

Date: November 9, 2021

Case: FY 2023 DCPS Public Budget Hearing



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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

FY 2023 DCPS PUBLIC
BUDGET HEARING

Via Zoom

Tuesday, November 9, 2021

6:00 p.m.

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MS. GASKINS: Thank you for joining us
3 this evening for the Fiscal Year 2023 Public Budget
4 Hearing for school year 2022/2023. My name is Sharon
5 Gaskins and I serve as a research strategy officer
6 for D.C. Public Schools. I am also joined by
7 Chancellor Ferebee and we're excited to be here with
8 you today.

9 By way of background, one of the
10 responsibilities of the Office of Resource Strategy
11 is to oversee and support budget development for
12 DCPS. This hearing is an important opportunity to
13 hear testimony from parents and the community so we
14 can hear your priorities.

15 Here's our agenda. We'll begin with an
16 introduction and an overview by Chancellor Ferebee
17 and myself, followed by public testimony. We'll be
18 hearing from community members, parents,
19 organizations, and others during this period. We do
20 ask that if you're not presenting please turn on mute
21 and turn off your cameras. We'll be live streaming
22 the hearing through our D.C. Public Schools YouTube

1 page at the web address at the bottom of your screen.

2 If, as a speaker, you're experiencing
3 challenges connecting this evening, please
4 communicate with the host in the Chatbox or send an
5 email to CEOinfo@k12.dc.gov. We do also have
6 American Sign Language interpretation available, in
7 addition to Spanish language interpretation. So,
8 with that, I'm going to now turn it over to
9 Chancellor Ferebee.

10 CHANCELLOR FEREBEE: Thank you, Ms.
11 Gaskins. It's an honor to be with you this evening
12 everyone. Today we're going to continue our dialogue
13 around how we prioritize our resources to address the
14 unique needs of our students and our families and our
15 schools throughout the District. Our team will begin
16 with sharing information on our revised model to help
17 educate the stakeholders in our community around our
18 model and ensure there's a deep understanding of how
19 we're allocating resources to schools.

20 We hope that this better understanding of
21 our revised budget model will help with, not only
22 understanding how our resources go to schools, but

1 what this means for our schools as well. We will
2 open the floor for discussion tonight to ensure that
3 we identify any questions that need responses and
4 also we want to ensure that, again, you leave with a
5 deep understanding of our model.

6 As we go forward, I think it's important
7 to ground on what our model is driven by and some of
8 our key principles. It's important to note that this
9 whole process starts with the Mayor setting
10 priorities for the city budget and also a strategy
11 for DCPS. Once we're able to identify those key
12 strategies and priorities from Mayor Bowser, we then
13 begin to build a budget for DCPS that aligns to the
14 needs of our school communities.

15 We've got much feedback on our budget
16 model, both difficult to understand and unpredictable
17 from many school communities is what we've heard and
18 the ability to align our resources to student need is
19 important.

20 So, that leaves us with important work to
21 ensure that we look at enrollment, we also look at a
22 sustainable process that is long-lasting, but also

1 one that is very transparent and has a lens around
2 how we're supporting students who may need more;
3 particularly, our special population.

4 We have revised the model to remove some
5 of the guesswork around how dollars are allocated to
6 schools, how its supports programming, and how it is
7 aligned to the enrollment n the District and in our
8 schools.

9 We go to the next slide, I just want
10 highlight for you, again, some of our goals. And as
11 we think about the budget, we wanted to continue,
12 again, the dialogue tonight. We wanted to help
13 answer any questions, but we also wanted to build
14 awareness of our new budget approach.

15 If you look at these three areas of the
16 revised model, I want to lift that up again tonight
17 as we think about what this will look like. We've
18 created a revised model to be clearer, to be fairer,
19 to be viable to ensure transparency, equity, and also
20 financial stability.

21 This new model will address three key
22 factors and that is enrollment, need, and stability.

1 For enrollment, these funds are distributed to
2 schools based on their student enrollment and their
3 staff counts. This is our way of providing
4 foundational dollars to schools to ensure that every
5 school has what they need across the District.

6 The second area is our targeted support.
7 Our targeted support refers directly to needs of
8 special population. For example, English language
9 learners, students receiving Special Education
10 services.

11 And the last bucket provides stability
12 during periods of enrolment transition. Whether a
13 school may be experiencing a decline in enrollment or
14 there's a lasting impact of the public health
15 emergency, we want to be sensitive that enrollment is
16 fluid in our schools and there needs to be a sense of
17 predictability.

18 Therefore, DCPS schools will have greater
19 flexibility in their school budgets and how
20 administrators collaborate with their local schools'
21 advisory teams to allocate resources and then in
22 addition to that we will be thinking about how we

1 layer on additional dollars or resources to ensure
2 stable resources and services to students and
3 families during years when enrollment may be
4 unpredictable.

5 Again, we believe that these three
6 approaches are critical to how we can best support
7 our schools. Again, thinking about the enrollment,
8 targeted support, and stability. With that, I'm
9 going to turn it back over to our chief strategy
10 officer and Ms. Gaskins going to share a little bit
11 more about what this means, how we will be supporting
12 schools differently, our budget design, and how
13 schools will have additional flexibility with their
14 decision-making. Now, I'll turn it over to Ms.
15 Gaskins.

16 MS. GASKINS: Thank you, Chancellor. So,
17 what does this mean for our DCPS schools? Well, each
18 school will benefit differently from the model. It's
19 important to remember that the revised budget model
20 seeks to provide more control to school leaders and
21 school communities and really how they serve their
22 students and families.

1 By design, the model provides more
2 decision-making authority to school leaders who know
3 best what their students need. Schools that serve a
4 larger number of special student populations will
5 receive additional dollars to support those students'
6 needs. And in addition to providing school leaders
7 more authority in their spending, the revised model
8 advances equity in education by assuring all schools
9 have the funds needed to provide essential programs
10 and services.

11 And really, overall, the model should
12 remove the guesswork that currently exists and allow
13 schools to continue programs, even when enrollments
14 shift. We're excited for this new model to allow us
15 to provide the essential services that will help all
16 students to thrive.

17 And so, with that I'd like to share a
18 little bit more about how you can be involved in the
19 school budget process in your local school. First
20 and foremost, I really encourage you to get involved
21 with your school's local school advisory team, or the
22 LSAT. If you're not familiar with LSAT, they are

1 school-based advisory groups made up of parents,
2 staff, PT members who work with principals on a range
3 of topics, like the school's budget.

4 For additional questions on the LSAT
5 structure, feel free to email the CEO.info email
6 address on the screen. Before you do that, let me
7 share a little bit more on the LSAT. So LSATs
8 normally meet monthly throughout the school year to
9 work on a range of topics, like school budget, or
10 school culture, student attendance, and a range of
11 other issues. At each meeting there's a brief update
12 on each school's comprehensive school plan, which
13 basically outlines a school's individual goals that
14 they're working towards.

15 Elections for chairs of the LSAT take
16 place each year at the end of the school year and
17 elected chairs are voted on by their peers. Staff
18 members at the school level elect staff. Parents
19 elect parents and the principal and the school's
20 administrative staff hosts the election process with
21 the assistance of DCPS Community Action Team member
22 or CAT team member.

1 Each school should have a functioning
2 LSAT body no later than October of each year. During
3 the January and February meetings the primary topic
4 of the LSAT meeting is the school budget for the next
5 fiscal year. So, if you're not involved yet, we
6 encourage you to get involved by that time. And to
7 support those conversations our Community Action Team
8 and our school Finance Team will host webinars on the
9 budget process, as well as the LSAT election process.
10 So, please be on the lookout for additional
11 District-wide engagement, including budget forms and
12 town halls and the like.

13 Okay, so turning to some logistics for
14 tonight, for those of you who we'll be hearing from,
15 thank you for taking out the time. A few things to
16 remember, please, aim to keep your testimony to three
17 minutes. We will make sure to keep time and provide
18 a gentle reminder to you when time is up. If you're
19 a member of a group, we'd ask that you identify one
20 speaker who can testify on behalf of the group.

21 And even though time seems short, we
22 really encourage you to speak slowly and clearly. We

1 have recorder, a notetaker, who's taking notes. In
2 addition, we have American Sign Language translation
3 and Spanish interpretation happening and we want to
4 make sure all of your thoughts are captured.

5 A few other notes for those who are
6 planning to testify, I'll be announcing the speaker
7 list, a group of five. If you are a part of that
8 five, a member of the DCPS team will be contacting
9 you via Chat to make sure you're prepared to speak
10 during that time, so just be on the lookout.

11 If you're having problems mid-session,
12 again, email the ceo.info mail on the screen or text
13 or call the telephone number on your screen and we'll
14 be sure to provide as quick help as possible. And
15 so, with that, we're going to transition to the
16 public testimony part of our agenda. Again, I'm
17 going to call up five speakers. I'm going to ask
18 that you prepare your testimony, be video and mike
19 ready. Please don't share your video until it's
20 time to speak. When your time to speak is over, we
21 ask that you turn off your video and turn off your
22 mike and join the remainder hearing on the YouTube

1 channel. And again, although you have three minutes
2 to speak, I encourage you to try to speak as slowly
3 and clearly as possible so your words can be
4 interpreted for the entire audience.

5 Okay, great. So, with that I'm going to
6 join us the following individuals, Grace Hu, Marion
7 Babcock, Cedric Hendricks, and Betsy Wolf. And I'll
8 start with Grace Hu. If you could come on screen,
9 come off mute, and feel free to begin your testimony.

10 MS. HU: My name is Grace Hu. I'm a
11 parent at Amidon-Bowen Elementary. Today I'm here on
12 behalf of the Digital Equity and D.C. Education
13 Parent Coalition.

