Date: November 16, 2022

Case: FY 2024 DCPS Public Budget Hearing

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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

FY 2024 DCPS PUBLIC

BUDGET HEARING

Via Zoom

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

6:00 p.m.

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

2   6:04 p.m.

3   MR. ILAR: Thank you Dr. Chancellor Amy

4   Maisterra and Chancellor Lewis Ferebee, we are ready

5   to begin the public budget hearing.

6   DR. MAISTERRA: Good evening everyone, and

7   welcome. Thank you for joining us this evening for

8   the fiscal year 2024 Public Budget Hearing for the

9   school year 2023-24. My name is Amy Maisterra, and

10   I'm the Deputy Chancellor of Innovation and Systems

11   Improvement here at DCPS.

12   I am also joined by Chancellor Lewis

13   Ferebee, and we're excited to be here with you this

14   evening. By way of background, one of the

15   responsibilities of my team is to oversee and support

16   budget development for DCPS. This hearing is an

17   important opportunity for us to hear testimony from

18   all of you, so we can understand your priorities.

19   So, we're excited to be here tonight with

20   you. I will take a look at the agenda, and you can

21   see here that we will begin with an introduction and

22   overview by Chancellor Ferebee and myself, followed

1   by hearing from you, public testimony. We'll be

2   hearing from community members, parents,

3   organizations and others during this period.

4   We do ask that if you're not presenting

5   that you please turn on mute, and turn off your

6   cameras. We will be livestreaming the hearing

7   through our DC Public Schools YouTube page at the web

8   address at the bottom of this screen. And if, as a

9   speaker, you are experiencing challenges at any time

10 connecting with us this evening, please communicate

11 that with the host in the chat box, or send an email

12 to CEO.info@k12.dc.gov.

13   And as noted we do have ASL interpretation

14 available as well as Spanish interpretation when

15 needed. You can see the link there for Spanish

16 interpretation. So with that, it is my pleasure to

17 turn things over to Chancellor Ferebee.

18   CHANCELLOR FEREBEE: Good evening

19 everyone. Thank you Deputy Chancellor Maisterra.

20 We're excited for you to be with us tonight to talk

21 about the DCPS budget, and budget development

22 process. Tonight we'll continue the dialogue around

1   the resources that are needed to support students in

2   schools individually, and the unique needs in each

3   school community, along with the needs of students

4   across the district.

5   Our team will share tonight about our

6   revised budget model. You may know we started this

7   model last year to help to ensure that resources are

8   equitably distributed to our schools, in additional

9   to the heritage transparency as well. We hope to

10   educate you more tonight about the benefits of this

11   model, and we also want to ensure, as we deepen your

12   understanding of this model, we have an opportunity

13   to be responsive to additional questions about that

14   you might have around how schools are funded.

15   As we go forward in the presentation I do

16   want to highlight again what the budget model looks

17   like, and our goals associated with this model. DCPS

18   has again a unique budget model that is meant to be

19   clear, fair, transparent, and also viable in terms of

20   equity and financial stability.

21   Our school budget is based on three

22   factors. That is enrollment, need and stability.

1   More specifically when we speak to need we have

2   additional resources that are allocated to

3   populations of students that we know need additional

4   resources that can come in the form of additional

5   weighting per student, which can include areas such

6   as students receiving special education services,

7   students receiving English language learner services

8   as well and the like.

9   And tonight you'll get an opportunity to

10 hear more about how those resources are allocated.

11 As stated, enrollment is a critical factor in

12 distributed resources to schools, but it's not the

13 only one. We are excited that DCPS continues to grow

14 in its enrollment, and in the second time and most

15 recently and past the pandemic, DCPS has exceeded our

16 milestone of over 50,000 students in the district.

17   We know enrollment is the foundation to

18 ensure that every student is served well, and they

19 are receiving what that need. But we do look at

20 other factors of enrollment to ensure that students

21 in schools have the appropriate resources. Tonight

22 you'll get an opportunity to hear about that as we

1   talk more about our safety net that is applied when

2   there's changes in enrollment.

3   We also provide targeted supports for

4   students that have special needs in special

5   populations, and tonight you'll also hear about that.

6   The last bucket that we think about is stability.

7   Stability is important because I had mentioned

8   earlier we do understand and acknowledge that

9   enrollment does flush away from year to year.

10   Therefore, DCPS is providing greater

11   flexibility schools and administrators, how they are

12   allocating resources, but also ensuring that there is

13   stability and resources year over year to support

14   programs and services that we know that are essential

15   to ensuring that students feel loved, challenged, and

16   prepared.

17   So in going to the next slide, I also want

18   to highlight what this means for schools and their

19   implementation of our budget. Each school will

20   realize a budget that is different and unique to

21   them, and will also benefit accordingly. It's also

22   important to know that in our revised model, the goal

1   is to ensure that school leaders are empowered in

2   concert with their schools and their local school

3   advisory teams to craft plans and staffing models

4   that best support the students in that school, and

5   families in that school, also incorporating the local

6   context.

7   By design, we've given more decision

8   making to our school leaders, and our local schools

9   advisory teams to be responsive to school needs. We

10   know that schools have very different population,

11   and need resources accordingly.

12   In addition to providing leaders with more

13   flexibility with spending, we also have provided more

14   transparency to take out the additional study needed

15   to understand the DCPS budget. We've also provided

16   overall year over year data points for families and

17   communities to follow to ensure that there is better

18   amount to student needs, but also clear lines of

19   transparency as well.

20   Year over year schools will be able to

21   provide the resources needed to their students and

22   families. And as a part of the DCPS model, we are

1 working to ensure that not only there's flexibility,

2 but also we are providing resources for schools to

3 align to the needs of the context of their school

4 communities.

5   You'll get an opportunity to hear more

6 about that tonight, but again I do want to reiterate

7 the points around greater transparency to ensure

8 there's no guesswork in how schools are funded,

9 flexibility for decision making, and also the ability

10 for school leaders and local school advisors teams to

11 align those resources with the needs of the students

12 and families that they're building.

13   With that, I'm going to turn it back over

14 to Dr. Maisterra, who is going to share a little bit

15 more about these points, and how schools are funded

16 in DCPS.

17   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you Chancellor

18 Ferebee. I appreciate the overview that you

19 provided. I think you went into a great amount of

20 detail, and so I'll just follow-up by sharing again

21 that our focus on the model allows us to provide more

22 transparency for schools, more flexibility for school

1   leaders, and again, better alignment to student

2   needs.

3   And so we continue to work to support this

4   new model. We're excited to see how the model has

5   supported schools in the first year of

6   implementation, and we continue to refine the model

7   moving forward. And so tonight we again, are very

8   interested in hearing your input, as we continue to

9   refine and support the model moving forward.

10   Before we jump in to hearing from you, I

11   do want to touch on a couple of notes about our local

12   school advisory teams. We know that the LSATs play a

13   significant, and important role in budget

14   development, and these are teams made up of parents,

15   staff and community members that work with our school

16   leaders on a range of topics, including identifying

17   school priorities, and developing the school's

18   budget.

19   We have additional information here for

20   you on the screen if you're not familiar with your

21   schools LSAT, or would like to participate, please go

22   ahead and reach out for more information, and we're

1 happy to make that connection for you.

2   And again, a little bit more on our LSAT

3 work. We support schools in meeting with our LSATs

4 regularly to develop priorities. Our teams typically

5 meet monthly throughout the school year to work on

6 the range of topics that I shared. At each meeting

7 we also look for a brief update on the school's

8 comprehensive school plan, which is our plan, our

9 annual plan, for each school, and their priority

10 goals to continue their progress.

11   And so those updates are meant to be

12 touchpoints with the LSATs to both share progress and

13 get input. Elections for LSAT Chairs are held at the

14 end of each school year, and voted on by peers and

15 staff and parents. The principal and school's

16 administrative staff host the election process, with

17 the assistance of one of our community action team,

18 or CAT team members from our central services team.

19   We look for each school to have a

20 functioning LSAT body by no later than October of

21 each year, again that's critical to support the work

22 that I just described, and then we also work

1   throughout the budget season with our CAT team and

2   our school finance team to host webinars and

3   trainings on the budget process, as well as to

4   support the LSAT election process, so we can make

5   sure that the LSATs are aware of, and supporting the

6   process as intended.

7   Please be on the lookout for additional

8   information via our LSAT newsletters, and again, if

9   you'd like to get involved please contact that email

10   address that we have been sharing.

11   So, now I want to touch on a few logistics

12   for tonight. I know that Mr. Ilar shared several of

13   these at the beginning of our time together, but

14   again we just want to highlight a few things before

15   we jump in. First, we ask that you keep your

16   testimony to three minutes. We will be keeping time

17   and we'll provide a gentle reminder when your time is

18   up, and that allows us to make sure we hear from

19   everybody.

20   Second, if you are a member of a group, we

21   ask that you identify one speaker to represent the

22   group, and that speaker can then testify on behalf of

1   the group. And last, please speak slowly and

2   clearly. We've touched on the fact that we have ASL

3   interpretation available here, and we also want to

4   make sure that we're able to record your testimony,

5   and be able to review it after the meeting, so we

6   want to make sure that again, if you are speaking,

7   that we are able to understand you, and you being

8   clear helps us with that.

9   A few other notes for those who are

10   planning to testify. We will be announcing the

11   speaker lists in small groups, and a member of the

12   team will also be contacting you via the chat, to

13   make sure you are prepared to speak during your time.

14   Please message the host privately in the chat to

15   confirm that you are present to speak.

16   This will help us with the transition and

17   flow of speakers throughout the evening. Please also

18   again keep your cameras off, and your microphones on

19   mute until you testify. Again, we will let you know

20   when we're ready to have you come onboard to speak.

21   And then last, please send your testimony

22   in either PDF format, or Word document format if you

1   have not done so already, and you see our email here

2   for you to be able to do that. And now we will

3   transition to public testimony so that we can begin

4   hearing from you. And the first group we have ready

5   to testify will be Grace Hu, followed by K.C. Boyd,

6   followed by Juniper Ho, and then followed by Sandra

7   Moscoso. So we'll start with Ms. Hu.

8   MS. HU: Good evening. My name is Grace

9   Hu, and I'm a parent at Amidon-Bowen Elementary. I'm

10   here today on behalf of Digital Equity in DC

11   Education, a parent coalition that's been working to

12   close the digital divide, and provide a 21st Century

13   education for our children.

14   We've come a long way since we first met

15   with DCPS leadership in 2018, and while DCPS has made

16   significant progress in some areas, we're still

17   noticing issues in areas such as school level, asset

18   management, and digital literacy instruction. On

19   devices, we were encouraged to see the FY 23

20   investment in student and teacher devices.

21   We ask you maintain the one to one student

22   device ratio for grades 3 to 12 throughout the school

1   year, and continue to provide a device for every

2   teacher. Additionally, we urge you to plan for and

3   fund a robust tech refresh cycle, with sufficient

4   contingency inventory of devices to account for

5   annual device loss.

6   On classroom technology, we're encouraged

7   by the recent investments in new smart boards.

8   However, the smart board installation project has

9   been a failure. We understand that the selected

10 vendor was only able to install a small number of

11 smart boards per day, and that some schools have been

12 struggling with outdated equipment in the classroom,

13 while smart boards have been sitting in boxes waiting

14 to be installed.

15   We urge you to resolve the installation

16 issues as soon as possible so that schools can make

17 use of smart boards that you've invested in.

18 Additionally, we urge you to make sure all classroom

19 technology is ordered, installed, and ready to be

20 used on the first day of school.

21   IT asset management continues to be a

22 significant challenge for schools. Some schools have

1   struggled with keeping up their IT inventories, and

2   since DCPS relies on these inventories to determine

3   the number of computers to provide to schools,

4   outdated inventories led to delays and Central Office

5   provision of the correct number of student devices to

6   schools.

7   We still do not understand why DCPS has

8   not provided additional asset management support to

9   schools, including requesting that OCTO provide more

10   support for schools in this area. On digital

11   literacy, we are not seeing consistent support, and

12   teaching of digital literacy skills at schools.

13   The extent to which digital literacy

14   skills are taught often depends on whether a school

15   principal, or school staff had prioritized

16   instruction in this area. And so we urge you to

17   provide teachers and schools with the time and the

18   supports to fully integrate digital literacy into

19   curriculum.

20   Without robust digital literacy skills,

21   it's difficult for our students to perform well in

22   the online standardized tests and grade level

1 assessments. And lastly, this past September we

2 were delighted to see the DC Council pass a DCPS

3 Digital Equity Act of 2022, which requires a

4 comprehensive technology plan, and school level

5 technology assessments.

6 We look forward to working with you on the

7 implementation of this important law. Thank you for

8 the opportunity to testify.

9 DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you. And now we

10 will hear from KC Boyd.

11 MS. BOYD: Thank you for the opportunity

12 to provide testimony this evening. My name is KC

13 Boyd, and I'm a school librarian in Ward 6, at

14 Jefferson Middle School, and I'm also a DCPS Library

15 Leadership Core Leader.

16 During the 2012 school year many school

17 librarians throughout the district were eliminated

18 from school budgets. And they were -- and this

19 subsequently impacted student achievement. Now,

20 nearly 10 years later we're still faced with the

21 uncertainty of our positions. Year after year we

22 wait to see if the school librarians will be included

1   in the budget.

2   I've often asked the question why is the

3   school library position always left very vulnerable

4   in the DCPS central or school budget? Why do school

5   librarians have to hold their breath every year to

6   see if the position will be budgeted? I've received

7   responses that range from budget cuts, principal

8   autonomy, to LSAT choice, despite many of our

9   students not reading on grade levels around the

10   district.

11   There is a misconception that if students

12   read more that they will become better readers, but

13   that is not solely the case. When students find that

14   they're interested, and feel a connection to the

15   material, they will want to read more. That then

16   translates into them becoming better readers, and in

17   the library students aren't told what to read, they

18   are free to explore and find books that speak to

19   them.

20   In my opinion, that's priceless. Now,

21   there's over 30 years of research that is associated

22   with the correlation of a full-time certified

1   librarian, and a well-stocked school library, and how

2   with the correlation of the two, students perform at

3   a higher level on standardized tests than students

4   that don't have that access. Last year, the DCPS

5   library programs had over 1 million print, digital

6   content resources due for the school year of 2021

7   through the present.

8   Students use destiny, print, and store

9   e-books to encourage students to engage in

10   independent reading. My question to DCPS leadership

11   is that do we want to see this usage continue where

12   students have access to e-books and research

13   materials, to help them achieve successfully? Do we

14   want our students to receive the social and emotional

15   support of a school librarian, and school libraries

16   who could provide the resources and that support?

17   I do want to take this further in closing.

18   I find that it's one thing to have proper staffing

19   and funding in place. It's another to provide the

20   access. Currently we have some librarians that have

21   been asked to teach foreign language, and home

22   economics classes, while others are serving as

1   permanent substitutes.

2   Now I do want to emphasize we believe that

3   we should be team players within our schools. But

4   when we are moved from our primarily responsibility

5   students lose. So those of us that have spoken up

6   about this have been retaliated against, and it's

7   just not fair.

