14 does that mean? It is going to be a platform on the
15 web that will allow you to provide feedback and also
16 allow other parents, other committee members to
17 leave feedback for DCPS to get that feedback and
18 really generate a conversation that happens via the
19 website, so we can say hey here's an idea and not
20 only is it a good idea, it's an idea that's being
21 passed amongst our community, on to DCPS and it is
22 really a chance for you to put your ideas out there

1 in such a way that others can see it, comment and
2 think about it.

3 The third piece is this budget workshop.
4 We want to make sure that going into this we are

5 continuing to have nights like this where we are
6 taking something that is naturally a little bit
7 complex to a budget and conveying it in such a way
8 that folks have a clear understanding of what the
9 implications are, what decisions are being made or
10 aren't being made. Please stay tuned and what you
11 will see is that relationship, we are going to have
12 more interest in that and we are also going to have
13 more web based events, webinars, to give us a chance
14 to get feedback, so even if you can't get out or
15 participate, you'll still have your opportunity to
16 see what is happening and to provide your feedback.

17 And the last piece is, if you aren't
18 already, please consider participating in the
19 schools, as local school advisors, teamwork -- again
20 by virtue of you being here, I think that it shows an
21 interest in things related to the finances, the
22 school budget, that's a great thing to have this

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1 conversation, you know, it's an opportunity to talk
2 with all parents, an opportunity to talk to the
3 school principals about the budget and what the
4 decisions are with reference to it, trust me that the
5 folks have given me that type of opportunity, so we
6 strongly encourage you to do that. It can be a huge
7 impact for your school. And that's it for the
8 communication part, I will turn it over to Chancellor
9 Henderson.

10 CHANCELLOR HENDERSON: So I just want to
11 say again, thank you so much for coming this evening,
12 there are lots of places that you could have been but

13 your being here tonight conveys a commitment to
14 working with us to get the budget that we that we
15 need for our schools. If you don't take anything
16 else away tonight, please take away the fact that our
17 desire and our intention and our commitment is to do
18 this process differently. We don't want to be at
19 odds, we don't want to be cutting school budgets, we
20 want to figure out what are the known parts that we
21 need to provide our young people with a world class
22 education that they deserve that will attract the

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1 Latino families and help us meet these five big
2 goals. It isn't going to be easy and we operate
3 under difficult circumstances but I fundamentally
4 believe that with greater transparency, greater
5 opportunities for engagement, we can have a process
6 that is very different from the last time and where
7 we actually come to an agreement about what we think
8 is right, so again, I have heard lots of things this
9 evening that I think are easily implementable and our
10 commitment is to go back and figure out how to
11 implement them through our website and we will let
12 you know -- we heard this and we are moving forward
13 with this, if we actually aren't able to move
14 forward with x, y and z, we'll do our best to explain
15 why and I think that is what it needs, an agency that
16 is committed to the transparency and working with
17 families, I think that's what we can achieve
18 together, so I'm hopeful about this process and I
19 want you to be brutal as you were earlier this
20 evening, in telling us how we can fix it because we

21 fundamentally believe, that with us working together,
22 is the way to make things happen for everyone. Thank

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1 you so much and very Happy Thanksgiving.

2 (APPLAUSE)

3 (Whereupon at 7:48 p.m., the DCPS Fiscal
4 Year 2015 Budget Hearing adjourned.)

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