14 We've come a long way with DCPS
15 technology since we first met with DCPS leadership in
16 2018. However, despite the progress that has been
17 made, we continue to see barriers and disruptions to
18 teaching and learning due to technology challenges.

19 This coming year is not only an
20 opportunity to provide the funding to address these
21 challenges, but also to develop a comprehensive,
22 multiyear tech plan so that the school system is not

1 constantly in a reactive mode when it comes to
2 technology. On devices, we have heard from both
3 families and teachers that the small screen and
4 features of the Microsoft Surface Go Tablets are not
5 adequate for high-school level work. A
6 one-size-fits-all approach to devices is not the best
7 solution for students. We urge you to budget for the
8 appropriate tech devices and tools that meet student
9 needs at every level. In addition, we urge you to
10 plan for and fund a robust tech refresh cycle with
11 sufficient contingency inventory to account for
12 annual device loss.

13 On classroom technology, having a digital
14 display for teaching in the classroom is no longer
15 optional; especially, given the digital first
16 instructional choices that have been made by DCPS's
17 Office of Teaching and Learning. The 545 smart
18 boards that are planned to be installed this year is
19 completely inadequate to meet teaching needs, given
20 that more than 3,000 boards are needed for a baseline
21 refresh of classroom technology across the District.
22 We urge you to prioritize for providing every

1 classroom with the tech tools and support that enable
2 effective teaching.

3 On tech support and asset management, we
4 encourage that DCPS increase the number of auto
5 technicians this year; however, we do not see how
6 OCTO can be held accountable for performance or how
7 good planning can happen before school starts when
8 there's no service level agreement in place that
9 specifies services and durables, staffing and support
10 levels and benchmarks and metrics. All crosswalk to
11 funding received from DCPS. OCTO Director Parker
12 stated at last week's council hearing that the lack
13 of a service level agreement allows OCTO to focus on
14 the things it needs to focus on. Ambiguity like that
15 does not equate to reliable, clearly defined service
16 outcomes and deliverables.

17 Finally, on digital literacy, we
18 appreciate DCPS's acknowledgement that digital
19 literacy is important and we look forward to seeing
20 digital literacy training built into future budgets
21 and curricula at schools. We know that providing
22 digital literacy standards to school is unlikely to

1 advance digital literacy unless Central Office also
2 provides adequate training and support.

3 Until DCPS has a funded, multiyear
4 comprehensive plan tied to instructional goals and
5 budgets that include all these elements, technology
6 will continue to be managed in an unpredictable,
7 costly, and inefficient manner. Thank you for the
8 opportunity to testify.

9 MS. GASKINS: Thank you, Grace, for your
10 time.

11 Next, we'll hear from Marion Babcock.
12 Marion, I understand you might not be able to join on
13 screen, but your mike is working.

14 MS. BABCOCK: Yes, my mike is working, so
15 everyone please enjoy the ASL interpreter. Good
16 evening. My name is Marion Babcock and I'm a parent
17 and LSAT representative at the School Without Walls
18 High School.

19 First, let me begin by saying that I
20 agree with your budget principle of lifting those
21 students with the greatest of needs. We are living
22 in a very broken time where homelessness, gun

1 violence, and immigration are having a profound
2 impact on DCPS schools. Making sure that the
3 necessary supports exists for all DCPS students is
4 the mark of an equitable budget, but is it fair.

5 I have no clue about the proposed budget
6 impact on my school, nor does any parent at any other
7 school. After reading the new budget funding study,
8 filling out surveys, and attending budget engagement
9 sessions, parents only have sentiment and ideals on
10 which to base our future school budgets. Without
11 real transparency or simulated budget modeling, the
12 story I am telling myself is that your new budget
13 model will further underfund my children's
14 education.

15 I am scared that yearly inflation costs
16 will mean that our school will, once again, cut
17 positions. I am scared that our 600 students will
18 lose their much needed mental health supports. I am
19 scared that DCPS is being defunded and I'm scared
20 that our mayor does not value DCPS schools. D.C. has
21 a failure not listening to stakeholders at critical
22 times of educational crisis. We were asked to fill

1 out surveys and attend reopen strong meetings and
2 then we wait. Instead, as stakeholders, we have to
3 create our own engagement. First, we address COVID
4 safety protocols, then we grappled with tech support
5 and exhausted we lobbied for mental health
6 provisions.

7 Now, DCPS stakeholders are suffering a
8 loss of 1200 teachers and an increasing shortage of
9 substitute teachers. This pandemic has amplifying
10 the Mayor's inability to listen to the cries for more
11 funding and the inability to DCPS leadership to
12 consider meaningful budget transparency.

13 These problems are not going to be
14 resolved with budget cuts to any one of DCPS schools,
15 from Early Childhood Education to Adult Ed, from
16 Magnet Schools to Youth Services funding an
17 education system that every DCPS student deserves
18 demands that a DCPS education is a budget priority.
19 When COVID-19 pushed us to prioritizing mental health
20 supports, DCPS schools became better equipped to not
21 only help those affected by poverty, homelessness,
22 and homicide, but to also address all the

1 comorbidities brought on in this pandemic affecting
2 all of our children.

3 We must continue to prioritize DCPS
4 funding and rapidly genderfying city. The only DCPS
5 budget model that works is the one that reflects the
6 city where everyone wants to thrive. Thank you for
7 your time.

8 MS. GASKINS: Thank you, Marion, for your
9 testimony

10 Next, we'll hear from Cedric Hendricks.
11 Please feel free to come off mute and share your
12 screen.

13 MR. HENDRICKS: I'm trying to show my
14 video, but I can't. So, if you could open my video,
15 I would appreciate it. Thank you.

16 Alright, my name is Cedric Hendricks and
17 I'm the chair of the local School Advisory Team at
18 the School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens. And at
19 the start, I want to associate myself and our LSAT
20 with the excellent remarks delivered by Grace Hu and
21 Marion Babcock.

22 Let me go on to say that for me I'm glad

1 to see Chancellor Ferebee, though, not in person. I
2 remember at the start of your administration you were
3 out and about in the community, very accessible, and
4 listening. Friday with Ferebee I think it was
5 called and I certainly followed you around to engage
6 you and so I appreciated that it was clear to me that
7 engagement was going to be the hallmark of your
8 administration and the fact that you're here
9 tonight, I guess, is a reflection that you're
10 continuing to do that. But ultimately, the question
11 become do you hear us.

12 Let me say this, since I was last in a
13 room with you, and in fact, that was a budget
14 hearing, so it may be a couple years ago, our school
15 has lost its great principal, Richard Trogisch.
16 Yes, I dare say his name, but we have gained a very
17 wonderful principal in Shanna Young, so I want to
18 thank you for that.

19 Now, let me go on to say that I want to
20 thank my colleague, schoolteacher Jamie Wolf, for
21 joining us. She'll be testifying later today, and
22 it's important that we have our faculty members at

1 the table in the LSAT, but also willing to step up
2 without fear and speak their peace in forums like
3 this.

4 Now, before I turn to the budget, I want
5 to offer a comment about a facilities maintenance
6 challenge that's causing problems for us that I want
7 you all to have on your radar screen. As the result
8 of our skyrocketing enrollment at Francis-Stevens,
9 you all may remember that you graced us with some
10 portable classrooms. Well, we're now having
11 maintenance problems with those classrooms, plumbing
12 problems, more specifically.

13 And so, now because the warranty is up on
14 those units, we're relying on DGS to come and keep
15 things flowing, if you know what I mean. And so,
16 they really do need to come back on a monthly basis
17 to attend to that; otherwise, those portables are
18 going to become unoccupiable, so please keep that on
19 your radar screen.

20 Our school has some staffing challenges
21 that require additional funding to address and I
22 certainly want to call that to your attention as

1 well. First, we need two instructional coverages
2 for our middle school, one to handle ELA and one to
3 handle Math. The support that they can provide will
4 help us overcome some learning deficits we are seeing
5 and do so before these students leave us for high
6 school. This is both an immediate and a long-term
7 need and we hope you will help us address that.

8 And finally, we need an administrative
9 assistant because the volume of calls coming into our
10 office is extreme and it certainly reflects parents
11 interested in being able to communicate with our
12 administration and find out how the young people are
13 doing. So, you know in order for us to handle that
14 capacity, we need another administrative assistant.
15 And thank you so much for your attention.

16 MS. GASKINS: Thank you, Cedric, for your
17 testimony.

18 We'll hear next from Betsy Wolf.

19 MS. WOLF: Chancellor Ferebee and DCPS
20 leadership, thank you for the opportunity to testify.
21 My name is Betsy Wolf and I'm testifying as a DCPS
22 parent, a member of the DCPS Budget Stakeholder

1 Engagement Group.

2 Tonight I want to highlight three points.

3 Number one, the new proposed budget model will not
4 address the root causes of the year-to-year funding
5 instability and inequity for schools. For one,
6 staffing costs increases rise faster than school
7 budget allocations. Until this is addressed, schools
8 will continually face staffing cuts each year.

9 For two, the new budget model does not
10 come with additional investments at the school level,
11 which means the DCPS cannot at the same time provide
12 the floor, a well-rounded education to all students
13 and layer on supplemental funds for schools serving
14 underserved populations. When you account for extra
15 funds allocated for Special Education purposes and to
16 meet requirements outlined in students' IEP hours
17 there's almost no supplemental funding from local
18 dollars for schools serving underserved populations.

19 For example, in years past, Amidon-Bowen
20 has received only \$30,000 in local at-risk funds,
21 which is enough to fund one-third of a teacher.
22 Therefore, without bigger changes the new budget

1 model is like rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic
2 and it will fall short of solving our budgetary
3 problems.