8   So in closing I'm going to say all of the

9   above budgeting and internal scheduling adjustments

10   that can correct the aforementioned challenges, the

11   school library is the heart of the school, and the

12   center of learning where students can read,

13   discover, and call this location in the school a home

14   away from home.

15   For fiscal year 24 please provide the

16   funding and support, and proper scheduling please, so

17   that we can have a successful future in serving the

18   students that we are committed to, thank you.

19   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you. And next we'll

20   hear from Juniper Ho. Ms. Ho, I think you're still

21   on mute. There we go.

22   MS. HO: My name is Juniper Ho, and I'm a

1   fourth grader at Amidon-Bowen Elementary School. I

2   would like to ask you to spend more money on

3   increasing aide and substitute salaries, putting

4   money into computers, and giving schools good

5   materials.

6   I think you should put more money into

7   funding teacher aide and substitute salaries.

8   Teacher aides and substitutes get paid much less than

9   general teachers. Also, DCPS leadership is paid a

10 huge amount, which is unfair. Teacher aides get paid

11 on average only a little more than minimum wage.

12 Substitutes get paid about $160.00 per day if they

13 work. That can result in money problems, and can

14 mean if something bad happens they may have a hard

15 time doing their job, or even getting to their job.

16   I've seen in my years at Amidon-Bowen that

17 the teacher aides and substitutes work very hard in

18 managing kids. Meanwhile, other people may not work

19 half as hard, but still get paid more. I think the

20 aides and substitutes should have an increase in

21 their salaries.

22   Another thing I think you should consider

1   is putting more money into computers. I've seen for

2   myself that sometimes computers don't work, or are

3   very slow. I also see that there are not enough

4   spare computers all the time, so sometimes a student

5   keeps another student's computer, and when that

6   student looks for their computer they can't find it.

7   Then that can cause confusion that

8   disrupts the entire class. The thing is computers

9   are an important part of learning these days, so

10   every child needs a good, quality computer. I think

11   you should either put money into more computers, or

12   put money into making sure that the computers are

13   working well.

14   You should also give schools enough decent

15   quality materials. When the school year started

16   there were not enough headphones, dry erase markers,

17   and pencil sharpeners. Also, sometimes dry erase

18   markers stopped working, and parts of headphones

19   break off. Without headphones, when students are

20   working on their online work, they hear all the other

21   computers, and they cannot focus on their own work.

22   School supplies are essential to learning,

1   and students like me need them. Some of the top

2   people in DCPS, it is your responsibility to provide

3   materials that work to schools. It is not the

4   responsibility of teachers to buy them. I think you

5   should use your money to provide enough decent

6   quality materials for the schools. Thank you for

7   listening to me.

8   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you. And next we

9   have Sandra Moscoso.

10   MS. MOSCOSO: Good evening DCPS budget

11 team, and Chancellor Ferebee. I'm Sandra Moscoso, a

12 member of the School Without Walls High School. I'm

13 in School Association and LSAT, and an officer in the

14 Ward 2 at Council and 16 Public Schools Parent

15 Organization.

16   Our schools need budget stability.

17 Unfortunately, year after year Central Office has not

18 been successful in security budgets that meet the

19 needs of our schools. Funding gaps are only filled

20 after city-wide fights that require DC Council to

21 intervene. The erratic budget process is

22 exacerbating teacher turnover. Please correct this

1   by providing schools with adequate budget envelopes

2   from the start.

3   Even in circumstances where communities

4   succeed in restoring budgets and positions, trust is

5   lost, and educators leave seeking stability. At

6   School Without Walls, this played out in school year

7   22 when the foreign language teacher's position was

8   cut. After months of citywide advocacy, the position

9   was restored, however, the damage was done, and the

10 teacher, a 10 year veteran at the school left.

11   On paper, the position was funded. But in

12 reality, many students paid the price of the chaotic

13 semester without a teacher. What will happen in

14 school year 24? Under the current DCPS budget

15 model, when DCPS's mystery temporary stability funds

16 are gone, as things stand, School Without Walls will

17 lose three staff members.

18   Not due to a drop in enrollment, not due

19 to a drop in student needs, but due to DCPS's

20 underfunding of the school. And I do want to take

21 issue on the insistence that the new budget model is

22 more transparent. Just because you say it's

1   transparent doesn't mean it is.

2   Most of the school budgets I saw last year

3   had one-time stability funds labeled mayor's recovery

4   funds, or hold harmless funds, with no indication as

5   to how those amounts were formulated or allocated.

6   So want to add that point to my testimony.

7   DCPS must fund new requirements not for

8   schools to cut programming. Changes to DCPS policy

9   and requirements that don't come with budget support

10   cause damage to school programming. We learned this

11   lesson from Hardy's LSAT about the devasting impact a

12   change in special ed funding requirements had on the

13   school's scheduling, and student access to music,

14   foreign language and more.

15   New policies or funding needs should not

16   require principals to cut existing school resources

17   and programming. I want to support funding,

18   implementing and maintaining, and providing oversight

19   on technology and support the testimonies of the DC,

20   the digital equity in DC school's testimony.

21   And finally, I just want to ask to please

22   finalize the WTU contract with an agreement that is

1   fit for 2022, that addresses wages, planning time and

2   job flexibility. Thank you.

3   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you. Our next group

4   will include Betsy Wolf, Ahmad Nurriddin,

5   Cathy Reilly and Abigail Paulsen. We'll start with

6   Betsy Wolf.

7   MS. WOLF: Hi, good evening. I'm Betsy

8   Wolf and I'm a parent at Amidon-Bowen. Thank you for

9   the opportunity to testify tonight. Let me start by

10   saying that I believe we have the same goals for all

11   students, and that is for all students to flourish.

12   But it's easier to give lip service to

13   equity, and a lot harder to actually implement

14   equitable policies, and allocate resources equitably.

15   How DCPS allocates this resource tells the story

16   about what it cares about. I'm going to raise

17   awareness about three parts of the story.

18   First, we're not telling the truth about

19   how much we're spending on students. And we're

20   spending less on targeted students than we say we

21   are. DCPS did not give schools adequate funds in

22   the S student base budgeting base weight to cover

1   basic general education costs. Things like Assistant

2   Principal, grade level teachers, a minimum number of

3   related teachers.

4   So for example, Amidon-Bowen was short on

5   the student base budgeting base weight funding by

6   about $377,000.00. So what this means is that it had

7   to use $377,000.00 of its targeted funding on these

8   basic costs. So when you look at the targeted

9   funding for Amidon-Bowen, you don't get an honest

10   picture of how much money you were actually spending

11   that's supplemental, that could be targeted to

12   bolster student learning for students behind grade

13   level.

14   It makes it more difficult to have these

15   conversations with DC leadership as an advocate, if

16   DCPS isn't straightforward about what is covered in

17   various buckets of money. The bare minimum staff

18   needed for a school to operate should be under the

19   base weight, and not under targeted funds period, so

20   that we can actually get to the honest conversations

21   about what we're spending, and what whether what

22   we're spending is sufficient for the work at hand.

1   Number two, DCPS continues to use

2   self-contained special ed classrooms as an unfunded

3   mandate. For example, DCPS opened three new CVS,

4   which is a classroom for autistic children at

5   Amidon-Bowen this year, and none of the staff had

6   relevant trainings, so the school had to spend over

7   $50,000.00 of its own budget on training for staff,

8   so the staff would be adequate prepared.

9   Self-contained classrooms are DCPS run,

10 but DCPS doesn't cover all the costs, and it doesn't

11 also cover a lot of the burdens like hiring teachers

12 that come with the staff. So, DCPS posture for these

13 self-contained classrooms should be how can I set

14 these students up for success, and instead it's how

15 can I do the bear minimum, and push the costs down to

16 the additional schools. This says a lot about what

17 DCPS cares about.

18   Number three, given that teachers haven't

19 had a new contract in about three years, DCPS

20 continues to sell the story that DC is a toxic place

21 for teachers to work. This goes back for as long as

22 I've lived in DC. It's far time to change that

1   narrative, don't you think? Let's start with this

2   teacher contract.

3   Along those lines, schools have been

4   short-staffed since before the pandemic, and the

5   pandemic has made it worse. Schools don't have

6   enough paraprofessionals and substitutes to hire, in

7   part because the pay for these positions is so low.

8   Staffing shortages means that students are shifted

9   around to other classrooms during the day when

10   teachers are absent, which happens all the time,

11   which means that no learning happens.

12   My kids have told me as much, so there's

13   learning loss happening every single day, and we're

14   not doing much about it. In addition, a recent

15   education study that just came out found that

16   incentive pay worked to help recruit substitutes in

17   hard to staff schools in Chicago public schools.

18   The same thing could be done in DCPS.

19   DCPS should implement policies to ensure there's

20   equity for students in terms of adequate staff

21   coverage in underserved schools, and also equity for

22   workers, which matters, in terms of having reasonable

1   wages for paraprofessionals and substitutes. There's

2   a lot of work to be done, it's hard work, but we can

3   do it if we work together, thank you.

4   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much. And

5   next we have Ahmad Nurriddin.

6   MR. NURRIDDIN: Good evening. My name is

7   Ahmad Nurriddin. I live in Ward 6, community member

8   on the Columbia Heights Education Campus, LSAT.

9   First of all I want to hope every one of you had a

10   great Wednesday, and as a former PTA President at

11   Amidon, before it was Amidon-Bowen, it does my heart

12   great to hear the students and the parents advocate

13   for Amidon.

14   It is truly one of your great schools. I

15   think that seeing Chancellor Ferebee and the Deputy

16   Ms. Maisterra, you know my issues are going to be at

17   risk funding, specialty school funding, the 6 to 12

18   education campus model of, or a component of the

19   budget modeling that was without any explanation, or

20   justification.

21   At least as a Chairperson of the ANC the

22   LSAT at Columbia Heights, we heard about it. I

1 communicated with you, Dr. Maisterra, about some of

2 these issues. We appreciate your taking the time to

3 give me a direct response to those things that we

4 haven't addressed.

5   It's hard to understand how with the

6 concentration of that risk students at some schools,

7 the funding breakout. I see in the submitted budget

8 the funding allocations, but there's no specific line

9 item that says this is the amount that the school got

10 for at-risk because they had a concentration in what

11 was spent above 40 percent, but this is a lump sum.

12   And knowing a little bit about math it

13 looks a little bit inflated, so I'd like to do that.

14 The other thing that is troubling is in terms of the

15 ESL policy that's going to be changed. What are you

16 planning for in terms of the budget, and how many

17 there's going to be in front of us shortly.

18   I liked Betsy's question about the -- or

19 comment, about the difficulty in understanding what

20 do you mean by transparency. From my vantage point

21 it's not there. The time is up?

22   DR. MAISTERRA: Yes, thank you. I hope

1   you're also submitting testimony of your complete

2   comments for us as well, thank you.

3   MR. NURRIDDIN: Yeah, I will definitely do

4   that. As I said a good deal of it is in the letter

5   that I have provided to you Dr. Maisterra, back in --

6   you're nodding, so I know you know what I'm talking

7   about.

8   DR. MAISTERRA: Yes, thank you. We now

9   will hear from Cathy Reilly.

10   MS. REILLY: Thank you. Thank you for

11   this opportunity to testify. My name is Cathy

12   Reilly, and I have the privilege and opportunity to

13   facility and manage, shape and as well as the Ward 4

14   Alliance and C4DC. We're very pleased that

15   enrollment is up, and strongly up in ninth and tenth

16   grade.

17   DCPS will need to maintain high school

18   funding, as well as ensure the elementary and middle

19   schools are invested in and stable to keep these

20   students living in the District, and enrolled in DCPS

21   because we're in a very competitive environment.

22   These are the items that rise to the top

1   of the list right now. We need a contract with the

2   WTU, with issues of workplace flexibility and safety,

3   as well as salary addressed. Safety, locks, alarms,

4   protocols, buildings have to be secure. This means a

5   alarms on doors in secondary schools, classroom door

6   locks quickly repaired, and most importantly front

7   doors repaired to lock automatically upon closure.

8   Many of these issues are in modernized

9   buildings, and this cannot just be all right.

10   Collaboration and training for safe passive workers

11   and school spots at hot spots, like bus stops and

12   the Metro, looking to having students use their ID

13   number if they don't have their card. Reduce points

14   of friction as much as possible.

15   The FY 24 school budget allocations give

16   to schools, you have to give additional funds for

17   salary and supply costs increases. A constant

18   budget, with inflation and higher salaries, is a

19   substantial budget cut. I hope this makes sense. We

20   just can't do that. We can't say we got the same

21   amount of money if everything in the budget costs

22   more.

1   Secondly, whether it is XQ or ESSR funds,

2   there has to be a plan where outside money runs out.

3   DCPS is a system, not a bunch of independent schools.

4   There are advantages. DCPS can leverage Central

5   Office, and the resources of a whole system. It is

6   not only about accountability and standardization.

7   It can be about creativity and

8   opportunities across schools, by being able to offer

9   advanced language, math, or elective options

10 sometimes, virtually, or with part-time teachers

11 with flexible schedules. For the buildings

12 maintenance, DCPS is in charge of a number of areas,

13 including the CTE program equipment.

14   For example, at Roosevelt the freezer and

15 a refrigerator periodically malfunction, and ovens

16 and the stoves don't work. Next, advance and fund

17 the digital equity work, and next modernization.

18 You're going to hear today from Whittier. The

19 building has deteriorated since it's rating and the

20 PACE act.

21   The organizing effort by this community is

22 in response to conditions that need to be addressed

1   for the health and safety of the students and staff.

2   HVAC and access to drinking water remain as issues

3   that have not been addressed. We need your help,

4   your voice and your advocacy on this.

5   And lastly, DCPS is one of 69 local

6   education agencies, however, DCPS has over half of

7   the public school students. I feel you've been

8   underrepresented at a number of city wide settings on

9   budget lottery for example. We need you to fight

10   harder, use staff and advocates strategically on

11   this, especially with the facility master plan and

12   adequacy study coming up in 2023.

13   We want to ensure that DCPS voices for

14   over 50,000 students and their families are

15   passionately represented. And in closing, I'd like

16   to wish you a Happy Thanksgiving next week. Thank

17   you.

18   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you Ms. Reilly. And

19   now we have Abigail Paulsen.

20   MS. PAULSEN: Hello. Good evening all.

21   I'm Abby Paulsen, Co-President for the Hardy Middle

22   School PTO, DCPS Parent of a Jackson Reed ninth

1   grader, and Hardy sixth grader. I've been part of

2   DCPS since 2014, and at Hardy Middle School since

3   2015.

4   Hardy Middle School is here today as the

5   bell weather of unintended consequences that stem

6   from the current budget model. Eight additional

7   participants are here from Hardy to speak about

8   their lived experiences with the implementation of

9   this formula.

10   Chancellor, the follow-up from our meeting

11   may have slipped through the cracks, but here are

12   some of the answers we were looking for. The

13   majority of classes at Hardy are at, or

14   significantly over contracted class sizes. I used

15   the word significantly as out of 86 sections, 74

16   sections are at or above capacity, 43 sections are at

17   30 students or more, with our highest in an eight

18   grade science class with a class of 35 students.