4 For public trust and transparency
5 purpose, it is critical that DCPS post simulations of
6 what school budgets might look like under this new
7 model before the model is finalized; otherwise, the
8 new budget model will be another example of major
9 changes without real community input.

10 Number two, in light of the differential
11 impacts of COVID-19, DCPS must invest in resources
12 that directly touch students. There's literally
13 nothing you could spend money on in Central Office
14 that will have as great of an impact on students'
15 learning and social/emotional well being as targeted
16 supports provided directly to students.

17 For Fiscal Year '22, DCPS attempted to
18 create school budgets in a normal way and many
19 schools faced cuts. There was a serious public
20 outcry and then DCPS granted schools a few
21 additional members, yet, some schools still face
22 cuts. Schools need to provide additional supports

1 for multiple years to catch students up and with
2 federal funding this should be possible. I'm very
3 concerned about how the federal funds will be spent.
4 Please plan for schools to receive additional
5 investments in Fiscal Year '23 above and beyond
6 pre-COVID levels.

7 Number three, investing technology and
8 develop a plan that makes sense. We're hearing
9 tonight about too many broken devices and we also
10 that teachers who aren't tech professionals are
11 supposed to maintain all the technology in their
12 building above and beyond their jobs. This is not
13 sustainable and it's resulted in a broken and
14 unreliable equipment over the years.

15 In summary, it matters how we spend this
16 money and if DCPS is investing in resources that
17 aren't working for schools and communities like the
18 RCTs, which we're going to hear about later, we need
19 to pivot and reinvest. Thank you.

20 MS. GASKINS: Thank you for your
21 testimony, Betsy.

22 I'm going to call up our next group of

1 testifiers and as I do so, just a reminder to please,
2 acknowledging the three minutes is a short amount of
3 time, please be sure to speak slowly and clearly. We
4 want to make sure our interpreters can capture
5 everything you're saying. Okay.

6 And so, our next group is David Alpert,
7 Amanda Tyler, Rashida Taylor, and Sandra Moscoso.
8 We'll start first with David Alpert. Please feel
9 free to unmute your mike and come on screen.

10 MR. ALPERT: Thank you for convening this
11 hearing. My name is David Alpert, President of the
12 Ward II Education Council and member of the Ross
13 Elementary LSAT.

14 We know a new budget model is coming, but
15 very few specifics creating a lot of fear among
16 parents and teachers. I hope DCPS can alleviate
17 those concerns as soon as possible by sharing more
18 details.

19 We've heard so far a motivation to help
20 people follow at-risk dollars, goals of transparency,
21 equity, and sustainability and that this change may
22 be bad for smaller schools. I ask that DCPS narrow

1 and re-tailor changes to achieve specific goals
2 rather than simply replace everything wholesale for
3 more elegant spreadsheets and make absolutely clear
4 how each change directly achieves those goals.

5 On equity, I think you will see citywide
6 support for efforts to increase funding for at-risks
7 students. On transparency, unfortunately, the
8 opacity today of this process completely fails to
9 achieve this goal. Sustainability is vital. Just
10 last year, our school switched several inner core
11 positions to part time and then restored one, our
12 librarian. One overcrowded class went from two
13 teachers to just one. Great teachers are the
14 backbone of our schools, but we won't retain them if
15 they're in constant fear about their job security.

16 Already DCPS faces low enrollment this
17 year because parents were uncertain whether schools
18 would be open or safe. This is a terrible time to
19 create more uncertainty or to create big swings in
20 staffing due to enrollment volatility. Please do not
21 specifically harm our small schools. Sadly, it is
22 often said by advocates that DCPS seems to pitch

1 schools against one another when all want quality
2 education in all schools.

3 Many small schools are in Wards 7 and 8
4 due to declining enrollments and we should not harm
5 these. No matter where small schools have benefits,
6 like an administration that knows all of the
7 students, a tighter-knit community, and ease of
8 transportation, including walking and bicycling.

9 Our small school just completed a
10 DCPS-funded, multiyear attic renovation which added
11 space for Art, Music, Library, STEM, and more. And
12 our school hired amazing and innovative teachers to
13 launch these programs. This replaced offset
14 programming at Filmore, a money-saving initiative
15 from a past generation. But now there is genuine
16 fear we may lose this great programming if the new
17 budget model penalizes small schools.

18 In our LSAT, we have amazing newly-hired
19 teachers who have to sit in meetings about how we
20 don't know if our programs will be funded. This is
21 bad for teacher morale and it's bad for our children.
22 I ask DCPS to specifically do the following. First,

1 be more forthcoming about the budget model
2 immediately. Second, ensure sustainability by
3 preventing existing or new programs from cuts due to
4 the transition. Third, ensure your new model
5 specifically improves equity and make clear, publicly
6 how each change does this. Don't just make changes
7 without a good reason. Thank you very much.

8 MS. GASKINS: Thank you, David, for your
9 time.

10 Next, we'll hear from Amanda Tyler.

11 MS. TYLER: Hello, my name is Amanda
12 Tyler and I serve as President of the Ross Elementary
13 PTA, as well as secretary of the Ross LSAT. Ross is
14 a small and diverse public school located in the
15 DuPont Circle neighborhood. I appreciate the chance
16 to testify and to learn more about the DCPS budget
17 process.

18 I endorsed the stated goals of the
19 process -- equity, transparency, and financial
20 stability. Though, candidly, I do not have enough
21 information about the new model to be able to assess
22 whether DCPS is achieving these goals.

1 As you know, the pandemic has presented
2 enormous challenges to our schools. Speaking from
3 the perspective of the Ross Elementary community, our
4 principal, teachers, and other staff have made truly
5 heroic efforts to return to an excellent in-person
6 learning environment.

7 Building back confidence in our public
8 schools should be a high priority for the District,
9 as we seek to retain existing families and attract
10 new families to our District. Enrollment has
11 shifted across the District. New funding models
12 should consider the volatility at the last couple of
13 years and certainly not penalize schools whose
14 enrollment has suffered as a result of the
15 unpredictability of the pandemic.

16 As you shape the budget proposal, I would
17 urge the District to give plenty of lead time to
18 schools about any changes in the funding for schools.
19 That will promote and provide more predictability,
20 allow for longer-term planning and allow schools
21 time to adapt so that families can gain confidence in
22 our schools.

1 I also urge you to consider recent
2 investments made in schools and be good stewards of
3 funds already expended. For example, as David
4 mentioned, we are grateful for the completion of the
5 Ross Renovation Project, which has given us in-house
6 Art and Music rooms as well as expanded library and
7 STEM space. Retaining funding to keep teaching staff
8 to lead these programs is a priority for our school,
9 as is retaining our teaching specialists as we seek
10 to help every student meet literacy and Math goals.

11 Improving transparency and reducing
12 unpredictability of the budget, year-to-year, will
13 help our school continue to deliver excellent and
14 joyful education for our students. Thank you for
15 this opportunity to engage and I look forward to
16 continuing engagement.

17 MS. GASKINS: Thank you, Amanda.

18 Next, we'll hear from Rashida Taylor.
19 Please feel free to come off mute and come on camera.

20 MS. TAYLOR: Hello everyone. My name is
21 Rashida Taylor and I am from It Takes a Village D.C.
22 I'm also Executive Director, I'm a Ward VIII

1 resident, and I'm a parent of Lee Montessori East
2 End. My child goes to school like many other
3 children and her experience has been the same upon
4 returning to school, very much excited to get out the
5 house.

6 The most unfortunate thing, as a mother,
7 I feel is feeling like you're taking away a piece of
8 hope, laughter, or joy. For my daughter, Riley, that
9 has been school, especially, after being home for 17
10 months. Being in the classroom with her amazing
11 teachers at Lee Montessori East End and her
12 classmates who have become her new best friends had
13 been the best experience, I believe, she can put her
14 finger on in some time.

15 As a mother, we watch our children; we
16 watch how they develop emotionally, socially, and
17 intellectually. It is essential that we protect the
18 core development of our babies while protecting
19 their health while still dealing with COVID-19. We
20 all need to embrace hybrid learning. We need to
21 review the budget to make sure that the changes that
22 change that need to not to be directly affect our

1 children or our school leaders.

2 We need to prepare to have proper
3 technology in place, along with technical supportive
4 systems and we need full transparency from the very
5 top because if we do not the ball will continue to be
6 dropped. As a mother, as Black mother, that's just
7 something I cannot afford.

8 The school board's budget needs to
9 directly increase the funds and the supportive
10 systems for Wards VII and VIII. We need to be
11 aligned with every move, every dollar, and every
12 decision directly affecting our children. In order
13 for the children to succeed virtually and in person,
14 you must put your best foot forward and access each
15 situation for the best. We need to embrace better
16 precautions for exposures. That will mean cleaning
17 supplies for everyday use and a better plan once
18 outbreaks occur. If one is exposed, all are exposed.

19 Our children are the world, but most
20 importantly, they are the future. They must be
21 protected at all costs because it really does take a
22 village D.C. Thank you.

1 MS. GASKINS: Thank you, Rashida.

2 Next we'll hear from Sandra Moscoso.

3 Sandra, feel free to come off mute and come on
4 camera.

5 MS. MOSCOSO: Thank you. Good evening
6 Chancellor and DCPS budget team. I'm Sandra Moscoso,
7 parent of a student at School Without Walls High
8 School. I'm also the secretary of the Ward VI Public
9 Schools Parent Organization and Vice President of
10 the Ward II Ad Council.