19   This is not due to a master schedule

20   mismatch. This is due to not enough staff members to

21   cover the number of students needing to be in the

22   classroom at any given time. For those of you not

1   aware of what happens when your enrollment grows

2   under the current budget model, Hardy lost three

3   teachers, and additionally is unable to fund more

4   than one front office person, and has the principal

5   as a grade level head since we don't have an

6   Assistant Principal for each grade.

7   A class period was removed from the core

8   schedule, our box schedule has 90 minutes periods for

9   11 to 14 year old's. We have two lunch periods to

10   service 566 students in a two hour period. On paper,

11   everything at Hardy should be fine. In reality,

12   Hardy is not fine. It has been argued that no other

13   school has as many arts choices as Hardy.

14   That may be true, but we also need to

15   consider that Hardy doesn't have things other middle

16   schools do have, like IB programming, and language

17   emersion. Certainly, those schools receive

18   additional funding to support those programs.

19   Hardy is known and celebrated city-wide

20   for our arts programming, and if identifying our

21   school as a STEAM school is what needs to happen in

22   order to check the box, to allocate funds to maintain

1   the program that already has a proven track record of

2   success, then let's do the work to make it happen

3   before our great program is lost due to a lack of

4   vision and creative problem solving.

5   We are used to doing hard things at Hardy.

6   We are ready. For school year 22-23 we ask for the

7   reinstatement of the hold harmless funds back to the

8   Hardy budget. For school year 23-24 and moving

9   forward, we ask for the next conversation with the

10   budget office to work through what the funding model

11   looks like for Hardy Middle School, and by extension

12   McArthur High School.

13   There aren't many of us left who remember

14   where Hardy was just a short eight years ago,

15   declining enrollment, pitiful and boundary

16   participation, miniscule parent and community

17   involvement, and student safety in their school was

18   in question. We have turned all of these things

19   around. Don't cut us off at the knees.

20   We are sliding. I am here to affirm that

21   things are sliding, and parent confidence is

22   wavering. Hardy needs DCPS to look up from counting

1   the beans, to see if the outcome is really what you

2   are intending because we are the test case. If

3   nothing changes, outcomes will be dire.

4   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you.

5   MS. PAULSEN: Joy is not prescriptive, it

6   is organic. We have the data that shows that our

7   paring down and paring down is not getting the

8   results we need. So thank you. I have more

9   testimony here for you to read, and I'm happy to

10   continue our conversation as we have before. Thank

11   you Chancellor, thank you Amy.

12   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much.

13   CHANCELLOR FEREBEE: Thank you very much.

14   DR. MAISTERRA: And our next group of four

15   individuals is Cedric Hendricks, Grace Ladd, Joshua

16   Wiley, and Arthur Mola, and we will start with Cedric

17   Hendricks.

18   MR. HENDRICKS: Well good evening

19   everyone. I'm a parent of a sixth grader at the

20   School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens, located in

21   Ward 2. However, we're presently operating out of

22   the old Banneker High School because we're undergoing

1 the modernization project that we have waited for for

2 so long.

3   I also serve on the school improvement

4 team. I'm going to touch on our budget, the state of

5 our swing space, and also on the modernization of our

6 home site by one industry. For the school year 2023

7 we received a budget of approximately 8.9 million

8 dollars. That allowed us to open our school fully

9 staffed, as well as with the desired programming in

10 place.

11   And as we await your delivery to us of our

12 proposed budget for school year 2024, we respectfully

13 request that our funding be held constant. Now, a

14 couple of things to bring to your attention that we

15 urgently need your attention to. This school year

16 began as I said, with a modernization, but the

17 problem we're confronted now at the Banneker site is

18 that there was no heat there. Our administrative

19 staff had brought this to the attention of the

20 Central Office, and we've gone a few days without

21 heat. Kids wearing coats in school, and also we have

22 some water leaks that have made some of our floors

1   unsafe.

2   Kids are wearing coats, and obviously,

3   that's not an appropriate situation for our students

4   to learn in, or our teachers to teach in. Also, with

5   respect to our modernization project, we recently

6   sent a letter to our facilities project manager and

7   the design and construction team pointing out some

8   concerns we have about the latest design that they've

9   presented us.

10   I have copied that letter to you, or it's

11 attached to the testimony that I've submitted, and I

12 do urge you to take a look at it because there are

13 some safety concerns that we raised there, if left

14 unattended, will be a problem for us down the line,

15 and as well as for you.

16   So, I want to close and simply ask for

17 your help in addressing these problems. You know

18 it's going to go down into the 30's tonight.

19 According to the weather service it will be 36

20 degrees when school opens in the morning between

21 eight and nine o'clock. That's not a situation that

22 I want to send my kid into, but unless you do

1 something about it, that situation won't change.

2   So Chancellor, meet me at the school in

3 the morning, bring your coat, and come and see what

4 the problems are, and bring the team necessary to

5 solve them. Thank you very much and good to see you

6 again.

7   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you Mr. Hendricks.

8 Next we will have Grace Ladd.

9   MS. LADD: Hello. My name is Grace Ladd

10 and I teach at Whittier Elementary School. I would

11 like to speak today because of the ongoing

12 modernization efforts led by our parent teacher

13 organization. Currently, our school is on schedule

14 to be modernized starting in 2026, and finishing in

15 2028.

16   I am urging the budget committee to move

17 up these plans to be completed as soon as possible.

18 You will hear about the multitude of safety concerns

19 in our building from other Whittier community

20 members, but I would like to specifically focus on

21 the issue of elevators.

22   For context, our building has two wings.

1   The original building was built in the 1920's, and

2   the newer wing was built in the 1960's. Despite ABA

3   and IBEA, both being passed in 1990, we do not have

4   any elevators on either side of our three story

5   building. This has adversely affected our students,

6   staff and community.

7   We are unable to properly serve students

8   who cannot use stairs, which affects our enrollment

9   numbers and funding. Additionally, many of our staff

10   dealing with ongoing health concerns have no choice

11   but to walk up and down multiple flights of stairs

12   every day.

13   We have an early childhood student with a

14   disability who has to be carried upstairs every day.

15   We had an older student with a leg injury who had to

16   be carried upstairs by a staff member every time he

17   went to class. This is not fate, or fair for our

18   students.

19   DCPS's response to these issues was to

20   build an elevator on only one side of the building,

21   leaving the newer wing with our early childhood and

22   self-contained special education classes waiting.

1   Last year, I was sharing a classroom with two other

2   resource teachers, due to the limited space in our

3   building.

4   They needed to start construction on the

5   elevator in the middle of our room at the beginning

6   of our testing season. Over one-third of our

7   classroom was walled off to make space for the

8   elevator. We endured our frustrations with the

9   promise that the elevator would be available for use

10   by the start of this school year.

11   It's currently November 16, and the

12   elevator is not even close to being completed.

13   Construction workers have been working on it during

14   the school day, meaning that there is noise and

15   equipment in the hallways while we're trying to

16   teach. The district needs to expedite the process of

17   moving us into a swing space and starting

18   modernization, thank you.

19   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much. Next

20   we'll hear from Joshua Wiley.

21   MR. WILEY: Good evening. And thank you

22   for allowing me to testify today. My name is Joshua

1   Wiley, and I'm the Assistant Principal at Whittier

2   Elementary School. Many school leaders will not

3   testify about their school buildings due to fear of

4   retaliation from their superintendent and senior

5   leadership, but my fear of students in unsafe

6   learning environments supersedes that.

7   I am testifying today about the

8   modernization of Whittier Elementary School.

9   Whittier has a phrase we say to students, if trouble

10   finds you, find the nearest adult for solutions to

11   their problem. In the last few years I don't feel

12   like I'm able to embody that phrase and meet the

13   needs of my students. I feel helpless when students

14   come to me about the difficulties they experience in

15   an inadequate school building.

16   I cannot help them find a solution for a

17   leaky roof, for an outdated HVAC system, so I'm going

18   to the next nearest adult, you Dr. Ferebee.

19   Modernization at Whittier has been overlooked and

20   overdue for far too long. Patched up repairs have

21   plagued Whittier for years, lead abatement with open

22   windows. I have pictures.

1   Whittier received a new roof in 2020, and

2   it hasn't stopped leaking since. Check the work

3   orders. The elevator project is only on one side of

4   the building. We have 50 percent of the building out

5   of ADA compliance once the elevator is finally

6   completed.

7   Several students cannot attend Whittier

8   Elementary School due to lack of ADA accessible

9   classrooms. Why are we denying students their

10   educational rights? Imaging dropping your student

11   off at school and dodging falling bricks, breathing

12   in asbestos in the basement, or in the lack of

13   working water foundations for students to use.

14   Over the last two years I've personally

15   been present where we've had hot steam spewing from

16   busted pipes. When companies come for repairs, we've

17   been told it's only a matter of time before it

18   happens again. Steaming hot water, asbestos, leaks

19   and mold poses a severe safety risk for students,

20   staff and their families.

21   Before my request gets disregarded again

22   by DCPS leadership due to not being able to modify

1   the modernization list, I want to identify an error

2   in how schools are prioritized for the

3   modernization. This error has unfortunately bumped

4   Whittier further down the list. Whittier has six

5   self-contained classrooms, more than any other DCPS

6   elementary school, which combined currently hold

7   approximately 25 students total.

8   Whittier's building capacity is 520 swing,

9   which is not readjusted for the self-contained

10   classrooms. According to the master facility

11   listing, Whittier is only 70 percent full, however,

12   all six self-contained classrooms are fully or nearly

13   full, bringing Whittier's current capacity to 90

14   percent.

15   With this high number of self-contained

16   special education classrooms and constant safety

17   issues present throughout the building there should

18   be more urgency for this request. When you look at

19   the demographics of the schools that have moved up

20   the modernization list, received on the add on, or

21   unique swing spaces, it's clear what you must look

22   like, or what your zip code must be to have special

1 considerations.

2   I ask that Whittier be moved up the

3 modernization lists to begin planning during the

4 fiscal year 2024. If this request is not honored, it

5 further shows a lack of respect for students and

6 staff at Whittier Elementary School. I, too, am

7 tired of being overlooked. Happy Thanksgiving.

8   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you Mr. Wiley. And

9 next we have Principal Mola.

10   PRINCIPAL MOLA: Good evening everyone. I

11 am Principal Mola, Arthur Mola, proud Principal, not

12 only just a proud DCPS Principal, but a proud DCPS

13 parent. First, before I begin, I just want to say

14 how exciting it is that this year's budget hearing

15 coincides with our Chancellor's first strategic plan

16 with DCPS.

17   And I just want to say how exciting it is,

18 and I hope I could motivate and get everyone excited

19 about that, not only encouraging, but also supporting

20 our Chancellor as he gets his opportunity to craft

21 the strategic plan, and that we support him in

22 helping it be a successful strategic plan for the

1   next five years, so exciting time in modern DCPS

2   history.

3   As far as my two points, it really just

4   focuses on the teacher shortage, and operations.

5   First on the matter of the teacher shortage. I'd

6   like for us to consider a substantial amount of

7   funding to support the sponsorship of foreign

8   internationals, not just for teachers, but for other

9   staff positions. I think we need to embrace the

10   reality that the teacher shortage is not going to

11   improve.

12   The exodus of teachers in schools similar

13   to Cardozo, you know, really created a difficult

14   situation. And a lot of the teacher movement was

15   simply just teachers moving from one school to the

16   next, so obviously that creates a disadvantage for

17   schools like Cardozo, Dunbar, Coolidge and, you know,

18   the schools where my colleagues, my esteemed

19   colleagues lead.

20   So I'd like to propose that we allocate a

21   substantial amount of funds to support the division

22   in the department under folks like Nicole Billar to

1 not only sponsor foreign international teachers, but

2 also to create an induction program for them, provide

3 them with robust PLCs, help them network and adapt to

4 the DMV area.

5   I think it's a big shock for folks when

6 they move to the DMV area how expensive it is to live

7 out here. So while we want to continue to do our

8 best to try to recruit great talent from within the

9 United States, the reality is that that talent pool

10 is diminishing quickly, and it creates a disadvantage

11 for schools like Cardoza.

12   The second point to the teacher shortage

13 that I would like us to get very creative and bold in

14 funding, is to consider some of these reputable

15 organizations that have created some really

16 impressive teaching programs through virtual

17 platforms. So they're affordable, and we could

18 reallocate some of the funding that we're just not

19 going to be able to spend on teaching positions, and

20 reallocate those funds to staff, lower level, more

21 entry level staff, that would be in charge of

22 supervising the classrooms while they're receiving

1   quality, certified instruction from some of these

2   organizations such as Imagine Learning, to use one as

3   an example.

4   The other idea that just kind of came

5   about from that, that I didn't think of prior to this

6   testimony, was that these lower end jobs actually

7   creates a reasonable pipeline for even some of our

8   recent DCPS alum, who need to get into the workforce,

9   and what a great opportunity it would be if DCPS

10   could actually be that workforce for our recently

11   graduated alum, and they could build up their skills

12   and even who knows, become teachers themselves.

13   So I really want to focus on creating some

14   kind of funding sources for these virtual teaching

15   programs that will be delivered in the schools. So

16   we're not saying keep the kids at home, but bring the

17   kids to the school, but then, you know, provide them

18   with quality instruction from certified teachers.

19   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you Mr. Mola, yes.

20   PRINCIPAL MOLA: Yes.

21   DR. MAISTERRA: One more minute, and then

22   we'll certainly talk more. I know we'll continue the

1   conversation.

2   PRINCIPAL MOLA: Real easy, my last one is

3   on operations, and I think I heard everybody talk

4   about it. I don't know that it's reasonable for us

5   to continue thinking that the cross agency

6   collaboration between DGS, DCPS operations, and the

7   contracted maintenance consultants is working, and

8   that it's going to get better.

9   What if we reallocated a lot of the

10   funding that's actually earmarked for those agencies,

11   and folks working in those agencies, why not redirect

12   those funds back to the schools? I can easily call a

13   contractor to fix my locks. I could easily call a

14   contractor to fix a door, to fix a camera, an alarm.

15   These are not difficult, high-level, highly skilled

16   repairs.

17   If I had the funds in my local school

18   budget to pay for those things, I would get those

19   things done much quicker. So I'd like us to get a

20   little creative with that and understand that you

21   know I know it's a complex organization, but there

22   are some easy fixes to this that we can take care at

1   the school site level, rather than constantly waiting

2   and submitting work orders that often times you know

3   get closed out without the repair being made.

4   That's all I have, and I hope everyone has

5   a wonderful evening.

6   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much

7   Principal Mola. And I've been informed that Ms.

8   Carson Carr has joined us, so she will be next, Ms.

9   Carson Carr.

10   MS. CARR: Yes, good evening. Can you

11   hear me?

12   DR. MAISTERRA: Yes, good evening.

13   MS. CARR: Okay great. I can't put on my

14   camera because then you won't hear me. Good evening

15   everyone. Good evening Chancellor Ferebee and

16   everyone else. Capitol Hill Montessori and Logan is

17   in need of adequate staffing, especially for the

18   middle school.

19   They also need (Wi-Fi interference) course

20   offerings such as coding and robotics. We also need

21   more money to remodel and redesign the fallen tree

22   playground. It is a safety hazard for the children.

1   Secondly, Burrville Elementary has issues with its

2   HVAC system. The building is hot in the summer, and

3   cold in the winter.

4   What would happen if the students didn't

5   have to worry about being so cold in the building in

6   the winter, and so very hot in the summer? And we'll

7   talk about spring, and what learning could take place

8   if they could be comfortable. Burrville was tested

9   last week for their water, but they also need water

10   coolers now, with the supply of water, as long as

11   this situation is happening.

12   DCPS needs to find funding so it can teach

13   reading through fifth grade in every elementary

14   school. The test scores has proven this. Lastly,

15   I'm asking that we test all twelfth graders for

16   dyslexia this year. We know that at least 10 percent

17   or more of them has this issue, and are struggling.

18   It would be an eye opener for them. This

19   is DCPS's last chance to help them. It will help

20   them to become productive citizens. Please, I'm

21   begging you for the children, help them, and

22   everyone have a happy Thanksgiving, thank you.

1   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much. We

2   are now going to transition to our next group of

3   four. And that will be Yanna Contee-Jones, Agnes

4   Wanderer, Abigail Golden-Vazquez and Sonia Walti.

5   And we'll start with Ms. Contee-Jones.

6   MS. CONTEE-JONES: Hello everyone. My

7   name is Yanna Contee-Jones, and I'm a junior at

8   Phelps ACE High School. I'm a part of the

9   organization community enrichment projects EEE

10 program where DC youth focuses on local issues. I'm

11 here today to ask DCPS to provide adequate support

12 for appropriate student disciplinary actions.

13   Me and other DCPS students and families

14 have recognized a lack of fair and just disciplinary

15 procedures. This issue is important to me because I,

16 and other students, have witnessed multiple fights

17 being broken up by students while security was

18 available during these unsettling situations. Our

19 very own security officers conspiring against

20 students with other students.

21   And teachers being aware of heated student

22 arguments, and blatantly ignoring them. Many of

1   these students who get into these altercations have

2   already been in multiple fights, which disturb the

3   learning environment. However, despite their

4   behavior, the students do not seem to receive proper

5   consequences and help, but they continue to rejoin

6   the DCPS community.

7   I believe this is unfair to students,

8   including the disruptions, teachers and school staff.

9   This is an important issue, and we need to consider

10   how this affects us as students in the education we

11   are trying to get every day. I believe this issue

12   can be fixed by listening to the suggestions of DCPS

13   students. For example, me and other students have

14   been sharing our thoughts on DCPS issues on our

15   social media account at EEE project on Instagram and

16   TicTok.

17   We believe students are the best people to

18   talk to about these things because we see and know

19   everything that happens in our schools. Two specific

20   suggestions we have are related to DCPS programs, and

21   programs provided by outside organizations of DCPS.

22   The FY 21 DC budget included funding for a 13 member

1   social emotional learning and school culture team

2   that would support schools with student discipline in

3   fair ways.

4   We would like to request these supports be

5   provided to all schools. Some students who are

6   causing disruptions truly need this. Additionally,

7   OST programs like the community enrichment project

8   have limited budgets, and operate in various schools.

9   It would be near impossible for them to continue to

10 support these students if DCPS does not reverse its

11 decision to no longer cover security costs for the

12 free afterschool programming it provides to

13 students.

14   Chancellor Ferebee has said that many

15 afterschool programs will have to cover the cost of

16 security starting next school year, at an average

17 rate of $45.00 per hour, the costs for security

18 coverage could easily amount to over $30,000.00 a

19 school year. We hope this can be avoided for the

20 sake of students and the school CEP operates in.

21   Thank you for taking the time to hear my

22 testimony today.

1   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much.

2   Agnes Wanderer. Good evening.

3   MS. WANDERER: Good evening. My name is

4   Agnes Wanderer, and I'm the parent of two students in

5   DCPS schools. My son is in seventh grade at Hardy

6   Middle School, and I also have a daughter in fourth

7   grade at Eaton Elementary. Both of my children have

8   attended DCPS schools since kindergarten, and have

9   had excellent educational opportunities until the

10 start of this school year.

11   Due to the changes made last spring, and

12 the way that DCPS schools budgets are formulated,

13 Hardy Middle School was forced to cut three teacher

14 positions, including two elective teachers. Hardy's

15 consistent growth in the number of enrolled students

16 over the last decade proved to be a disadvantage

17 under the new budget model, and the resulting cuts

18 have seriously impacted the current student body.

19   The reduction in staff has resulted in

20 larger class sizes, which you heard from Abby

21 earlier, reduced elective offerings, and longer class

22 periods for the school year, which are all

1   detrimental to learning outcomes. However, the most

2   serious impact of the changes for our family has been

3   the loss of an entire class offering firm student

4   schedules.

5   During the 21-22 school year, Hardy

6   students took four core classes, math, ELA, social

7   studies and science, one foreign language and two

8   electives, which could either be a year long or

9   semester long offering. Given the positions that

10   were eliminated, the student body had to be divided

11   among fewer available instructors, which has resulted

12   not only in larger class sizes, but also the loss of

13   an entire elective option from student schedules.

14   This school year students are only able to

15   take the four core classes, one foreign language and

16   one semester long elective, so that our children are

17   receiving 14 percent less education than they were

18   last year because they are taking six academic

19   subjects instead of seven.

20   As an example, last year, in addition to

21   the four core classes and Italian, my son was able to

22   take a year long advanced band class to continue his

1   instrumental music studies, as well as a semester

2   long computer applications class, which is balanced

3   with health and PE in the other semester.

4   This year beyond the core classes, he's

5   only able to take one semester of an elective. In

6   order to funnel more kids into the remaining elective

7   options, Hardy's two music teachers have had to

8   switch from offering year-long instrumental music

9   classes at multiple levels, to offering only

10   semester-long general music education classes, in

11   order to accommodate the larger number of students

12   who did not have sufficient other elective options.

13   This has decimated the music program,

14   which was previously a leading music education

15   program in the district. Last year the school

16   offered beginning intermediate and advanced levels

17   of both orchestra and band, as well as a jazz band.

18   The seven ensembles were available for students to

19   begin our continuance in music.

20   The program served as an excellent

21   preparation for music students applying to DCPS's

22   Duke Ellington School for the Arts, which has lost a

1   key feeder program due to these changes. Although

2   the music teachers are currently offering once a week

3   optional ensembles to students who already play an

4   instrument during advisory periods, these are not

5   creative courses, and do not meet often enough to

6   truly advance student skills.

7   My submitted testimony also includes the

8   devastating impact of having lost the computer

9   applications teacher, which of course technology

10   skills are foundational to our students continued

11   education, so I hope that the district will

12   reconsider how it formulates school budgets for the

13   upcoming school year, so that prior offerings can be

14   restored at Hardy and other schools don't face

15   similar devastating changes next year once they lose

16   their full-time license. Thank you.

17   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you. Thank you very

18   much Ms. Wanderer. And next we'll hear from Abigail

19   Golden-Vazquez.

20   MS. GOLDEN-VAZQUEZ: Hello, hi, just take

21   me a second to unmute and get my camera going. Hi,

22   good evening. My name is Abigail Golden-Vasquez, and

1   I'm the mother of a eighth grade former musician at

2   Hardy Middle School. Thank you for the opportunity

3   to testify.

4   Budget cuts at Hardy Middle School

5   destroyed my son's music ambitions. While at John

6   Eaton, an elementary school with an award winning

7   music program, my son became an avid and accomplished

8   trumpet player. He was nurtured by outstanding

9   teachers, Mr. Brown and Ms. Mystery, to flourish in

10   music performance, and even began composing.

11   While in boundary for Deal Middle School,

12   we chose Hardy for its extraordinary music program,

13   which boasted a chorus, a jazz band, orchestra, and

14   strings. A main attractor for the school, which was

15   also served as a feeder of talented students to Duke

16   Ellington School for the Performing Arts.

17   The first year of middle school for him

18   was challenging, as it was for all because of the

19   COVID-19 quarantine. So he struggled with the online

20   music program. The second year was highbred and was

21   also challenging, but he continued performing, and

22   excuse me, but he continued performing, and

1   participated in end of year graduation concert.

2   Finally, this, his third and last year,

3   budget cuts eliminated the music program practically

4   in its entirety, and this was the final straw. My

5   son quit music altogether. Performance classes were

6   discontinued, and replaced with one general music

7   class with no performance element. My son said he

8   tried to keep it going over the three years, but this

9   was the last straw.

10   If his school wasn't going to take music

11   seriously, why should he? And I struggled to

12   understand why DCPS would eliminate a successful

13   signature program in a school recognized for music,

14   pulling the rug out from underneath the students and

15   parents who made a choice based on these offerings.

16   The course of action taken not only to

17   decimate the budget, but to remove the crown jewel of

18   Hardy Middle School makes no sense, given the

19   positive outcomes for students that participation and

20   music programs has proven. Catherine Doncall, our

21   Executive Director of Education through Music writes

22   there's a heap of incontestable research showing that

1   an education rich in music improves student's

2   cognitive function, and academic performance.

3   Joan Whitman in the Wall Street Journal

4   notes that a growing body of evidence suggests that

5   music could trump many of the more expenses fixes

6   that we have thrown at the education system.

7   Research shows that music training boosts IQ, focus

8   and persistence. While it's too late for my son, I

9   urge you to approve a budget that allows Hardy to

10   reinstate its comprehensive music performance and

11   arts programs for future students. Thank you very

12   much.

13   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you. And next we

14   will hear from Sonia Walti, Ms. Walti.

15   MS. WALTI: Dear DCPS, Community

16   Engagement Team, Dear Chancellor Ferebee, thank you

17   for the opportunity to testify on behalf of School

18   Without Walls High School's local school advisory

19   team to make three requests. First, budgets need to

20   fully fund our high school programming.

21   Post 2020, our high schools need student

22   centered programs, social emotional support, and

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1   robust academic programs that fill gaps while

2   preparing our students for tomorrow's complex

3   realities. The Federal School Emergency Relief Fund,

4   ESSR has been supplementing our budget, including

5   social workers at our school.

6   When ESSR runs out, our already lean

7   program is headed for a fiscal cliff, and we have

8   heard about fiscal cliffs just now on two

9   testimonies. Where costs affect teacher, core

10   programs and student support, hence our school

11   budgets need to be fully funded, accounting for

12   losses of federal funding as needed.

13   Second, budget allocations need to account

14   for building related limits. DCPS's budgeting

15   process makes increasing enrollments the sole

16   reliable path to security a school's budget to fully

17   fund teachers, staff, materials and existing

18   programs. This fuels an absurd ratcheting up of

19   enrollments.

20   We now have 600 students in a tiny

21   building built for no more than 520. Wall students

22   have less than two-thirds of the minimum square

1   footage recommended for high school students, per

2   D&E, roughly half that of the next most crowded

3   public high school Jackson Reed.

4   38 full-time and 9 adjunct teachers share

5   a good 25 owners of scraped classrooms with no place

6   to gather or recharge. Only 8 of our teachers have

7   their own classroom. Theater and gym share the

8   cafeteria, imagine that, and classroom less teachers

9   cart materials around the building.

10   Seeing how tightly packed and slowly our

11   students are able to evacuate when they need to, I

12   don't dare imagine an emergency. Hence, building

13   capacity limits are critical when allocating budgets

14   and developing algorithms to do so. That costs can

15   be met without ratcheting up these enrollment numbers

16   in absurd ways.

17   Third, budgets must be allocated in a

18   predictable manner. This is to reiterate and

19   highlight what Sandra Moscoso stressed in her

20   testimony earlier, regarding the destabilizing effect

21   of the current model's unpredictability. In the face

22   of high school needs, and a nationwide teacher

1   shortage, our schools need budgetary stability and

2   predictability from the start.

3   Thank you for the opportunity to stress

4   our need for budget stability, and the need for a

5   funding formula, in which costs can be met without

6   ratcheting up enrollments.

7   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you. Our next group

8   will be Alicia Bolton, Madison Bolton, Lara Stingley

9   and Maxwell Rabin. Ms. Bolton?

10   MS. A. BOLTON: It says the host stopped

11   my video. Can you all hear me?

12   DR. MAISTERRA: We can hear you, yes.

13   MS. A. BOLTON: Okay. I'll just go on and

14   maybe I can get fixed. Good evening, my name is

15   Alicia Bolton, and I am a parent at Whittier

16   Elementary in Ward 4. I have a third grader, and a

17   kindergartener at Whittier who both love this school,

18   but unfortunately do not have a building that is

19   safe. So I'm testifying to request that Whittier

20   start the building modernization process in fall of

21   2023, for three reasons.

22   First, the building is not compliant with

1 the Americans With Disabilities Act. Whittier has

2 gone without an elevator since it was built, which is

3 a nightmare for students and teachers with

4 disabilities, who often have to Ms. out on activities

5 beyond the first floor.

6   And while there is an elevator under

7 construction in one wing of the school, the building

8 will still not be compliance after it's done. And

9 until other changes are made to bathrooms,

10 classrooms and so much more, which means that the

11 students at Whittier will continue to be shortchanged

12 because the district is not living up to its legal

13 obligation, and promise, to provide an equitable

14 learning environment for all students.

15   Second, the building has experienced

16 chronic roof leaks. The resulting water damage is

17 dangerous because it negatively impacts air quality

18 and subjects students and teachers to health

19 complications. A previous study by the Harvard

20 Public School of Health found that school is the

21 place where children spend most of their time outside

22 of the home, yet common indoor air pollutants in

1 schools have been associated with acute chronic

2 health conditions like asthma and allergies, as well

3 as impacts on the central nervous system.

4   As a mom of young children it is

5 disturbing to me. And let me repeat that, it is

6 disturbing to me that the very place where I send

7 them to learn could also be the same place that makes

8 them sick.

9   Third, the building does not have the

10 state of the art space and technology necessary to be

11 a premiere STEM school, poised to live up to its

12 designation as a green ribbon and project lead the

13 way school. The thought of my girls not being able

14 to do robust experiments that develop critical 21st

15 Century skills is disheartening, especially when

16 other students across the district have improved

17 buildings.

18   To attract and retain families in Ward 4,

19 and get them excited about sending their kids either

20 Ida B. Wells and Coolidge, then DC must make a proper

21 first impression that begins with a great experience

22 at Whittier, otherwise these families will leave

1   DCPS.

2   I'll close by saying that the Pace Act,

3   despite its good intentions, allows schools like

4   Whittier to fall through the cracks. So my request

5   to DCPS is two-fold. First, move Whittier up on the

6   modernization schedule to begin design work this

7   fall, 2023. Second, please address the underlying

8   flaws and limitations of the Pace Act. 2023 is the

9   time for the district to show through its budget what

10   it values, and who it values, thank you.

11   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much. And

12   is Madison Bolton also speaking?

13   MS. A. BOLTON: She is. Let me just get

14   her.

15   DR. MAISTERRA: Wonderful.

16   MS. A. BOLTON: All right come on Madison.

17   We're just going to adjust our height. Stand up.

18   Okay go ahead.

19   MS. M. BOLTON: Hi. My name is Madison

20   Bolton, and I'm in the third grade. I'm here to talk

21   about why Whittier Elementary needs to be fixed.