11 I'm here as a partner of my daughter's
12 school, a partner of my community's schools, and of
13 DCPS. I've been following DCPS's conversation about
14 changes to the budget model for about a year and a
15 half. I have observed DCPS efforts in gathering
16 input about the types of resources families want
17 prioritized in schools. We have been asked to give
18 input on the proposed hybrid model, but have been
19 given no detail, no definitions, or insight into how
20 the model would affect individual schools, access to
21 staff and resources. We are told DCPS was
22 prioritizing flexibility to staff schools, but what

1 we have learned over the past decade is that, in
2 effect, this means flexibility to choose which staff
3 to cut.

4 We are told that the budget team has not
5 worked out the details and will not have them worked
6 out in time to get input from families before budget
7 envelopes are released in January or February. DCPS
8 says the budget model relies on equity,
9 sustainability, and transparency as measures of
10 success, yet, there is no transparency.

11 We cannot have equity, sustainability, or
12 trust without transparency. We need to know right
13 now how this new model will affect our schools and we
14 need to know this at the school level. If DCPS asked
15 what school communities want it's to be resourced in
16 a way that supports the needs of the students,
17 academic needs, mental health needs, special
18 education needs, social/emotional needs, technology
19 needs, and engagement needs, and to meet these needs
20 without excessively taxing the staff and faculty.

21 DCPS wants financial sustainability, but
22 does not seem to understand schools need programming

1 sustainability. Schools need to be able to count on
2 consistency of resources from year-to-year. This
3 requires DCPS funds to keep up with inflation, staff
4 salaries, and the changing needs of student
5 populations.

6 Finally, after conversations with my
7 student and her friends about technology in schools,
8 I ask for attention to the sustainability of
9 technology and Internet. Students and teachers rely
10 on access to both and when these fails equity is
11 immediately impacted. Students with means can bypass
12 this, but those who rely on the resources are left
13 behind. Please support schools and please hold OCTO
14 accountable for ensuring those services work. Thank
15 you for this opportunity to testify.

16 MS. GASKINS: Thank you, Sandra, for your
17 time.

18 I will share the next group comprised of
19 Qubilah Huddleston, Cathy Reilly, Laura Fuchs, and
20 Anne Taylor. First, let's begin with Qubilah
21 Huddleston.

22 MS. HUDDLESTON: My name is Qubilah

1 Huddleston and I'm a policy analyst at the D.C.
2 Fiscal Policy Institute. Thank you for the
3 opportunity to testify on DCPS's upcoming Fiscal Year
4 2023 budget.

5 Today DCFPI recommends that the DCPS
6 finance team offers more transparency around American
7 Rescue Plan dollars, ensures Fiscal Year '23 school
8 budgets keep up with rising cost to not lose real
9 buying power and avoid cuts. And lastly, give school
10 communities the opportunity to develop at-risk
11 spending plans.

12 DCPS has received at least \$304 million
13 in federal recovery since the pandemic hit; yet,
14 detailed information about how DCPS is investing and
15 monitoring the use and expected outcomes of federal
16 investments is buried in opaque budget documents or
17 spread across documents and/or websites of different
18 agencies.

19 Given the historic level of federal
20 funding that the system has received, DCPS should
21 include data on how much federal recovery money DCPS
22 is allocating to schools and how schools are

1 investing those dollars within the schools'
2 allocation dashboard on DCPSbudget.com. The
3 dashboard should also include how much federal
4 recovery funding is being allocated for Central
5 Office functions and for what purposes and should be
6 updated on a regular basis.

7 DCPS should also include a webpage on the
8 website that provides clear information on allowable
9 uses of American Rescue Plan dollars that DCPS will
10 be authorized to spend through September 30, 2024.
11 In addition, year after year many schools in DCPS,
12 but especially lower enrolled schools in Wards VII
13 and VIII struggle to maintain previous staffing
14 levels, let alone add any new staff to support new
15 students. This is largely due to the relationship
16 between student enrollment and a school's budget;
17 however, another key factor driving inadequate school
18 budget is the failure of DCPS's budget to keep up
19 with rising costs. DCPS must ensure that all
20 schools' budgets keep up with inflation and keep up
21 with any expected increases in key education cost
22 drivers, such as the salary and benefits of

1 educators.

2 When DCPS fails to minimally follow these
3 sound budgeting practices, schools lose purchasing
4 power and are forced to make cuts or wait and see if
5 the D.C. Council can find additional funding. DCPS
6 should request that the Mayor account for these real
7 costs of operating the system in her upcoming budget.

8 Lastly, the D.C. Code requires DCPS to
9 supplement a school's budget with at-risk funds.
10 Many people testified about that tonight; however, it
11 has been well documented that DCPS routinely does not
12 do that and instead relies on these funds to cover
13 basic educational services.

14 DCFPI is supportive of DCPS's efforts to
15 create a funding model that would allow schools to
16 tap into these dollars as they were intended;
17 however, we know that if that is to occur
18 enrollment-based funds, as well as program-driven
19 funding will need to be sufficient to cover minimally
20 required staff. So again, we just ask that DCPS
21 request a budget that will allow this system to
22 preserve at-risk funds for the intended purpose. We

1 also strongly support giving us more than 10 days to
2 review the budgets and so thank you for the
3 opportunity to testify and I'm happy to answer
4 questions.

5 MS. GASKINS: Thank you for your
6 testimony, Qubilah.

7 Next, we'll hear from Cathy Reilly. Feel
8 free to come off mute and share your screen.

9 MS. REILLY: Hi. Thank you for this
10 opportunity to testify. My name is Cathy Reilly and
11 I'm the Director of S.H.A.P.P.E., the Senior High
12 Alliance of Parents, Principals, and Educators as
13 well as a facilitator for the Ward IV Education
14 Alliance and C4DC.

15 The budget concerns and questions of C4DC
16 a group of all Ward Education Councils and other
17 organizations are attached to this testimony and I
18 can't go into all of them in three minutes, but I
19 hope that you will address them. The priorities for
20 this budget model change are transparency, equity,
21 and sustainability. All of which we strongly
22 support. And transitioning to a new budget model is

1 a heavy lift. DCPS has undertaken this internally
2 with a few check-in; therefore, we're testifying
3 blind on vital details of what the model for next
4 year will look like. It isn't transparency.

5 DCPS testified this morning that the
6 positions in the 18 pilot schools funded with
7 reallocated security funds would be safe in next
8 year's budget. We understand that with the priority
9 on equity more attention will be paid to students
10 qualifying for at-risk, thankfully. However, the new
11 budget has enrollment at the base, meaning small
12 schools will potentially be hurt. So, will the
13 guarantee for security funds positions or funding for
14 at-risk students then come at the expense of other
15 positions and programs? How can they not? By all of
16 our figures, DCPS does not an adequate funding to
17 cover all of these things.

18 Specific concerns for the high schools in
19 your budget, recognition that teachers have planning
20 periods in the student/staff ratio, without this
21 schools will be understaffed reducing elective
22 offerings and potentially enlarging class size.

1 Second, woefully inadequate provisions
2 for substitutes as a carryover, this is a carryover
3 from prior pandemic and it's now exacerbated. Third,
4 concern on how programs will be budgeted, what will
5 qualify for extra funding, how much, how will that be
6 decided? And fourth, an increase in the cost of a
7 school position as previously meant that schools,
8 even with more students, can appear they have more
9 funds, yet, lose positions and funds. So, how will
10 that be addressed?

11 And our persistent concerns on building
12 condition and safety, now including how custodians
13 and preventive maintenance will be budgeted.
14 Continued concerns on technology which have been
15 already documented, but as a system this should be a
16 place where DCPS is able to efficiently and
17 economically fund and maintain quality, up-to-date
18 smart boards and computers. So, we're not there on
19 that.

20 On Capitol, SHAPPE wants to see the
21 feeder patterns strengthen. Elementary schools like
22 Whittier or LaSalle, Truesdell, on all of Phase I

1 modernized schools we want them modernized and for
2 DCPS to commit to invest in a Center City Middle
3 School at Banneker, as well as an additional middle
4 school feeder for Woodson. This is a way to invest
5 and grow our feeder patterns. So, thank you and I
6 think you have a heavy task ahead of you and I hope
7 this hearing helps and we're able to get more details
8 quickly. Thank you.

9 MS. GASKINS: Thank you, Cathy.

10 Next, we'll hear from Laura Fuchs.

11 MS. FUCHS: Alright, hello. Thank you.

12 I'm Laura Fuchs in my 15th year of teaching at H.D.
13 Woodson High School and today I'm testifying for
14 myself regarding the need to truly and systemically
15 plan for how we will recover from the pandemic,
16 moving forward as a school system.

17 Firstly, I want to testify strongly
18 against any form of modified or otherwise of
19 student-based budgeting. DCPS has a lot of very
20 small schools that are central parts of the D.C.
21 community and provide valuable services to their
22 students. If DCPS moves forward without providing

1 guarantees that small schools will receive adequate
2 funding for basic needs as well as additional
3 programs and fully supporting our students in an
4 equitable manner, then it should not change.

5 With student-based budgeting or some
6 modification thereof is passed through, then I can
7 guarantee that some of our small schools will be at
8 risk of closure and make no mistake this will once
9 again hammer Ward 7 and 8 the most just as the past
10 school closures did under these ed' reformers. DCPS
11 has refused to follow the comprehensive staffing
12 model in a transparent and equitable way, often
13 violating their own policies. Why should we trust
14 that a change in budgeting process will result in a
15 change of your process?

16 More needs to be done to align DCPS
17 budget with our priorities of investing in students.
18 We're talking about putting students first. The
19 first thing DCPS has to do is lower the cost and
20 spending at Central Office and increase the spending
21 at and by our local public school communities. If we
22 are serious about putting students first, then we

1 need to fix the extreme imbalance between what is
2 spent centrally through DCPS Central Office and/or
3 the requirements of DCPS Central Office versus what
4 our local schools are able to spend in ways that suit
5 their students' needs.

6 DCPS Central Office is too large and
7 produces too many unfunded mandates that are
8 detrimental to local schools' ability to truly serve
9 their students. Impressively, at the same time, DCPS
10 Central Office provides little to no support on the
11 most important issues, continuing to shut out those
12 who are best suited to help the practitioners,
13 parents, and student voices and insisting that only
14 Central Office knows what is best.

15 Second, DCPS needs to ensure that schools
16 are receiving their full at-risk, ELL and Special
17 Education funds and not using them to supplant the
18 funds that schools are typically owed based on
19 comprehensive staffing model. DCPS Central Office
20 has still not fixed the problems pointed out by the
21 D.C. auditor and that goes for other targeted funds.
22 This is a violation of local and federal law and must

1 be rectified now more than ever.

2 DCPS should hold schools as harmless as
3 possible for student enrollment the next few years,
4 number three. Typically, the three-year cycle means
5 one bad year of enrollment can lead to several years
6 of budget losses for a school. The one's that always
7 losses their budget? This year should not lead to
8 that kind of loss. Also, make sure to follow the
9 D.C. law that no school's budget should be reduced by
10 more than 5 percent to maintain some semblance of
11 stability.

12 Fourth, DCPS must invest even more in our
13 schools that serve high percentages of at-risk
14 students and work with schools instead of telling
15 schools to determine how to spend that money in a way
16 that mitigate any increase in learning gaps. Please
17 do not buy some one-size-fits-all massive expensive,
18 non-competitive, outside contract with your national
19 education reformer friends, like you always do.

20 Now, more than ever, we need to be smart
21 in how we spend our money, not be focused on
22 supporting our professional networks and their

1 resumes. Digital equity, fifth, must come first and
2 needed to be supported and more quickly one-on-one
3 ratio. We don't have one-to-one in my school nor in
4 most schools east of the river. So, that's just a
5 bold face lie from DCPS. Thank you.

6 MS. GASKINS: Thank you for your
7 testimony.

8 Next, we'll hear from Anne Taylor.

9 MS. TAYLOR: Hi. I'm Anne Louise Taylor
10 from Seaton Elementary School. I'm a member of
11 Parents for Center City Shaw Middle School and I'm
12 asking you to support sufficient funding in the FY
13 '23 CIP for Center City Middle School and the Cardozo
14 feeder pattern.

15 The middle grades of Cardozo share a
16 building, a budget, and a principal with the
17 traditional high school, the International Program
18 and the Trans STEM Academy. The feeder elementary is
19 in this neighborhood, all Title I schools are
20 thriving, but DCPS is not serving these students well
21 when they get to middle school.

22 DCPS has the resources and capacity to

1 offer more in middle school than the current
2 offerings in Shaw, but it can't do it serving a small
3 number of students on the third floor of Cardozo. We
4 have a roadmap for success. We've seen the positive
5 response to new middle schools and worked for with
6 McFarland and Ida B. Wells.

7 The Coalition for D.C. Public Schools
8 found that the feeder pattern for H.D. Woodson has a
9 similar structural disadvantage in middle school.
10 DCPS should invest in these feeder patterns to ensure
11 that students in all parts of the city have access to
12 the same opportunities in public school. The city
13 should also consider whether it would be beneficial to
14 combine the middle grades from Cardozo with the
15 middle grade from School Without Walls at
16 Francis-Stephens. A larger school would be better
17 positioned to offer competitive programming options.

18 The 2020 Feasibility Study found that a
19 modernization and conversion of the former Banneker
20 Building on Euclid Street into a middle school
21 meeting DCPS educational specifications would cost 70
22 to \$75 million.

1 DCPS has \$3 million in FY '22 to begin
2 planning a Center City middle school. I'm asking the
3 city to provide the rest of the funding necessary in
4 the FY '23 CIP to make this school a reality. Thank
5 you.

6 MS. GASKINS: Thank you, Anne Elise.

7 So, our next group of testifiers will be
8 the following, Jaime Wolfe, Hugo Rosen, Amay Arora,
9 Sara Malagon, Maria Malagon, and Emily Thomas. So,
10 first, I'll ask Jaime Wolfe. Please come off mute.

11 MS. WOLFE: Good evening everyone. My
12 name is Jaime Wolfe and I am a kindergarten/first
13 grade teacher at School Without Walls at
14 Francis-Stephens, as well as a member of the LSAT.

15 I've had the pleasure of teaching at this
16 wonderful institution for the past eight years, my
17 entire tenure with D.C. Public Schools. I've been an
18 educator for 16 years and this school year without a
19 doubt has been the most challenging of my career.
20 Not only are we navigating in-person learning with
21 100 percent of our students in the midst of a global
22 pandemic; yet, we are also attempting to address

1 significant learning loss only exacerbated by our
2 current circumstances.

3 Education leaders at both the local and
4 federal levels are seemingly pretending that business
5 is usual and nothing could be further from the truth.
6 In what appears to be an attempt to streamline
7 curricular standards and ensure all students are
8 learning the same content at the same time DCPS is
9 demanding all students complete a series of required
10 curricular tasks, or RCTs, each term and students
11 must complete all RCTs on campus.

12 Oftentimes, students are expected to
13 complete two to three RCTs in one week and some of
14 these RCTs are developmentally inappropriate for my
15 first grade students. Our precious instructional
16 time is disproportionately used to complete these
17 mandated RCTs rather than affording me and my fellow
18 educators the necessity of consistently meeting with
19 our most thriving learners in targeted small groups.

20 It is my understanding that DCPS has
21 invested upwards of \$10 million in canvas in
22 structure. While completing these RTCs may be viewed

1 by DCPS leadership as the most important tool to
2 measure student learning and mastery, we are
3 assessing our young scholars ad nauseam. This
4 unrelenting barrage of assessments reduces the time
5 that educators have to close these significant
6 learning gaps.

7 The funds proposed for further investment
8 in canvas in structure software would be much better
9 spent on ensuring that every D.C. Public school has a
10 dedicated reading specialist and other support staff
11 whose sole role is to work with striving students in
12 intensive small groups to directly address the
13 learning lost that our most vulnerable students have
14 experienced over the past 18 months.

15 Educators cannot do this alone. This is
16 an all-hands-on-deck situation and the budget should
17 prioritize hiring support staff and reading
18 specialists to buttress the inexhaustible efforts of
19 our talented and dedicated teachers. Sydney J.
20 Harris professed the whole purpose of education is to
21 turn mirrors into windows. I implore DCPS leadership
22 to look in the mirror and ask themselves if their

1 efforts are performative or transformative. Invest
2 in our educators and students and not in a
3 multimillion learning management system. Thank you
4 for the opportunity to testify.

5 MS. GASKINS: Thank you for your
6 testimony, Jaime.

7 Next, we'll hear from Hugo Rosen.

8 MR. ROSEN: Good evening Chancellor,
9 budget team, and attendees. My name is Hugo Rosen,
10 Co-President and student at the School Without Walls
11 High School.

12 Now, many of my peers who don't go to my
13 school believe that because of our academic success
14 we are rich. This assumption is far from the truth.
15 In fact, Walls lacks many of the facilities common
16 throughout other high schools, such as a gym and
17 outdoor area. Our building is quite small, smaller
18 than most DCPS high schools, in fact. We don't have
19 lockers and our facilities are often shared with the
20 nearby college, GW.

21 In my health class, for example, we do
22 almost all of our activities outside on the sidewalk

1 because we do not have a gym or dedicated outdoor
2 area. Despite these unique challenges, Walls
3 remains one of the best schools in the city for any
4 student to receive an excellent education.

5 Excellence, however, is not a state of being and must
6 be maintained.

7 With limited space, reopening has been a
8 challenge for many students and teachers at Walls.
9 Throughout the process, we have done everything in
10 our power to prioritize safety and health by
11 providing PPE, hand sanitizer, and professional
12 mental health assistance to any student who needs it.
13 Without enough funding, however, such necessary
14 measures may no longer be possible.

15 Now, Walls is a small school and
16 therefore we are uniquely susceptible to budget cuts.
17 One teacher lost can have a much greater impact
18 because it affects a larger portion of students as
19 proven by our loss of two French teachers at the
20 beginning of the year which affected almost half of
21 French students.

22 I worry that when you, the Budge Council,

1 looks at my school and sees our academic success you
2 will decide that we no longer need the resources
3 necessary to sustain this success. This is
4 assumption would be both incorrect and harmful. The
5 goal of any school is to provide its students with
6 the best education possible. Walls provides one of
7 the best educations possible for students around the
8 city and aims to make each student as good as
9 possible. I urge you, the Budget Team, to consider
10 this legacy and the resources required to maintain it
11 in your new budget proposal. Thank you.

12 MS. GASKINS: Thank you, Hugo. We
13 appreciate your testimony.

14 Next, we'll hear from Amay Arora.

15 MS. ARORA: Good evening Chancellor
16 Ferebee and the DCPS Budget Team. My name is Amay
17 Arora and I'm a sophomore at School Without Walls
18 High School and I'm a part of the Student Government
19 Association.

20 Today I wish to testify about an issue
21 that affects my classmates, teachers, and I daily.
22 The school's WiFi or the lack thereof. Ever since

1 the start of the pandemic in March of 2020, DCPS has
2 come to devote a greater portion of its budget
3 towards technology that many students otherwise
4 lacked which prevented them from obtaining the
5 educational content they needed to succeed in class
6 while learning from home.

7 This has been a movement my peers and I
8 have commended. But now, after one and a half years
9 later, I find that every classroom I visit in schools
10 supplied with many computers for students and staff
11 to use. However, my greatest concern today does not
12 relate to our technology itself, but rather our WiFi.
13 Every day I have to work on my computer at school I
14 overwhelmingly find myself connecting to my phone's
15 hotspot instead of using the school's WiFi networks,
16 DCPS Guest and DCPS Connects.