22   There are too many reasons why. The first reason is

1   that Whittier has pipes that are breaking.

2   When the pipes broke inside Whittier on

3   October 18, it forced all of the children and

4   teachers to come out of the building and go to the

5   school across form Whittier, which is Ida B. Wells.

6   When we got there we had to sit at tables in the

7   cafeteria until the fire trucks were gone.

8   We did not learn anything while we were

9   there. We got to talk and we drew pictures and ate

10   snacks. Then the teachers called each homeroom to

11   get in line and go back to Whittier. The second

12   reason is that people with physical disabilities that

13   cannot go up the stairs, or use the elevators because

14   the people who are working on the elevator, could not

15   finish it at the start of the school year.

16   One of my classmates broke his ankle. He

17   had a cast with crutches, and he could not get up the

18   stairs. He missed a few classes. One of the

19   teachers had to pick him up and carry him upstairs.

20   I don't think it's fair that people, I mean students

21   with disabilities who have crutches, or a wheelchair

22   don't have an elevator when they need to use it.

1   I also don't think that it's fair that

2   Whittier does not have a new building like Ida B.

3   Wells. Please fix Whittier starting in the fall,

4   2023, so that my classmates and I can play and learn

5   safely. Thank you for your time. It was such an

6   honor to be here.

7   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you Madison. And

8   next we have Laura Stingley.

9   MS. STINGLEY: Good evening.

10   DR. MAISTERRA: Good evening.

11   MS. STINGLEY: Thank you for the

12   opportunity to speak this evening. I am a parent of

13   a DCPS elementary school student, and we have been

14   active participants and partners with DCPS for over

15   two years. I'm speaking tonight because our children

16   need our assistance, and time is of the essence.

17   Since the beginning of the pandemic in early 2020,

18   I've attended several virtual meetings where DCPS

19   discussed and sought input from parents and the

20   community, about developing strategies for overcoming

21   student's learning loss.

22   Indeed, the math and reading assessment

1   numbers are stark, and addressing learning loss must

2   be a priority. However, our children have a greater

3   need during these challenging times. I'm requesting

4   additional funding, and further development to

5   implement social emotional interactive curriculum in

6   our classrooms.

7   Our children need immediate help in

8   maneuvering the obstacle course of social emotional

9   development, and practicing appropriate and effective

10 communication skills. Currently, the schools that

11 are incorporating social emotional curriculum are

12 treating it as a special, they're doing it once a

13 week, and that is insufficient.

14   It really needs to be integrated

15 throughout the curriculum on a daily basis, either

16 during morning meeting at the beginning of class, or

17 through reading, and role playing, and also it could

18 be incorporated into math, in terms of coming up with

19 hypothetical math problems.

20   Our children need the development of these

21 skills are imperative for our children to effectively

22 access the classroom learning. Children without

1   these skills are left alone to identify and navigate

2   their emotions, and engage with peers without the

3   necessary strategies and supports to appropriately

4   communicate their needs, and safely and joyfully

5   engage with their peers.

6   Funding to support social emotional

7   development and communication, such as We Thinkers,

8   Social Problem Solvers curriculum, which I have right

9   here, will help our children develop these skills,

10   which will provide the foundation for sound,

11   emotional and social health. And this curriculum is

12   actually used by Hospital for Sick Children in their

13   social communication courses.

14   Likewise, funding for proactive social

15   emotional programs will give teachers the tools and

16   support needed to address student disruptions,

17   student's emotional concerns, and peer conflicts in

18   the classroom. Implementation of these proposed

19   programs have multiple goals, including improving

20   children's emotional health, and reducing peer

21   conflicts, suspension and expulsion rates.

22   Other goals would include improving school

1 safety, and reducing incidents that are unfortunately

2 increasing in frequency in our schools. Incidents

3 where students, or former students, devoid of

4 self-esteem, and healthy peer relationships and

5 social emotional strategies make the inappropriate

6 choice to cause harm to students, teachers and staff

7 inside of schools.

8   DCPS has an opportunity to be a leader,

9 and to stand up as a school system of change,

10 committed to including increased commitment, funding,

11 resources, training, oversight and accountability to

12 supporting our children, and providing the tools

13 needed in the area of social emotional development,

14 and communication to improve the safety and learning

15 experience in the classroom.

16   Lifelong skills that are children will use

17 to become healthy, civil contributors in their

18 families, to their community and society. Thank you

19 again for this opportunity. Thank you again for this

20 opportunity.

21   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much. And

22 next we have Maxwell Rabin, or Rabin, my apologies.

1   All right. We'll keep moving and Mr. Rabin if you

2   are here we'll come back to you. Our next group is

3   Elizabeth Stuart, Peter Boyce, Maddlyn Sivilli and

4   Christopher Stewart, so we'll start with Elizabeth

5   Stuart.

6   MS. STUART: Great, thank you so much for

7   having me. I was not prepared to be the first in my

8   session, but it's nice to be here. I am here today

9   as a DCPS parent, and Co-Chair of the Alice Deal

10   Middle School LSAT.

11   I'm testifying today to highlight

12   challenges with the existing DCPS budget model,

13   especially for large schools. In particular, I'm

14   advocating on behalf of all DCPS schools, so that

15   all, regardless of their size, can be provided with

16   budgets that allow them to operate effectively

17   serving all of their students with year to year

18   consistency.

19   According to the most recent enrollment

20   audit, Deal serves about 1,400 sixth to eight grade

21   students, 16 percent of all DCPS in those grades.

22   The next largest school serving those students has

1   about 500 students, so Deal is about three times the

2   size of the next largest middle school.

3   Additionally, Deal serves about 140

4   English language learners, and 140 at-risk students,

5   more than the total number of sixth to eight graders

6   at several other DCPS schools. Deal also serves many

7   students from all over the district who travel from

8   across town to attend it.

9   Deal is also 100 percent IB school, so

10   each and every student at Deal receives an IB

11   education, regardless if that student is a special

12   ed, or ELO learner. And I appreciated Abby's

13   comments, and want to note that Deal does not receive

14   extra funding for this. It takes on this challenge,

15   receiving the lowest and per people funding of any

16   DCPS school.

17   So there are three points I want to make.

18   First, the new DCPS budget model imposes dramatic

19   cuts on Deal's funding. These were masked in FY 23

20   by nearly two million dollars in one time stability

21   funds. Losing those is the equivalent of 16 teaching

22   positions.

1   Under that model, Deal's total budget

2   would have fallen right over 1 million when

3   accounting for inflation. We are very concerned

4   about what will happen next year. Second, Deal, and

5   schools across the city are being forced to make do

6   with less. When we compare budgets for FY 20 to 23,

7   Deal's general ed funding has fallen by over $600.00

8   per student when accounting for inflation.

9   This leads to reduction of about 800,000

10   even after accounting for the reduction in the number

11   of students. This is at a time when as we've heard

12   students are challenged with recouping learning loss

13   and social emotional issues.

14   Third, the budget model does not take into

15   account the challenges of large schools. As you'll

16   hear about from Jackson Reed, and where my daughter

17   also attends, the economies of scale justification is

18   a false narrative that disadvantage students from

19   across the city. DCPS frequently allocates resources

20   on a per school basis, not accounting for school

21   size.

22   There are simply not economies of scale

1 that make up for the fact that large schools are

2 complicated organizations that require substantial

3 resources to operate efficiently and well. Ensuring

4 adequate funding needs to also take into account

5 specialized curricular, and we need to work together

6 to make sure that all schools have the resources and

7 attention that they need and deserve, thank you so

8 much.

9   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much. And

10 next we have Mr. Boyce.

11   MR. BOYCE: Here, here Elizabeth Short.

12 Folks I promise I won't be too long, so that those

13 who are at the end of the program can get home or

14 return to a decent hour. DCPS, Chancellor,

15 Co-Chairs, members, parents, guests and fellow

16 citizens, I extend my gratitude for this opportunity

17 to provide comment on the DCPS FY 24 budgetary

18 process.

19   I am Peter Boyce. First and foremost,

20 proud parent of two Ivy League grads, both from

21 education provided by DCPS, two present high schools,

22 a senior at Jackson Reed, and a sophomore at School

1   Without Walls. I'm a Ward 3 resident, President of

2   Community Peers Consultants. I am a current member

3   of the School Without Walls, and I concur with much

4   of the testimony of the prior presenters, and

5   especially those of members of the LSAT from School

6   Without Walls, and Alice Deal Middle School.

7   Three years ago Co-Chairs, as a member of

8   the LSAT Alice Deal Middle School I testified before

9   a similar DCPS public budgetary hearing at Maury

10   Elementary School. And along with another parent

11   presenter, Gwendolyn Washington, we urged budget

12   makers to allocate more funds towards social

13   emotional learning.

14   Today, I think the CPS for moving in this

15   direction to address the many social and mental

16   health issues through our schools, especially in

17   light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, I again

18   urge decision makes to continue to increase funding

19   for SEL given the real stresses and pressures that

20   impact society, humanity or students in our schools

21   system.

22   Co-Chairs while I leave the issues of

1 school size, class size, new schools by the

2 renovations et cetera to the technocrats, I solely

3 encourage full speed ahead to better performance in

4 DCPS. In an attempt to better rate and grade schools

5 from elementary to tertiary, Falls Magazine on July

6 31, 2018, published an article written by Renee

7 Morrat, titled Stick with the Best Public School

8 Systems.

9   And although that survey did not rank DCPS

10 very well, I believe it did our system a valuable

11 service if only we would heed the pre-requisite for

12 better school performance from one of the researches

13 cited in the article. Lois Shu, Assistant Professor

14 at Merrymount College. She found that more than any

15 factor, teacher quality seems to be the strongest

16 predictor of student achievement.

17   DR. MAISTERRA: Excuse me.

18   MR. BOYCE: My two minutes are up. Oh my

19 God.

20   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you, yes.

21   MR. BOYCE: So thank you, and please our

22 best, let's do our best. Thank you.

1   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much.

2   Maddlyn Sivilli.

3   MS. SIVILLI: Good evening, and thank you

4   for the opportunity to testify.   My name is Maddlyn

5   Sivilli, Division Manager of Programs at CASA for

6   Children of DC.   I was a public school teacher for a

7   number of years, and in the classroom I felt that I

8   couldn't effectively support my most vulnerable

9   students.

10   At CASA DC we support some of the most

11   marginalized youth in the district.   CASA DC

12   recognizes the vast importance of education for DC's

13   youth, particularly at risk youth.   We applaud the

14   2024 budget for allocating additional funds for DC's

15   high-risk youth, and urge individualized support to

16   ensure the success of our most vulnerable youth.

17   Recognizing the impact of childhood trauma

18   on youth learning is critical.   Childhood trauma

19   impacts brain development and youth who have

20   experienced childhood trauma are paramountly

21   impacted, particularly in learning.   Children

22   involved with Child Protective Services consistently

1   perform lower in math and reading.

2   Foster youth are at increased risk of

3   dropping out of school, and are less likely to

4   graduate from high school or college. The

5   achievement gap is readily apparently in DC's foster

6   youth. In 2019, less than 27 percent of youth served

7   by CFSA were approaching meeting or exceeding

8   expectations in English, and less than 23 percent in

9   math.

10   CFSA involved youth from 2020 to 2021, had

11   an average GPA of 1.9. Individualized support can

12   help. For 20 years CASA DC's volunteers have

13   provided one on one mentorship and best interest

14   advocacy for foster and juvenile justice involved

15   youth. One of our primary areas of youth support is

16   in education. Engaging youth in learning activities,

17   providing academic assistance, engaging with academic

18   providers and navigating academic barriers.

19   With the support of a CASA volunteer, 88

20   percent of our youth in 2021 were approaching

21   expectations in school or greater, compared to CFSA's

22   23 percent. Our youth with reported GPA achieved an

1   average of 2.6, compared to CFSA's 1.9. And 85

2   percent of our youth have positive and hopeful

3   feelings about their academic present and future.

4   CASA DC seeks to better support DCPS in

5   its efforts to improve education for at-risk

6   students. There are strong opportunities for

7   partnership, utilizing our dedicated community-based

8   volunteers. In the past year we have provided

9   numerous trainings for our staff and volunteers on

10   topics including providing academic support, student

11   voice, creating accountability plans, special

12   education and cognitive development.

13   With increased funding for DC's at-risk

14   youth, DCPS can take a decisive approach to ensure

15   greater individualized support for DC's foster youth.

16   Well CASA DC is eager to provide partnership to

17   facility greater support to youth, we additional

18   urge the following.

19   Increased bundled help support at each

20   DCPS school, with a high at-risk population.

21   Decreased adults to student ratio with additional

22   cost for aides, and expanded tutoring services to

1   address academic gaps. CASA DC's is very grateful

2   for the opportunity to support DC's at-risk youth.

3   Thank you for your time as well.

4   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much. And

5   next we'll hear from Christopher Stewart.

6   MR. STEWART: Yes, hello. Can you hear me

7   okay?

8   DR. MAISTERRA: Yes, good evening.

9   MR. STEWARD: Good evening DCPS FY 24

10   Budget Hearing, November 16, and the DCPS family.

11   When we ponder the trauma that our community has

12   endured, I think it's only empathically just for us

13   to take a 10 second meditative moment, thinking about

14   the thousands of DCPS related lives that were lost in

15   the last few years, and the emotional, psychological

16   and fiscal toll this caning has caused us.

17   As we continue to lift one another up, we

18   heard one another. Let's just continue to talk about

19   the budget or this ideal budget that I know that we

20   can create together. The United States Congress

21   Joint Economic Committee examined the monthly

22   household inflation cost. The inflation costs

1   reflect how much more the average U.S. household must

2   pay for the same goods and services it purchased in

3   January 2021

4   The average inflation cost in the United

5   States are slightly under $750.00. The average

6   inflation costs in Washington, D.C. is slightly above

7   $1,000.00. Educators don't make enough, regardless

8   of whether or not DCPS educators make more than a

9   large amount of other educators, we also pay more for

10 housing and healthcare.

11   A survey entitled The American Community

12 Survey, ACS, by the Census Bureau reported a few

13 years ago that the median income for white households

14 was $125,000.00 roughly, compared to $47,000.00

15 roughly for African American households. Those

16 figures have not changed significantly.

17   As an anti-racist, anti-hatred school

18 system, we have been fortunate enough to have school

19 librarians who are trained researchers, historians

20 and archivists who can examine such troubling

21 realities as to its full solutions, and help develop

22 equitable partnerships that would combat said data,

1   and systemically heal practices.

2   While we're on the subject of school

3   librarians, in FY 23 after peaceful protesting and

4   fighting to guarantee every school has a full-time

5   certified librarian, Council Member Janeese Lewis

6   George authored an amendment that passed and

7   solidified 3.25 million to guarantee that every

8   school has a certified full-time librarian. I would

9   like to give kudos to DCPS and Chancellor Ferebee,

10   thank you.

11   This investment was not a heavy lift for a

12   school system that received in total over 300 million

13   in COVID-19 recovery funds. To date, a very small

14   amount of these elementary and secondary school

15   emergency relief asset funds have been steady. I,

16   we, are curious as to what the plan is to spend

17   equitably and judiciously, indefinitely personnel,

18   all schools should have at least one librarian, which

19   is not non-petitionable.