17 Usually, I do not have much luck with
18 either of these networks because the DCPS firewall
19 blocks many websites my classmates and I need to use
20 in class. These include are no way limited to Aspen,
21 which is DCPS online grading system; Canvas, where
22 most of our teachers have posted assignments since

1 quarantine; PC products such as Google Drive and
2 Gmail and AP Classroom, which we need for accessing
3 resources for advance placement classes.

4 Schools computers have a no exception
5 either. DCPS has white listed these very same
6 websites on these devices. And on top of all of
7 this, the WiFi is not very effective in the school's
8 basement where most of the Science Department is
9 housed. As a result, many Biology, Chemistry, and
10 Physics students have no choice but to use their
11 personal hotspots instead. Then again, not all
12 students may have a phone, ultimately eliminating
13 their access to the WiFi.

14 In response, however, School Without
15 Walls has made many strides in addressing the problem
16 around DCPS's WiFi. In fact, 60 high school students
17 of all grade levels have signed a recent Walls
18 petition on Change.org to make DCPS Guest and DCPS
19 Mesh useful and thus, given the increasing student
20 support for improving school WiFi I propose budgeting
21 at least \$500 for the coming 2022 to 2023 school year
22 for purchasing new routers for our school basement

1 and I also humbly request DCPS to remove the
2 firewall on academic websites for us to students to
3 continue to bolster district-wide achievement a
4 success for everyone. Otherwise, thank you so much
5 to DCPS for funding the technology its students and
6 teachers alike have needed since quarantine. I hope
7 you consider addressing the issues I've brought up
8 today around our school's need for better WiFi and
9 once again, thank you for today's opportunity to
10 testify.

11 MS. GASKINS: Thank you, Amay, for your
12 testimony.

13 MR. ARORA: Of course.

14 MS. GASKINS: Next, we'll hear from Sara
15 Malagon.

16 MS. MALAGON: I'm sorry. We're having
17 problems with our camera.

18 MS. GASKINS: That's okay. If you feel
19 comfortable, you're welcome to still testify. We can
20 hear you just fine.

21 MS. MALAGON: Okay. Wait a minute. I'm
22 trying -- okay. Now, I can see her. Sorry.

1 MS. MALAGON: Hi. My name is Sara
2 Malagon and I am a fourth grader at Langley
3 Elementary School. I went to Langley since
4 kindergarten. My little brother, Enrique, goes to
5 Langley with me now. He's in Pre-K3. I love my
6 school. I love my teachers. I love my principal. I
7 love my assistant principal. They take care of me
8 and my friends every day. They make sure we have fun
9 and we need to learn and feel happy and calm and feel
10 loved, but there are some things at my school that
11 bother me too and that's why I wanted to talk to you
12 today.

13 There's not a bathroom on the floor of
14 the cafeteria and gym. That means me and my
15 classmates and I have to walk two flights of stairs
16 to use the restrooms or wash our hands. We need a
17 bathroom in the cafeteria. I see cockroaches in our
18 school and the other day I saw a dead rat on the
19 field of Harry Thomas that we use for recess.

20 My Music teacher has to pay for her own
21 dry erase markers when our students break her
22 supplies because the school doesn't have enough money

1 for new ones. We have to use art supplies for a long
2 time, so all the paint brushes are gross and the
3 paints are mixed together into brown. In our
4 auditorium, the seats are really old and have writing
5 on them. I wish we had a better auditorium with
6 sound and light systems so that we could have a drama
7 club. I really like acting.

8 Our hallways also need to be painted.
9 Our classrooms are really fun and cheerful, but the
10 hallways look really different. The paint in our
11 hallways is peeling a lot. I have friends who leave
12 to go to other schools with nicer buildings, but I
13 don't want to leave Langley. I love it. I have a
14 lot of friends at Langley and the teachers are really
15 nice. I just wish that we could get our building
16 fixed so that it would be nice too. Thank you for
17 letting me talk to you today.

18 MS. GASKINS: Thank you so much for
19 joining us, Sara. We appreciate hearing from you.

20 Maria, Sara's mom, did you also want to
21 share some words.

22 MS. MALAGON: Yes, thank you. Buenos

1 noches and good evening. I'm Maria Malagon. Thank
2 you for inviting me and Sara today here. I'm the
3 mother of Sara, who's a fourth grader and a Pre-K
4 student, Enrique, at Langley Elementary. I'm also
5 the Vice President of the school's Parent/Teacher
6 Organization. This is our fifth year at Langley.
7 Sara has been here since kindergarten.

8 Langley is a school full of exceptional
9 teachers and staff, committed families, and a lot of
10 love. Our school motto is "In This Place You are
11 Loved" and it is true. Everyone who steps inside our
12 school feels the love of our community. Langley
13 Elementary is a community that welcomes everyone.
14 We're working class, middle class, and families
15 dealing with homelessness. We're Black, we're White,
16 we're Hispanic, we're Asians. We're immigrants and
17 non-immigrants. We have girls, we have boys and we
18 have children.

19 We have super healthy kids and kids
20 suffering with severe health conditions, but we're
21 all in this together. There is only so much that
22 love and community can do when our school building is

1 quickly deteriorating and in dire need of repairs.

2 Our bathrooms have broken sinks and toilets and many
3 have damage to ceilings and walls from the leaky roof
4 and other wear and tear. The floor of our cafeteria
5 and gym doesn't have a working bathroom, so kids and
6 teachers have to walk up two flights of stairs to
7 wash their hands or use the restroom during meals or
8 during PE.

9 We have a large Special Education
10 population and I have seen teachers or teacher's
11 aides carrying Special Needs students up to those two
12 flights of stairs to use the restroom. Is this how
13 children in such a privileged city have to live? Is
14 this how children in a pandemic have to live where
15 they can't wash their hands next to the room where
16 they eat breakfast and lunch?

17 We have a beautiful auditorium that has
18 host the citywide Spelling Bee for years, but the
19 audience could barely hear the spellers because we
20 have no sound system in there. The lighting in the
21 auditorium is very dark. My daughter, as she say,
22 loves to sing and act, which we can't hold the

1 student performances in our beautiful auditorium
2 because there's no way to hear it or see it.

3 We were grateful that the Mayor included
4 money in her latest budget for upgrades for Langley.
5 In the summer our kids and teachers swelter and in
6 the winter they freeze. We hope the process of
7 getting that installed to move along smoothly so that
8 you can start to work as soon as school is out this
9 summer, which is the only time that work can happen
10 because students are in the building then. If the
11 product gets caught and is delayed we have to wait an
12 entire year to get the HVAC upgrades that our
13 students and teachers need now to ensure they have
14 plenty of ventilation and a comfortable learning
15 environment. We are also grateful that DCPS was able
16 to finally install an elevator in our five-story
17 building, but the building has had several delays and
18 is still not done. We always hear next month. Our
19 staff spends their days deciding to control insects
20 and rodents. And in fact, recently my son and I saw
21 a live rat on the Early Childhood playground in front
22 of the school and my daughter reports frequently that

1 she sees roaches and other bugs inside the school.

2 One of my fellow moms attended Langley
3 when she was in junior high and she tells me that
4 during her lifetime she has never seen a renovation
5 of Langley. Thank you so much. I respectfully ask
6 that you step up for students and our teachers.
7 Gracias. Good night.

8 MS. GASKINS: Thank you for your
9 testimony and for your time.

10 Next, we'll hear from Emily Thomas.

11 MS. THOMAS: Yes, can you hear me.

12 MS. GASKINS: Yes.

13 MS. THOMAS: Okay. Great. Hi, I'm Emily
14 Thomas and thanks Maria and Sara. My daughter,
15 Florence, is in kindergarten at Langley Elementary
16 and that's our local neighborhood school and it's in
17 Ward 5. This is our family's third year at Langley
18 and I can't wait to send my son there next year too.
19 And our love for Langley started with the strong
20 community that we found here. We're a really
21 close-knit and diverse group of families. We're 70
22 percent Black, 12 percent Hispanic, 16 percent White,

1 and 2 percent Asian. We're a Title I school and
2 every family and student qualifies for free breakfast
3 and lunch, based on median income.

4 We have the highest percent Special Needs
5 students for a neighborhood school in the District.
6 Over half of our students are considered at-risk and
7 9 percent experience homelessness and yet, we've made
8 huge leaps forward these past few years through our
9 new Conscious Discipline Program and Langley is
10 really a school on the rise.

11 One thing that families are constantly
12 appalled by is the condition of our school building.
13 Our teachers have moved mountains to make their
14 classrooms cheerful and safe, but the communal spaces
15 in our school, and particularly the bathrooms, are
16 unacceptable. Toilets and seats are broken, tile is
17 crumbling off the walls, the roof is leaking,
18 children spot roaches and rodents in the building and
19 worse of all the children have no place to wash
20 their hands or use the restroom on the floor with
21 their cafeteria and gym.

22 They have to walk up two flights of

1 stairs to find a working bathroom. It's unsanitary
2 and it's added burden to the teachers who have to
3 escort them. Behind me you can see the decrepit
4 bathroom that we're asking to be refurbished into a
5 clean and working bathroom. There are funds
6 available to make this happen today. It's just a
7 matter of prioritizing our students. Langley
8 families have said that. We write and win grants.
9 We maintain the playground and our beautiful garden
10 and we fundraise.