20   Budget recommendations, schools with more

21   than 600 students should budget a library tech aide

22   to support school library programming. Schools with

1   more than 1,000 students should allocate a second

2   school librarian position to support the school

3   library program. I have more there I'll let you all

4   read.

5   Next, for DCPS's FY 23 Budget Development

6   Guide, funding, create a program and hire peace and

7   love ambassadors. These ambassadors would replace

8   SPL's and traditional security offices. These

9   ambassadors will receive mediation, anti-hatred, and

10   restorative justice training.

11   Ambassadors would reside in every school,

12   but also Central Office because we all need that

13   care. Additional funding for music programs and art

14   programs, including dance throughout DCPS. Every

15   primary and secondary school should have a robust

16   arts program that includes each of these programs.

17   In conjunction with DC Housing Authority,

18   DC Public Library, create tutoring and homework help

19   opportunities in each ward and neighborhood, with 26

20   public libraries there is incredible opportunity for

21   each student, parent and community member to have

22   homework, resume and employment application

1   assistance with a collaborative partner. DCH, DCPS

2   and ECCL.

3   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you Mr. Stewart.

4   MR. STEWART: Really quickly, our

5   personnel, our students are carefully watching, and

6   often quietly, but they are observing our actions.

7   We have a responsibility to work together to,

8   Chancellor Ferebee and WTU educators have lost homes,

9   part-time jobs, and for some their confidence in

10   their abilities.

11   This month must be the month that egos are

12   put to rest, and politics become a distant memory.

13   This month must be the month that a new contract that

14   propels educators in an incredible future signed,

15   seals and delivers. My colleagues are beautiful,

16   intelligent and compassionate.

17   My colleagues are not only the ones that

18   are ET-15, but they are part of the wider DCPS

19   family, including each person at Central Office, from

20   instructional superintendents, division chiefs,

21   directors, brilliant custodians, administrative

22   assistants. Our students are watching, and what

1 example do we want to give them, absolutely peace,

2 love and light, thank you.

3   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you so much. And

4 our next group will be Angela Anderson, Nierria

5 Jones-Cooper, Ambrose Lane Jr., Martin Welles. And

6 we will start with Ms. Anderson.

7   MS. ANDERSON: Hello. Can you hear me

8 okay?

9   DR. MAISTERRA: Yes, thank you good

10 evening.

11   MS. ANDERSON: Good evening. Good evening

12 Chancellor Ferebee and the Council. My name is

13 Angela Anderson and I'm a Ward 4 resident, a parent

14 of four, in which my daughter, my youngest, attends

15 Whittier Elementary School, which is our neighborhood

16 school in Ward 4.

17   And I'm also proud to say that I am the

18 current PTO president of that amazing school. So I'm

19 here to provide my testimony on the gross negligence

20 that is happening at Whittier, and continues to

21 happen at Whittier. This is my fifth year at the

22 school. There have been ongoing and ignored issues

1   the entire time that I've been a parent at this

2   school.

3   This is actually the reason why I stepped

4   into the role of PTO President because someone needs

5   to advocate for all of our working parents at our

6   school. Someone needs to highlight the gross neglect

7   that our families continue to endure over the years.

8   Is it because we have working parents who don't have

9   as much free time as other schools across the city?

10   Is it because of our demographics, and

11   we're a school of mostly minorities? You know last

12   year I wrote a letter on behalf of the issues that

13   were going on in the school, and even though that

14   letter was addressed, it wasn't addressed because the

15   sub-par contractors continue to put the band-aid

16   solutions on our issues, which is of course, you've

17   heard it already, our leaky roof.

18   You're aware that prior to the pandemic

19   that there was a leaky roof issue, and that the issue

20   was repaired, but the roof is still leaking. And

21   that year, prior to the pandemic, there were three

22   classroom relocations. Teachers who fell ill to the

1 poor air quality because of the water that ran into

2 the classrooms.

3   Do you think that that type of environment

4 is one that is conducive to learning? Do you think

5 teacher absences due to poor air quality and these

6 band-aid solutions should continue? There have been

7 three roofing repairs since I've been there, and yet

8 this roof still leaks. I'll stop about the roof.

9   As we know, Whittier is a nearly 100 year

10 old building. The negligence forces us to continue

11 to suffer. You've heard about the leaky roof, but

12 there's also HVAC issues. There's non-working water

13 fountain. There are sewage backups in the classrooms

14 and in the bathrooms. They're non-working toilets on

15 an entire level in our building, and let's not talk

16 about the falling bricks that are on ECE wing, and

17 all of the sustained water damage that we continue

18 to deal with.

19   You heard Madison, one of our students,

20 give testimony about the radiator that burst, how she

21 felt, the hot sting that spilled out. The fact that

22 there were hours of disruption for the classroom

1   instruction, and the teachers could not do what they

2   needed to do to help fulfill the need and demand of

3   educating our students.

4   Again, my presence today is to urge you to

5   pay attention, and for DCPS, DGS, the facilities,

6   whoever is in charge of insurance that we get

7   qualified contractors to stop the negligence. We've

8   been having these piece meal solutions, and they are

9   not resolving any of our issues.

10   What it is, is costing taxpayers millions

11   of dollars. My ask, my urge, my request is for

12   Whittier to be modernized, beginning fall of 2023

13   because the current schedule just doesn't address the

14   fact that we have students, teachers, and families

15   that are put at risk every day. Has anyone ever

16   considered the fact that we should not follow a list,

17   and instead consider the safety need?

18   As a parent, both options need to be

19   addressed. I would just like to say my last part if

20   it's okay, it's just disheartening to know that when

21   we look across the street we see the new Ida B.

22   Wells, and all of the money that's been put into

1   Coolidge, and we see that we have all of these

2   ongoing physical issues. So thank you very much for

3   allowing me to testify today, and I hope that

4   Whittier can be moved up because it's definitely

5   wasteful to continue pouring money into our school.

6   Thank you.

7   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you Ms. Anderson.

8   Next Ms. Jones-Cooper.

9   MS. JONES-COOPER: Can you hear me okay?

10   DR. MAISTERRA: Yes. Thank you.

11   MS. JONES-COOPER: Okay thank you so much.

12   Good evening everyone. My name is Nierria

13   Jones-Cooper, and I am the LSAT Communications

14   Coordinator, and parent of a junior scholar at

15   Phelps Architecture Construction and Engineering High

16   School.

17   First, let me start by saying thank you

18   for giving me the time to speak today. This is my

19   third time speaking at the annual budget hearing, and

20   I have to be honest and say that it's a bit

21   discerning that after three hearings, three years,

22   we're still asking for the same things.

1   We are seeing mice running through the

2   halls during the daytime. We have classroom doors

3   and bathrooms that we have been waiting for over four

4   years now to be repaired, all while we watch DCPS

5   continue to construct new facilities and other

6   athletic fields.

7   We are still dealing with the shared

8   subpar athletic field since DCPS took our athletic

9   field to construct a new school. There have been

10 quite a few fights on campus, as one of our students

11 has mentioned, and a lot of these are occurring in

12 the rooms that do not have proper working doors.

13   So how long does it take to fix a door?

14 How long does it take to provide quality athletic

15 fields? How long does it take to provide safety for

16 our scholars? In my first speech three years ago I

17 talked extensively about my son who was diagnosed

18 with autism when he was three, and our choice to

19 choose DC as our forever home.

20   Over the years with heavy interventions,

21 he is at a place where he still needs support, but he

22 can, and has been successful academically. Phelps

1 has had more scholars on the spectrum into the school

2 in the last three years, and yet the school has not

3 been provided with any resources to support scholars

4 on the autism spectrum.

5   Autism is a unique disability, and the

6 word spectrum means something. These neuro divergent

7 scholars have the ability to see things through a

8 beautiful lens that should be celebrated, accepted

9 and nurtured. Elon Musk, Temple Grand Dean, Anthony

10 Iona, are examples of people on the autism spectrum

11 that have gone on to do great things with proper

12 support.

13   I don't think DCPS is doing enough for

14 this unique demographic to be supported, especially

15 at Phelps High School. Yes, we are application

16 school, but we are also a school where we have

17 scholars with disabilities that need proper support.

18 In closing, as the Board considers its budget, we ask

19 that you take time and properly research autism

20 spectrum disorder, and provide the supports to not

21 just your comprehensive high schools, but also your

22 application high schools, for scholars on the

1   spectrum.

2   And please, please, please, fix our doors

3   in the building, please, fix the doors. Thank you.

4   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much.

5   Ambrose Lane Jr.

6   MR. LANE JR.: Good evening, my name is

7   Ambrose Lane Junior. I'm Chair of Health Alliance

8   Network, DC's largest community based health advocacy

9   organization, but I'm here tonight as a Ward 7

10   resident, a parent of a third greater at Anne Beers

11   Elementary School, and active member of the PTO, and

12   a former officer in Ward 7 Education Council.

13   I'm here to advocate for the creation of a

14   STEAM Academy for entrepreneurship for grades six

15   through 12 at Winston, formerly Winston Elementary

16   School. But I ask you, the Mayor's capital

17   improvement plan put in the budget money to demolish

18   Winston, and create a community oriented city-wide

19   facility or project based and career oriented

20   learning.

21   This plan did not go through as last year,

22   and in part I believe because it wasn't supported by

¹ the community. It wasn't supported by the PTOs and

² Anne Beers. It wasn't supported by the PTO at Randle

³ Highlands Elementary School. It wasn't supported by

⁴ the Hillcrest Community Student Association, and it

⁵ wasn't supported by the Ward 7 Educational Council.

⁶   Why do we need, and what can a Winston

⁷ STEAM Academy for Entrepreneurship do? Well it can

⁸ provide a guaranteed high-quality neighborhood

⁹ secondary option. It can provide a sixth through 12

¹⁰ education campus with a STEAM curriculum that

¹¹ supports an entrepreneur mindset. It can provide

¹² strong world language options, and it can follow a

¹³ whole school, whole community, whole child focus.

¹⁴   It also can provide space for adult

¹⁵ learning in math and reading literacy, given the fact

¹⁶ that Ward 7 has the highest illiteracy rate in the

¹⁷ city, and residents -- and I consider the residents

¹⁸ east of the river, read at a first grade or lower

¹⁹ reading level.

²⁰   Why Winston? Well the Mayor just today

²¹ unveiled the draft Racial Equity Action Plan.

²² Winston can create an opportunity to address start

1   systemic inequities from those students living east

2   of the Anacostia River, and those living west of Rock

3   Creek Park, and the gradations of inequity that

4   exists in between that have been exemplified by the

5   testimony here tonight.

6   It can also reverse the current

7   inequitable practices of DCPS that currently require

8   students to leave Ward 7 and travel west for greater

9   educational opportunities, like AP and IP programs

10   for early childhood access, do a language and STEAM,

11   and address facility concerns as currently in

12   practice with the overcrowding of Deal, Jackson Reed,

13   formerly Wilson, and newly approved McArthur Campus

14   High School.

15   It can also establish a school with the

16   social economic diversity, strong parental and

17   community support, and quality educational programing

18   by developing a feeder pattern from the fully

19   enrolled elementary schools of Anne Beers, or Randle

20   Highlands, coming from the economically diverse

21   communities of Hillcrest, Snake Gardens, Fairfax

22   Village, Randle Highlands, Dupont Park and Penn

1   Grant.

2   It can also enhance plans for many that

3   are underway in major development, but it's process

4   and growing in the surrounding communities like the

5   crest at Skyline town center, and the resident of the

6   Penn Grant shopping center. It can also increase the

7   DCPS student capture rates for east of the river

8   schools.

9   And lastly, we are open to, and willing to

10   collaborate and work with Chancellor Ferebee and his

11   staff. And what we are requesting is the creation of

12   a planning committee from DCPS to work with parents

13   from Anne Beers and Randle Highlands, with parents

14   and community residents from Hillcrest and

15   Association and the Ward 7 Education Council to

16   jointly create a plan for the use of Winston

17   Elementary School.

18   Thank you very much for the challenge, and

19   I will put up my information in the chat for

20   Chancellor Ferebee, but we challenge, and we want to

21   know that the Chancellor is willing to work with us

22   as a community to get some of these things done,

1   thank you.

2   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you. And now we'll

3   hear from Martin Welles.

4   MR. WELLES: Okay. Sorry for the light.

5   I'm in a closet here. We've got award ceremonies

6   going on tonight, but my name is Marty Wells. I have

7   three children at Jackson Reed High School. My

8   children participate in a total of seven different

9   sports. Some of these sports are funded by DCPS,

10   DCIAA, and some are not.

11   All these teams are required to comply

12   with the regulations of DCIAA, including coaches pay,

13   attendance, grades, athletic trainers at events. And

14   all these costs are shifted to the parents, and the

15   parents have to come up with the money so that a

16   season can take place.

17   The estimated cost for an unfunded sport

18   is somewhere between 10 and 15 thousand dollars per

19   season. None of this money come through the

20   budgetary process. Like a head coach is required by

21   DCIAA, that's $3,000.00. An assistant coach is

22   $1,000.00. Athletic trainers at $175.00 an hour

1   require eight home games, that's $2,800.00.

2   Referees are $2,400.00. Uniforms are

3     $2,000.00 annualized. Bus transportation is about

4     $4,000.00. All these expenses are incurred at the

5   parents expense. So what DCPS can do is place

6     $250,000.00 in a grant program administered by DCIAA,

7   and then these unfunded high school sports can apply

8   for those grants based on their budgetary needs.

9   If DCIAA doesn't want to do it, I serve on

10   the board of Capital Community Partners, and we'd be

11   happy to put in a proposal for that grant. This is

12   about equity and inclusion. There's many sports that

13   are non-traditional outside of football and

14   basketball that students could participate in, and

15   get a college scholarship.

16   For example, women's field hockey in

17   college or boy's lacrosse. And, you know, I want to

18   thank you for your time. I look forward to

19   partnering with you in the future. I've already

20   talked to the Mayor about this. I've talked to City

21   Council members, it's time to fund the unfunded high

22   school sports in DC public schools. Thank you.

1   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you. And next we

2   have an upcoming group beginning with Dennis Beath,

3   Andrew Beath, Shawn Ruffing and Nura Green, and we'll

4   start with Mr. Dennis Beath.

5   MR. BEATH: Thank you Chancellor and

6   everyone for allowing me to testify. My name is

7   Dennis Beath. I'm a student at Hardy Middle School.

8   In school I haven't been able to choose any of my

9   elective classes of my choice because we don't have

10 many to choose from other than the classes that have

11 been given for us.

12   My science teacher, Ms. Davis, because of

13 the difficulty trying to get to Hardy, so having her

14 leave impacted the class without a teacher. We

15 haven't done any school work for three weeks

16 straight, so without a teacher we haven't been able

17 to function as a class properly.

18   As you know we didn't have the rules

19 enforced properly that led to a fight that broke out

20 at class. I've noticed at school that the classes

21 have gotten a lot bigger, and longer than the classes

22 from last year. 90 minute classes are the three

1 classes that we have, such as each day. The three

2 classes we have each day is a lot longer than last

3 year.

4   We haven't had multiple classes of our

5 choice. Many of us want, a few us like, for example,

6 wanted a class just PE or band. We haven't been able

7 to do that because of the three classes that have

8 been given to us. With these larger classes it has

9 been a lot harder to maintain order in class.

10   I've noticed a lot of rough housing,

11 because I do not feel as safe as I should be at

12 school. Many people have been fighting, without a

13 lot of talk. They haven't been punished for what

14 happened. A lot of poor behavior such as foul

15 language has been seen anywhere in school no matter

16 where you go. There will be someone that curses.

17   I want to thank you all again for

18 listening. Have a great evening.

19   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much. And

20 now we'll hear from Andrew Beath.

21   MR. BEATH: Yes, thank you. So I'm the

22 proud father of Dennis. I also have two other

1   children in DCPS in elementary and early learning

2   center. I've never testified before. My son has

3   never testified before, quite frankly, because you

4   know we've never had a situation that is as

5   concerning as what we've experienced this year at

6   Hardy.

7   Dennis joined Hardy last year in sixth

8   grade. He had a very positive experience and took

9   band, had great teachers. And you know, not

10   withstanding usual middle school issues, many of his

11   classmates seemed to be well behaved. The teachers

12   were motivated.

13   I was as impressed with Hardy as I have

14   been with any DCPS school, or any other schools that

15   I've been exposed to. And, you know, I had followed

16   Hardy over the years, and you know, obviously making

17   the decision to enroll there. Hardy is such a

18   success story. It has been such a success story.

19   And I was so proud, you know, I was so proud to be

20   able to continue that.

21   But this year has just it's been a real

22   break. I noticed during the parent teacher

1   conferences compared to last year that the teacher's

2   morale had fallen quite precipitously. Only a week

3   after I had the parent teacher conference Dennis's

4   science teacher quit, for reasons including, you

5   know, that she just could not make ends meet having

6   to pay the transport costs coming to the city.

7   And it's testimony too that has been

8   incredibly disruptive. He's been reporting to me

9   about the problems with behavior that is stemming

10   from frankly, the huge classes that he's in. This is

11   all a product of the new budget model, it's a product

12   of Hardy. The victim of its own success, and having

13   staffing positions cut.

14   Hardy is such a success story for the

15   school as Ms. Paulson ably detailed earlier. And I

16   would hate for the future of DCPS for that success to

17   be reversed. I have a very hard decision to make,

18   and we have a fifth grade child who will be, you

19   know, looking obviously to go on to middle school

20   next year, and at the moment I don't know that I can

21   send her to Hardy in good conscience knowing what is

22   going on this year.

1   So I implore the Chancellor, all of you in

2   decision making power, to look at this, look at how

3   you can resource Hardy appropriately, so that the

4   school does not suffer regression so that it becomes

5   a place where people like myself and others

6   throughout the city can in good conscience send our

7   children in, because at the moment I cannot say that

8   that's the case. Thank you.

9   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you. Next we have

10 Shawn Ruffing.

11   MR. RUFFING: Thank you so much, and good

12 evening to each and every one of you, to the

13 Chancellor of DCPS, Chancellor Ferebee, to the Deputy

14 Chancellor, and to each and every one of you under

15 the sound of my voice. My name is Shawn Ruffing, and

16 I am a former DCPS graduate, and also a former DCPS

17 employee, and I just came back, and I am working at

18 Calvin Coolidge Senior High School, which is my alma

19 mater.

20   There were several things that confirmed

21 my testimony today. One of them that I wish DCPS

22 would have -- I would suggest to DCPS is to create an

1   alumni council, a DCPS alumni council for alumnus

2   throughout who graduate through DCPS, especially

3   through the high schools.

4   To come and talk and who are interested

5   into employees back home in their area schools,

6   whether it be elementary, whether it be middle, or

7   whether it be high school. So that is my request is

8   to create a DCPS alumni council. Another thing too,

9   for the educational aides and paraprofessionals, we

10   know that there's a teacher shortage. I've been

11   hearing that tonight.

12   Teacher shortage, and you have educational

13   aides and paraprofessionals that could step up to the

14   plate, and to fulfill the teacher role for our

15   students. So I wish that if we have some -- a cohort

16   of educational aides and paraprofessionals who

17   wouldn't mind stepping up to the plate and try to be

18   trained to become certified teachers, that would be

19   easy enough for DCPS to place the talent that we have

20   into these schools that do not have enough teachers

21   for instruction for our students.

22   Because I was a substitute teacher. A

1   larger substitute teacher at another school district

2   that needed help, and that's because I'm an

3   educational aide, you know, team players make you

4   know, make the dream work. So I feel that if you

5   have educational aides and paraprofessionals that are

6   ready to step into that teacher mode, and to create

7   that core, to create the training for that endeavor.

8   And lastly, on AVID. I remember that

9   there was AVID through DCPS, I don't know what

10   happened to it, but if it's possible that somewhere

11   down the line that AVID could come through the middle

12   and high schools, especially through the high schools

13   while they are applying to colleges, given their

14   essays scholarships and that sort.

15   And for the middle schools AVID where the

16   middle schools get to know what the process is,

17   preparing themselves through what the materials are

18   for them to successfully become a scholar when they

19   get to high school so they can be prepared.

20   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you Mr. Ruffing.

21   MR. RUFFING: Thank you so much.

22   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you. And next we

1   will hear from Nura Green.

2   MS. GREEN: Good evening everyone

3   DR. MAISTERRA: Good evening.

4   MS. GREEN: Thank you. Thank you DC

5   Public Schools for giving me the opportunity to share

6   my thoughts and recommendations for budget fiscal

7   year 2023-24. I'm Nura Green Lane, a part of a

8   student at Anne Beers Elementary, and these are my

9   recommendations.

10   First, happy early Thanksgiving. My son

11   is a legacy. I attended, my grandparent, my

12   grandmother was the crossing guard, and my aunts

13   attended, so we're very proud of Anne Beers, and Anne

14   Beers is a legacy school. In addition to my aunt

15   being a special ed teacher. My concern, excuse me,

16   is traffic safety to prevent accidents and

17   fatalities.

18   Anne Beers is along Alabama Avenue. There

19   are several entity organizations and educational

20   centers around Alabama Avenue from Pennsylvania

21   Avenue to Branch Avenue. We need to remedy this

22   immediately. No one adheres to the speed limit, and

1   it is very frightening to walk across Alabama Avenue

2   even with the crossing guard.

3   Next, and I've heard this many times

4   through other school representatives, building

5   modernization and completion of projects. Did you

6   know Anne Beers is 80 years old this year. So when

7   Anne Beers was built, the US was going to World War

8   II. And all the while at that time the school was

9   predominately white. It's now a majority black.

10   And it's old, it has the issue of an 80

11   year old. Nothing has the same shelf life. And so

12   originally, about a decade ago some form of

13   modernization took place. The work was shoddy. I

14   understand the faults with Whittier. We sympathize

15   with you because the work was shoddy, and we continue

16   to have issues around that shoddy work.

17   Please stay abreast of those contractors

18   that are working in the schools. Back in 2019, there

19   was a fire in our cafeteria after this shoddy work.

20   One-half of the building learned that the fire was

21   going on, the other half did not know. And so, I'm

22   not certain whether or not that fire issue has been

1   addressed. I am concerned that with an 80 year old

2   building, we need to be sure that the school is ready

3   for our 21st Century scholars.

4   Health and safety, I will say that our

5   building and maintenance staff and personnel, really

6   carried our school during this pandemic, and they had

7   to be sure that our schools were ready for safe

8   return, for our parents, for our teachers and our

9   students. And HVAC, the HVAC system, of course, is a

10 situation that we had to deal with.

11   It continues to be, and I hope that you

12 guys continue to provide updates citywide about those

13 HVAC systems, as well as water filtration systems.

14 They did replace some things at Anne Beers, but that

15 is ongoing. And we know that as the season

16 progresses, more of our students are getting sick

17 again. It's not necessarily COVID, but the other

18 viruses, and so we need to ensure that the cleaning

19 and the maintenance continues on as is needed.

20   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you.

21   MS. GREEN: I would also say that food

22 security -- am I over?

1   DR. MAISTERRA: You are. If you can in

2   one more minute please to finish.

3   MS. GREEN: Food security issues, we have

4   the food prep program, and that needs to be fully

5   funded. I did submit my testimony. Please make sure

6   that our teachers all have NARCAN available to them

7   because we do have an opioid crisis, and students

8   are getting access to opioids, thank you.

9   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you.

10   MS. GREEN: Thank you very much, Happy

11   Thanksgiving.

12   DR. MAISTERRA: You as well, thank you.

13   Our next group will be Alice McNeill, Karen Cowden,

14   Valerie Boykin-Pair and Stephen Kletter. And we will

15   start with Alice McNeill.

16   MS. MCNEILL: Good evening. Thank you for

17   the opportunity to testify regarding the DCPS fiscal

18   year 24 budget. I appreciate this hearing being held

19   outside of our contract hours, so that educators are

20   fully able to participate. I'm Alice McNeill, a

21   reading specialist at Garfield Elementary School in

22   Ward 8.

1   There are many things I strongly believe

2   should be funded, such as increased budgets for

3   wrap-around mental health services for students, as

4   well as staff, money to support flexible scheduling,

5   and of course a strong contract for the WTU.

6   However, my testimony this evening will be focused on

7   a more straightforward line item, allocating more of

8   the budget to purchase decodable text to better

9   support our new and struggling readers.

10   The district has clearly stated that using

11   evidence based instruction is a priority. I'm a

12   proud alumnus of the DC Reading Clinic, one of the

13   best professional development opportunities

14   available within our district. Being trained with

15   the DC Reading Clinic is the first step to

16   supporting educators and students in this switch to

17   structured literacy, literacy aligned to brain

18   science.

19   The next step is continuing to support

20   educators with adequate and appropriate resources to

21   codable text. This school year each school should

22   have received 40 titles of somewhat decodable text,

1   written specifically for DCPS students in first

2   grade. This is a great start for students to have

3   some of their experiences mirrored in the curriculum.

4   However, 40 titles is far from enough. As

5   we have seen from the latest test scores, the vast

6   majority of DCPS students need instruction in

7   foundational literacy skills. 40 titles just isn't

8   enough, and we don't have to wait for DCPS to create

9   more titles. There are a plethora of resources

10 already available for purchase at a wide variety of

11 price points. The DC Reading Clinic already compiled

12 a list of suggested titles, and some are available

13 to download on the science of reading educator canvas

14 page.

15   Educators, who are able to find these

16 resources, are able to put together books made from

17 their own printer paper, however, I urge you to

18 simplify this process and purchase actual bound books

19 from professional publishing companies. These bound

20 books will last longer, and be able to support more

21 students over time.

22   I have enclosed a link in my testimony

1 from the Reading League, a non-profit organization

2 created to advance awareness, understanding, and use

3 of evidence based instruction with recommended texts

4 for readers of all ages.

5   DCPS leadership has stated that effective

6 literacy instruction is a priority, however, without

7 the funding for appropriate and research based

8 resources, we cannot align actual classroom practice

9 with the stated goal. It's an issue of equity.

10 Students need to be able to practice decoding skills

11 in real books.

12   Schools need enough books for a full

13 scoping sequence of instruction, and for students to

14 be able to take these books home. We know that what

15 is best, decades of research has shown that

16 decodable text best support children's literacy

17 development. Now we need the money to purchase them.

18 Thank you for your time.

19   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you. Next we'll

20 hear from Karen Cowden.

21   MS. COWDEN: Good evening.

22   DR. MAISTERRA: Good evening.

1   MS. COWDEN: Thank you for this

2   opportunity to testify this evening. I'm Karen

3   Cowden, proud parent of two DCPS graduates, and the

4   school librarian at Kimball Elementary School,

5   located in Ward 7. It is home of 400 amazing, and

6   truly brilliant Kimball scholars.

7   I stand up today for equitable access to

8   school libraries and librarians because I believe

9   that every child, no matter their zip code, deserves

10 a state of the art school library, filled with

11 current print and non-print books, electronic

12 resources, working technology and so much more.

13   This is a fight we've been fighting for

14 far too long in DCPS, and so I ask you today will you

15 be bold and do your part? I know we want to believe

16 differently, but the inequity in our school system is

17 real, and I fear the positive momentum and

18 investments of millions of dollars in DCPS school

19 library programs will slide backwards again.

20   You see, prior to the passing of

21 legislation last year by the City Council, known as

22 the Right to Read Act, all schools, and all DCPS

1   scholars, did not have access to a school library

2   with a full-time certified librarian.

3   And while DCPS's history with respect to

4   school libraries has shown greater promise in recent

5   years, it has been thanks to our City Council's

6   leadership stepping in, and the citizens demanding

7   action that we were able last year to get the Right

8   to Read Amendment passed to ensure fully staffed

9   school libraries.

10   We are now at a crossroads. Will you be

11 bold and do your part? Eight years ago amidst the

12 battles facing DCPS school libraries, I transferred

13 from a school in northwest DC to Kimball, known as

14 one of the lowest 40 performing schools in southeast.

15   I saw a library collection very dated, and

16 a third the size. I saw an opportunity for field

17 trips, author visits, science and social studies

18 resources, technology, technology support, starkly

19 missing. I saw a few schools in Ward 7 and 8 with no

20 libraries or librarians at all.

21   What I believed in my heart before the

22 move, and after the move, and to this day remains the

1 same. Children, no matter their zip code, no matter

2 their color, their religion, their sexual

3 orientation or gender expression, are curious about

4 our world. Yes, significant progress has been made,

5 but let's not go backwards.

6   All of our children deserve the very best

7 in all respects, including a state of the art school

8 with well resourced libraries and a certified school

9 librarian. Be bold, let DCPS be a leader for our

10 nation to show that we value the right to read for

11 all of our children, and democracy is at state.

12   If we do not fight for, and protect our

13 libraries, and make certain they are accessible to

14 one and all.

15   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you.

16   MS. COWDEN; Let us know Ms. an

17 opportunity to stand up, to keep the momentum moving

18 forward, take action, and do what is right. Thank

19 you so much for this opportunity, have a wonderful

20 Thanksgiving.

21   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much. And

22 next we'll hear from Valerie Boykin-Pair.

1   MS. BOYKIN-PAIR: Good evening Chancellor

2 Ferebee and DCPS community. My name is Valerie

3 Boykin-Pair, I'm a native Washingtonian, and graduate

4 of DC public schools. I'm the current PTO President

5 and LSAT member at McKinley Technical Education

6 Campus. A member of the Principal's Selection

7 Committee from McKinley EC, and former member of the

8 Chancellor's Advisory Board.

9   I come to you today as a parent of a Class

10 of 22 Ellington graduate, current McKinley Tech 11th

11 grade student, and current School Without Walls

12 freshman. There are three concerns I'd like to

13 highlight for your budget consideration, excuse me.

14 Principal division at McKinley Tech Education Campus.

15   Technology deficiencies across school

16 communities, delayed service responses, creating a

17 lack of equity and physical mental health across

18 school communities. As I mentioned, I participated

19 in the Principal's Selection Committee at Tech.