11 With over half of our students being at
12 risk, our community simply cannot fundraise the
13 hundreds of thousands it would take to refurbish our
14 bathrooms or fix the roof. DCPS needs to maintain
15 our facilities to a basic standard of safety and
16 sanitation, the standard that we see elsewhere, but
17 not at Langley. Right now our students are being
18 failed on this. It's also a retention issue.
19 Langley is surrounded by charters with superior
20 facilities. We watch families move to charters not
21 because of the teachers or test scores, but because
22 the facilities are nicer. It is unacceptable that a

1 neighborhood school would be so neglected. What
2 message do these broken down bathrooms, peeling
3 paint, vermin, and leaks send to our students,
4 certainly not that they are valued by this city, that
5 they are prioritized and important.

6 Ward 3 schools do not look like this.
7 Ward 2 schools do not look like this and it is not a
8 coincidence that their student bodies don't look like
9 ours either. Let's not pay lip service to equity.
10 Let's prioritize equity of dollars where they are
11 needs. Students and schools should be a refuge,
12 particularly for our most vulnerable students. Right
13 now the Langley Elementary facilities are not that
14 refuge. I'm respectfully asking that funds be
15 allocated for the small capital improvements that we
16 need today at Langley Elementary to make this a place
17 where every student feels valued and loved and safe.
18 Thank you.

19 MS. GASKINS: Thank you for your
20 testimony.

21 I'll call up as our final group Melanie
22 Newman, Nierria Jones-Cooper, Emily Blake, Shandrika

1 Donawa-Johnkins, Steve Kletter and Jean Kohanek.

2 First, will be Melanie Newman.

3 MS. NEWMAN: Good evening. I am Melanie
4 Newman and I am the proud parent of a Langley
5 Elementary School Pre-K4 student, the current
6 President of the Parent/Teacher Organization and a
7 20-year resident of the District of Columbia.

8 I must say that I'm honestly dismayed to
9 hear the word "equity" thrown around this evening so
10 causally without full appreciation for the experience
11 of children across the District; particularly, those
12 with high at-risk and Special Needs populations.

13 As you've heard, Langley is a Title I,
14 Pre-K3 to fifth grade elementary school in Ward 5,
15 representing the neighborhoods of Bloomingdale,
16 Edgewood, Eckington, and Stronghold with a
17 population of over 50 percent at-risk students and
18 the highest percentage of Special Needs students at
19 any D.C. Public School elementary school. Additional
20 targeted resources for Special Needs populations are
21 desperately needed for Langley and I am quite
22 optimistic about the new budget model which I believe

1 will improve the equity for schools who need the
2 increased support, like Langley, and I look forward
3 to learning more detail about its potential impact.

4 I'm here today to ask for your continued
5 support as we seek to improve our school building.

6 As you've heard, Langley's facilities have suffered
7 for inequity and political indifference for far too
8 long. A full decade ago, in 2011, Langley received
9 Phase I of modernization, which included minimal and
10 most cosmetic improvements. In 2012, \$17 million was
11 set aside for Phase II and Phase III of Langley's
12 modernization, but those repairs never happened and
13 the money was moved to other schools after the PACE
14 legislation changed the way school modernization
15 decisions were made.

16 At this point, Langley is not slated for
17 full modernization until 2028, which is too late for
18 children currently in Pre-K3 to experience the school
19 building they fully deserve today. So, we are asking
20 for your support to complete several small capital
21 improvements that will, over time, improve the
22 environment for our children and make them safer.

1 Specifically, as you've heard, we are
2 asking for funding through small capital improvements
3 and ADA budget lines for the following: bathroom
4 repairs, repairs for water damage throughout the
5 school, improved ventilation in bathrooms and
6 hallways, and an upgraded intercom system. You've
7 already heard the specifics from other parents and a
8 Langley student tonight, so I won't repeat them, but
9 I want to be clear that these facility concerns are
10 not new to DCPS leadership or the City Council. In
11 fact, we've raised them repeatedly with DCPS, city
12 government, prior budget hearings, the Mayor's
13 office, et cetera.

14 Langley principal, Kristina Kellogg and
15 our school leadership team are working incredibly
16 hard to ensure our children have a healthy and safe
17 learning environment through this pandemic. Our
18 facilities should reflect the high quality education
19 that our school provides, instead, potential parents
20 seeking a school for their children look at the
21 crumbling facility and worry that their children will
22 be left behind the way the building has been. We

1 need your help to ensure that Langley continues to
2 get the facility improvements we need since it is
3 clear we are not set for modernization until 2028.
4 Thank you for your time.

5 MS. GASKINS: Thank you for your
6 testimony.

7 Next, we'll hear from Nierria
8 Jones-Cooper.

9 MS. JONES-COOPER: Good evening. My name
10 is Nierria Jones-Cooper and I'm the LSAT co-chair,
11 former middle school and high school Math teacher in
12 D.C. and a parent of a sophomore scholar at
13 Phelps-Ace High School.

14 First, let me start by saying thank you
15 for giving me the time to speak today. In addition,
16 I want to thank DCPS for its efforts in keeping
17 parents updated on changes happening as we all get
18 acclimated back into our normal routines. I want to
19 thank the teachers, faculty, and admins at Phelps for
20 doing all that needs to be done to ensure our
21 children and parents feel safe with in-person
22 return, as well as addressing the social and

1 emotional challenges some scholars have had with the
2 return to in-person learning.

3 I often feel like Phelps is the underdog,
4 the lonely redheaded stepchild that has the
5 opportunity to outshine most, but seldom given the
6 opportunity. We are a small school in comparison to
7 other DCPS high school, but we're doing something at
8 Phelps that no other high school in DCPS can say they
9 are doing. We are increasing our enrollment numbers
10 and have exceeded our enrollment projections every
11 year for the past four consecutive years and we are
12 providing our scholars with real options so that even
13 if they don't go to college they are able to have a
14 career that wills sustain them and their future
15 families.

16 So, why do we have to continuously fight
17 for funding and resources that we need to run a safe
18 and highly effective school? Why do we have to
19 continuously deal with a school building that is
20 losing its luster and a DGS that's slow to move. We
21 have rooms, stores, and bathrooms in our buildings
22 that we have been waiting for over three years to be

1 repaired; all while we watch DCPS construct a new
2 facility on our athletic field.

3 At the beginning of the school year, we
4 had classrooms as hot as 80 plus degrees due to
5 non-working cooling systems, but our scholars and
6 teachers persisted and came up with ways to make it
7 work. But these problems weren't just recently
8 presented to DGS and requests for repairs have sat
9 for years in a waiting pool. While we have been
10 given promises by GDS, the follow throughs have been
11 lacking. As the temperatures drop, the same problems
12 we had with the cooling in the classrooms are ones we
13 expect to have with the heating.

14 The building was vacant with plenty of
15 time to fix repairs, just as you all constructed the
16 new school on our athletic field, so why are we still
17 waiting? Our faculty, teachers, admins, parents, and
18 scholars have done all we can to make sure Phelps
19 scholars are in a safe environment. We have had less
20 than eight COVID cases since the start of the school
21 year and no scholar has tested positive in our
22 building with our random student testing.

1 We are doing our part. When will DCPS
2 and DGS do theirs? Thank you.

3 MS. GASKINS: Thank you for your
4 testimony.

5 Next, we'll hear from Emily Blake.

6 MS. BLAKE: Good evening. My name is
7 Emily Blake and I am a parent and LSAT co-chair at
8 Stevens Early Learning Center, the first stand-alone
9 preschool DCPS school.

10 As a parent and LSAT member of the
11 Stevens Early Center community, I've reviewed the
12 past budget for the school. I'm very concerned that
13 DCPS does not provide a more competitive salary for
14 teacher assistants within the school. This directly
15 impacts Stevens ability to hire and retain
16 high-quality candidates for these roles; especially,
17 aides with more specialized skill levels who support
18 Special Needs students within our school and
19 preschool students, as a whole.

20 Washington, D.C. and its metropolitan
21 area have a notoriously high cost of living. It is
22 extremely difficult for individuals in these roles to

1 balance their costs of living at the current level.
2 I urge DCPS to pay a more livable wage for the range
3 of teacher assistants within the school system.

4 Two ways to achieve this would be to
5 implement at least a 25 percent increase in salary
6 for teacher assistants or increase them to a 40-hour
7 workweek across the system. Additionally, Stevens
8 Early Learning Center teachers would greatly benefit
9 from a budgetary increase for coverage staff and
10 materials to better support planning and moments of
11 need during assessments, prep, and professional
12 development training during the school day. Thank
13 you for hearing my testimony this evening.

14 MS. GASKINS: Thank you, Emily, for your
15 testimony.

16 Next, we'll hear from Shandrika
17 Donawa-Johnkins. Time for you to come off mute and
18 come onto video.

19 MS. DONAWA-JOHNKINS: Can you see me?

20 MS. GASKINS: Not yet, but we can hear
21 you.

22 MS. DONAWA-JOHNKINS: Hi. Can you see

1 me?

2 MS. GASKINS: We cannot see you. I must
3 be on a delay. My apologies. I can see you.

4 MS. DONAWA-JOHNKINS: Okay, can you hear
5 me?

6 MS. GASKINS: Sure can. Feel free to get
7 started.

8 MS. DONAWA-JOHNKINS: Good evening. I'm
9 Shandrika Donawa-Johnkins. I am a parent of a
10 student with a 504 at School Without Walls High
11 School. I am also an academic specialist at a
12 charter school in Ward 8. I am here on behalf of my
13 son, as a parent, his school as an SHA member
14 at-large, and as a supporter of neighborhood and
15 charter school.

16 I know that DCPS has been having
17 conversations about a budget model change. I applaud
18 DCPS's effort to gather input from parents as to the
19 type of resources we need; however, I'm concerned
20 that we are still dealing with COVID and heightened
21 needs of students while you are asking us to make a
22 decision on this budget and there is not quite enough

1 transparency for me.

2 I am asking that you consider the effects
3 of COVID because it will last for years to come.
4 Furthermore, we haven't been given the details, nor
5 the insight to know how this will affect schools'
6 access to much needed staff and resources as class
7 sizes increase and the needs of students increase. I
8 understand that you're attempting to allow
9 flexibility to staff schools, but all I see is the
10 ability to pick and choose what staffing programs
11 you will have and even what schools you may close to
12 the detriment of students and their families.

13 Students need continuity and consistency
14 now. I'm concerned that your budget threatens that
15 and your details have not been shared with me. I
16 know that you're saying equity and sustainability,
17 but you cannot have equity and sustainability
18 without transparency and you cannot have transparency
19 without accountability. It is imperative that you
20 consider the stakeholders, which are the families and
21 students, and let us know how this budget model will
22 affect the schools that we are in.

1 If DCPS asked me what school communities
2 need, it is to be resourced in a way that is student
3 centered, data driven from the perspective of all
4 stakeholders, including the students themselves.
5 Consider academic, mental health, Special Education,
6 foreign language, social/emotional, technology and
7 engagement needs. This also means it is imperative
8 to consider the faculty, the teachers, and the
9 leaders of our schools so that they're taxed or
10 overburdened with excess duties due to budget
11 restructuring. If faculty, teachers, and leaders are
12 constrained, then they won't be able to give 100
13 percent to nurturing students or even my child.

14 Consider a social worker that overlooked
15 a student that might be suicidal because they don't
16 have time, because their caseload tripled. DCPS
17 wants financial stability, but it does not seem to
18 understand the schools need for stability. Schools
19 and their most precious consumers, the students, need
20 for the school to maintain programming that they
21 have. We need you to consider people who are serving
22 them day in and day out. Please support our

1 schools. Please hold OCTO accountable for ensuring
2 staff and all needed services have viable and
3 sustainable.

4 MS. GASKINS: Thank you. I'm sorry. We
5 have to ask you to wrap up your time.

6 MS. DONAWA-JOHNKINS: Thank you.

7 MS. GASKINS: Thank you.

8 Next, we'll hear from Steve Kletter.

9 MR. KLETTER: Yes, hi. Good evening. My
10 name is Steve Kletter and I'm a practicing economist
11 who has lived and worked in the District of Columbia
12 for over 25 years. I've two children in DCPS
13 schools. My youngest child attends Alice Deal Middle
14 School. With 1500 students, Alice Deal is by far the
15 largest middle school in the city. It's helpful to
16 remember that Alice Deal is more than three times as
17 large as the average DCPS middle school, more than
18 double the size of the next largest middle school.

19 School size matters because the current
20 CMS budget model used by DCPS underfunds large
21 schools, even after accounting for student needs. To
22 its credit, DCPS itself explicitly recognized this

1 problem in its summer 2020 budget presentation.

2 This flaw in the budget model underfunds
3 Alice Deal by over \$2 million per year. It needs to
4 be fixed in the new DCPS budget model. The problem
5 with the current CMS budget model lies in the general
6 education funds, referred as enrollment funds, given
7 to each school which are not needs-based, DCPS
8 handles needs-based funding through other specific
9 funding programs.

10 Under the enrollment funding model, many
11 key budget items do not increase with the size of the
12 school, so big and small schools receive exactly the
13 same funding amount despite massive differences in
14 size. Let's consider just two examples.

15 First, the middle school investment is a
16 budget item that allocates two to three additional
17 teachers to each middle school. Any school over 350
18 students receives three teachers. Deal, with 1500
19 students, receives the same number of additional
20 teachers as a school with just 350. This single line
21 item alone underfunds Deal by up to nine teachers.

22 Second, each middle school receives,

1 regardless of size, a fixed \$100,000 for
2 social/emotional support. That level of funding does
3 not go far when you need to serve 1500 students. So
4 let me argue that there are economies of scale in
5 operating a school and this is true, but only for
6 very small to mid-size schools.

7 In contrast, as schools get large,
8 research studies show that dis-economies of scale
9 kick in, resulting in increased, not decreased costs
10 for students needed to maintain educational quality.
11 Case in point, the Department of Education in the
12 State of Maryland, our next-door neighbor, recently
13 studied this very question and found that large
14 middle schools with over 900 students require more,
15 not less, funding per student which is why they
16 recommended that middle schools in the state be
17 capped at 900 students.

18 Consistent with the Maryland finding, the
19 new DCPS budget model needs to reflect the fact that
20 large schools face increasing costs per student.
21 I've attached a presentation that outlines this
22 funding problem in detail, including sites to

1 studies, academic papers, and DCPS materials.

2 Thank you so much for your time today and
3 for all the hard work you guys have been doing in
4 this very difficult year. Appreciate it.

5 MS. GASKINS: Thank you for your
6 testimony, Steven.

7 Our final testimony tonight will be from
8 Jean Kohanek.

9 MS. KOHANEK: Hi. Good evening everyone.
10 Thank you for the opportunity to address you tonight
11 and thank you for hanging in there. My name is Jean.
12 I'm a member of Eliot-Hine LSAT and I previously
13 served in the LSAT at Maury Elementary School and I'm
14 here today as a long-time DCPS parent.

15 I want to echo and amplify many of the
16 great points already made here tonight. Number one,
17 I appreciate the DCPS goal of increasing transparency
18 in the budget process; however, I don't think we have
19 it yet. I'm concerned about the launch of a revised
20 model without the provision of school-based examples
21 for analysis before the model is finalized.

22 A sample budget for each school using the

1 new budget model based on the previous year's budget
2 would be incredible helpful for the school
3 communities to digest and give meaningful feedback on
4 the model again before it's finalized. The rollout
5 of this model was delayed a year, so I'm having a
6 hard time understanding why there hasn't been
7 adequate time to prepare a truly transparent process.
8 Also, every year schools and LSATs are asked to
9 process budget decisions in just a few days. We need
10 more time for this critical work.

11 Number two, we ask the Mayor's budget for
12 schools adequately account and keep up with staffing
13 costs. This should be a baseline every year.
14 Schools should not lose positions over inadequate
15 planning; particularly, in the coming years when the
16 needs are so great. We must prioritize our teachers
17 and school-based staff who've been working under
18 incredibly difficult and shifting conditions. Let's
19 provide stability and see if we can actually happen
20 for students.

21 Number three, I'm concerned about the
22 technology challenges that are present in our

1 schools. It was well into October before all the
2 students at my son's middle school had functional
3 devices. I understand that some of this part of the
4 supply crunch we're all experiencing, but I believe
5 that a comprehensive, multiyear tech plan
6 differentiated by needs at the elementary, middle,
7 and high school is long overdue.

8 And four, finally, there really is no
9 excuse for the inequities we see among different
10 schools. If we are seeking equity, we cannot harm
11 schools further with our budget models and we cannot
12 harm them further with inadequate upkeep of school
13 facilities. DCPS needs a reliable partner in DGS,
14 which it currently does not have. We cannot have one
15 group of children learning in a \$50 million building
16 and another group of children just down the road
17 learning in a building with broken plumbing, doors,
18 and inadequate HVAC systems. There has to be a
19 common-sense approach to school maintenance and
20 capital improvements that does not allow its schools
21 to devolve into squalor while waiting for a full
22 renovation.

1 So, thank you for your time and I
2 appreciate the opportunity to comment.

3 MS. GASKINS: Thank you for your
4 testimony.

5 CHANCELLOR FEREBEE: Thank you. Thank
6 you, again, everyone for attending tonight's
7 roundtable. We appreciate the feedback tonight.
8 It's great to hear from you. It's great to hear
9 your feedback and recommendations and we will
10 certainly take your thoughts and ideas into
11 consideration as we plan the upcoming budget.

12 As I mentioned earlier, our budget
13 development process begins with our stakeholder
14 engagement; however, the Mayor will set the
15 priorities that will influence the DCPS budget and
16 the way we think about our strategies for schools.
17 We encourage you to continue to be a part of our
18 ongoing engagement sessions. Ms. Gaskins will share
19 a little bit more about an information session we
20 have upcoming.

21 Again, underscore how much we appreciate
22 your feedback. We heard tonight there is

1 confirmation of the communication that families have
2 gotten throughout the school year. We continue to
3 strive to refine that and ensure that we're getting
4 timely information. And we can't say enough about
5 our teachers, our educators, our staff, our support
6 staff, our custodians, food service, everyone who
7 stepped up to ensure that our students can have a
8 full-time, in-person experience this school year and
9 it is something that we intend to build upon as we
10 prepare for the '22/'23 school year with the budget
11 for Fiscal Year '23. So again, thank you.

12 With that, I want to turn it back over to
13 Ms. Gaskins, who's going to share a little bit more
14 information before we close out tonight.

15 MS. GASKINS: Thank you, Chancellor. And
16 I share and echo your appreciation and just for
17 everybody's time this evening. And so, as we move
18 forward in this budget season, I encourage you to
19 continue your involvement. As the Chancellor
20 mentioned, we'll have an opportunity for a focused
21 budget model update next week, November 17th. You
22 can learn more at the address on your screen,

1 bit.ly/dcpsbudget link on your screen. We hope you
2 can join us on the 17th to learn more.

3 We also just continue to encourage folks
4 to stay involved with school-level budget planning
5 events and to be involved with your LSAT because that
6 is, as folks on this meeting know, where many
7 decisions involves the engagement at school levels
8 is really critical. And so, again, echoing the
9 thanks. Thanks for your time and we look forward to
10 seeing you again soon. Please have a good evening.

11 (Whereupon, at 7:37 p.m., the meeting was
12 adjourned.)

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