20   The parents in that committee asked

21 repeatedly of Central Office why these two schools

22 had to share a principal. We were told the

1   separation wasn't allocated in the 2022 budget.

2   Please reconsider this stance, as you plan for the

3   2023 budget. Principal Stafford is a wonderful

4   additional to our school, and this request is no

5   reflection of her.

6   Our experience as an EC has shown us the

7   deficiencies in this model. We continue to see a

8   decline in enrollment at the middle school, and in

9   the quality of our STEM program at the high school.

10 The goals for the two schools are not aligned enough

11 for this role to be shared and meet, and exceed, the

12 potential we see in this progress.

13   DCPS technologies do not meet the needs of

14 the school communities. I accessed three DCPS

15 buildings, and the networks in all three are lacking.

16 Students must use personal devices to et a good

17 signal, fix it. Teachers are forced to do double

18 entry in two systems that do not talk to each other.

19   In Campus there's inconsistent

20 implementation between teachers and this causes

21 confusion and angst amongst the students and the

22 parents. When I think of the time spent by thousands

1   of families that is wasted trying to discern what the

2   information sent out to families, and it's

3   inconsistent.

4   For example, the cumulative GPA listed on

5   my child's fourth term report card doesn't match what

6   went home to me in her readiness report. It's

7   imperative that families build the tools that are

8   useful and accurate, otherwise how are we to trust

9   what we receive from you?

10   Technology is supposed to create easy use

11   and access, but we're not reaping that. Having

12   options for high school students who determine their

13   interest early on in supporting them, is

14   commendable. I want more transparency in the funding

15   in our schools. The budgets aren't explained or

16   aligned to allow reasonable review and understanding.

17   Data isn't presented well, and is

18   confusing. For example, in your 2023 submitted

19   budget, McKinley Tech had 9 related arts positions,

20   Walls 13, Ellington 2. This cannot be right. I

21   would expect DCPS to fund more related arts teachers

22   at Ellington than anywhere else.

1   In the 2022 budget planning, your focus

2   was equity and transparency of DCPS. Shift to this

3   budget model. Unfortunately, the presentation is

4   lacking.

5   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you.

6   MS. BOYKIN-PAIR: Budgets aren't explained

7   or aligned to allow reasonable review. Thank you.

8   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you so much. And

9   next, we will hear from Mr. Stephen Kletter.

10   MR. KLETTER: Yes, hi, good evening. My

11   name is Stephen Kletter, and I'm a practicing

12   economist who has lived and worked in the district

13   for over 25 years. I have two children that attend

14   Jackson-Reed High School. Over the past two years

15   I've spent an enormous amount of my own time

16   attempting to decipher the old and new DCPS school

17   funding budget models.

18   I've identified significant problems with

19   both models, and I have shared my results with senior

20   DCPS staff, and the City Council. A serious problem

21   with the old model was that it dramatically

22   underfunded large schools, even after accounting for

1   differences in student needs.

2   For example, this flawed old model

3   underfunded Alice Deal Middle School by over 2

4   million dollars per year. To its credit, DCPS itself

5   explicitly recognized this problem at summer 2020

6   budget presentations. However, and for me this is

7   really disappointed, when the new DCPS budget model

8   was unveiled for FY 23, this fundamental problem was

9   left completely unaddressed.

10   As a result, many students in our city

11   will continue to receive inadequate general education

12   funding simply because they attend a large school.

13   It's long past due for DCPS to fix this mistake.

14   Remarkably, the new DCPS budget model is even worse

15   than its predecessor from my point of view.

16   The new model cuts baseline general

17   education funding for many elementary schools across

18   the city, and a few middle schools such as Alice Deal

19   and Hardy. The funding cuts per student are by far

20   the largest in the Jackson Reed feeder system.

21   Many LSATs may be unaware the new model

22   has cut their baseline funding, that's because DCPS

1   has supplemented their total FY 23 funding amounts to

2   what DCPS refers to as one-time stability funds. If

3   your school received one-time stability funds for FY

4   23, what this means, and this is important, with the

5   new DCPS budget model has determined that your

6   school, based on funding, should be cut dramatically.

7   To calculate your school's new baseline

8   funding under the new budget model, simply subtract

9   your school's total funding amount by the amount of

10 the one-time funds you received. For example, doing

11 the simple math for Alice Deal reveals that its

12 baseline funding will be cut by $750,000.00 relative

13 to FY 22.

14   And when you properly account for the loss

15 of purchasing power due to inflation, the two drop,

16 and Alice Deal's baseline funding is over 1 million

17 dollars. The pain, however, will not be felt until

18 FY 24, when the one-time funds disappear. Alice Deal

19 received 1.8 million in one-time funds, so next year

20 it faces a fiscal cliff that could result in the

21 elimination of a whopping 16 full-time teaching

22 positions.

1   Similarly, the elementary middle schools

2   that feed the Jackson High School collectively, will

3   lose 8.8 million in annual one-time funding, but

4   one-time stability funds when they're eliminated in

5   FY 24. This fiscal cliff represents a whopping 10

6   percent funding cut for the feeder system in what

7   will necessitate the elimination of the nearly 80

8   full-time positions. This is simply unacceptable,

9   and must be fixed.

10   I've attached the presentation that

11 outlines this funding problem in detail, and I do

12 thank you all for your -- I know you all worked very

13 hard on this stuff, and it's complicated and not

14 easy, and I do thank you for everything that you're

15 trying to accomplish. Thank you.

16   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much.

17 Next, we will hear from Danica Petroshius, Tommie

18 Jones, Timothy Abdella and Alicia Dorsey, and we'll

19 begin with Ms. Petroshius.

20   MS. PETROSHIUS: Hi. Thank you Mr.

21 Chancellor and Deputy Maisterra. Our schools,

22 Capital Hill Montessori at Logan, has had challenge

1 after challenge facing us. We had lead in the water,

2 crumbling buildings, lack of technologies, sewage in

3 the cafeteria, sexual misconduct, over and over,

4 nothing that our parents or our teachers or anybody

5 has inflicted upon us, and this has been the system

6 inflicting it upon us.

7 Tonight we've got a double whammy. You

8 have my full testimony. I am not going to give it

9 all because I want to give my son time to tell you

10 the bad news he heard from you all today in his own

11 words. But first, I want to briefly state the

12 overview of my testimony is that your budget model is

13 one million dollars short, much like Mr. Keller was

14 saying for CHML right now.

15 DCPS consistently, purposely ignores our

16 schools recommendations on enrollment, and under

17 enrolls us so that we are purposely short, just like

18 this year, you made us do 396. We told you it was

19 going to be higher, and we're at 423, so there's a

20 bunch of students underfunded.

21 And then you don't fund our middle school

22 over and over. We have each individual specials

1   teacher teaches 11 grades. We have one science

2   teacher for 11 grades. We have for all three middle

3   schools, which is very different grade content, and

4   specific content, we have one math teacher, and one

5   ELA teacher.

6   So I ask you to right size our budget this

7   year. Secondly, I ask you to fully fund our middle

8   school next year, and to accurately do enrollment on

9   budget next year. And now I leave it to my son. Go

10   ahead Maxie.

11   MR. WHITSELL: Hi Mr. Chancellor. My name

12   is Max Whitsell, I'm in seventh grade from CHML. My

13   school and friends are really important to me, and so

14   is sports. I found out today that my basketball

15   practice, at my basketball practice at DCPS will not

16   allow me, will not allow my school, to have a

17   basketball team. I can't compete in games this year.

18   I am so upset and disappointed. We have

19   around 13 boys and 12 girls who have been practicing

20   three times a day, three times a week sorry, and are

21   excited to play. We have great coaches. I don't

22   understand why you can't let us play. Is it because

1   we are a small school? Is it because we did

2   something wrong? Why?

3   We're having so much fun, and we want to

4   try and compete. You're cutting off our interest,

5   hope, and dreams, and our schools diversity in clubs.

6   Why won't you let us play now? Please change your

7   mind. Let CHML boys and girls compete in basketball,

8   thank you.

9   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much. Next

10 we will hear from Tommie Jones.

11   MR. JONES: Good evening Chancellor

12 Ferebee, Deputy Chancellor Maisterra. I'm Tommie

13 Jones. I am a proud DCPS parent. My wife and I are

14 proud DC residents, reside in Ward 7 in Hillcrest.

15 And today I'm coming as the LSAT Chair for Capital

16 Hill Montessori at Logan.

17   I don't want to reiterate all the points

18 that Danica has mentioned, we also have Tim, who will

19 presenting as well. But I just wanted to touch on

20 three particular points that I hope that as the DC

21 Public Schools leadership looks to budgets, and

22 making sure that kid and families have the right

1   tools that they need, that you look at these three

2   issues that we have.

3   One, is maintaining our enrollment numbers

4   of 400 students, and properly fund our school with

5   the needed resources as an education campus that

6   reflects both the elementary and middle school

7   students that we serve. For the past few years we

8   have seen the DCPS has projected our school

9   enrollment numbers under 400 students.

10   This projection has been wrong, caused

11 damages for our school community, and was an

12 unrealistic number of students served based on the

13 enrollment projections. Furthermore, the under

14 enrollment has hampered our base funding, decreased

15 the number of teachers we can hire, and has made it

16 even more challenging for our young people to have

17 the kind of school experience that we all believe

18 they deserve.

19   You will notice that for example, our

20 school FY 23 enrollment was projected at 396

21 students, and to date we have 423 students. Second,

22 I'd like for you all to consider to right size our

1   school budget. I think Ms. Petroshius has mentioned

2   some of that, and I know that Tim, the next speaker,

3   will mention that.

4   But Chancellor, based upon the projections

5   and the information we receive, actually from the

6   DCPS budget office, and from our preliminary

7   research, we ask that if we're wrong please help us

8   as an LSAT. We're projecting that based on the

9   information we're 1 million dollars short. So we'd

10   really like to make sure that we can do the things

11   necessary for the schools kids that we serve.

12   And then finally, I ask that as you make

13   these difficult decisions that the budget process be

14   both open and transparent. For us, we're parents,

15   we're advocating for our kids because we love our

16   kids. And I know you guys do too. You're working

17   very hard to make difficult decisions, and we're

18   asking you to help us be a part of the solution to

19   making sure that every kid that goes to a DC public

20   school, I'm proud to say we're over 50,000 student

21   that are enrolled in DCPS because we're doing some

22   things right.

1   We need the support to do that as parents.

2   We'll provide additional comments, Deputy Chancellor,

3   via writing, and thank you for the opportunity to

4   testify today.

5   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much. And

6   next we'll hear from Timothy Abdella.

7   MR. ABDELLA: Hello, thank you. Thank you

8   for your time this evening. My name is Tim Abdella,

9   to use my formal name, but I'm a parent of two

10 Capital Hill Montessori DCPS students, Gabriele

11 Abdella, age 13, she's in the eighth grade, and

12 Lauren Abdella, age 10, she's in the fifth grade.

13   Both girls started at Capitol Hill

14 Montessori, and Gabriele was born in September, so

15 started at two years old. They have been at the

16 school their entire lives. And we have been

17 fighting for them the entire time. We're exhausted

18 with fighting for basic, safe education of our

19 children, yet here we are again.

20   We live across the street from the school

21 in Ward 6 for the last 22 years. My wife Betsy and I

22 participate in the PTSO, we Chair committees. We are

1   room parents, LSAT members, SIT members, PIT members,

2   advocates, cheerleaders, soccer moms, and when need,

3   activists.

4   So this is not our first rodeo. You've

5   heard from some of my fellow parents, and from many

6   people testifying today, unbelievable number, that we

7   are grossly underfunded, and Capitol Montessori has

8   been underfunded for many years, and this must be

9   corrected.

10   As part of my testimony, I submitted the

11   Capitol Montessori 2023 budget as evidence. It is

12   publicly available on the DCPS website. Using the

13   numbers in this budget document, I will walk us

14   through a simple math problem that all schools should

15   conduct. This math will provide all of us with a

16   year over year per student funding value, and in the

17   case of Capitol Montessori, it will show a million

18   dollar shortfall.

19   The only other number needed that is not

20   included in the budget document, is our FY 23

21   certified enrollment count. The Capitol Hill

22   Montessori 2023 official enrollment count is 423

1   students. So let's do some math. The total fiscal

2   year 2022 budget was 5.6 million dollars.

3   FY 22 enrollment, projected enrollment,

4   was 355 students. Take that old budget, divide it by

5   total enrollment and you end up with a per student

6   funding amount of $15, 747.00. If we do the exact

7   same formula for fiscal year 23, with our 5.6 million

8   dollar budget, our official enrollment of 423

9   students, take the budget, divide it by the students,

10   and we end up with an enrollment, I mean a per

11   student average of $13,380.00.

12           $13,380.00 is significantly less than

13   $15,747.00. That's $2,367.00 per student to be

14   exact. That's just year to year math. If Capitol

15   Montessori was funded at the same level per student

16   this year, as they were last year, which I argue was

17   still underfunded. It doesn't account for inflation.

18   The Capitol Hill Montessori budget should be

19   6,661.256.00 dollars.

20   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you, Mr. Abdella.

21   MR. ABDELLA: This must be corrected.

22   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you. And next we

1 have Ms. Alicia Dorsey.

2   MS. DORSEY: Hello. Good evening. All

3 the top performing DC public schools are in

4 northwest, except for McKinley Tech, which is in

5 northeast. This is a gross display of inequity in

6 our education system. It is magnified by the fact

7 that 43 percent of all pre-K through 12th grade

8 students live east of the Anacostia River in Ward 7

9 and Ward 8.

10   However, despite housing the highest

11 percentage of students, Ward 7 and Ward 8 have the

12 lowest percentage of performing schools. We are

13 desperate for top performing school options. In

14 fact, data published by the Deputy Mayor of Education

15 shows that 20 percent of families living east of the

16 Anacostia River elect to send their scholars to top

17 performing schools in Northwest.

18   Furthermore, school year 16 and 17 data

19 show that the number of Ward 7 and Ward 8 high

20 schoolers leaving to attend top performing schools in

21 northwest, was enough to fill Benjamin Banneker High

22 School, as more than 500 high school students living

1   east of the Anacostia River attended Jackson Reed,

2   McKinley Tech, School Without Walls, and Benjamin

3   Banneker combined.

4   School performance is only one part of

5   this nuanced problem. The lack of strong school

6   feeder patterns is also a major source of stress and

7   frustration for these families who's kids are

8   shuffled like playing cards between various wards and

9   quadrants, scheming for schools that satisfy academic

10   and logistical needs as many families try to navigate

11   multiple children through the DCPS system.

12   This inequity disrupts critical family

13   time and routines needed to support academic

14   achievement, as high school students east of the

15   Anacostia River had the longest school commutes. Our

16   kids also lose meaningful opportunities to build

17   lasting neighborhood friendships, and do not have the

18   related benefit of social continuity that supports

19   academic success, and builds thriving communities.

20   The impact on families notwithstanding.

21   These dynamics strain the entire DCPS system.

22   Schools in northwest are bursting at the seams each

1   year strategizing ways to meet the needs of a

2   continuously increasing student population.

3   Meanwhile, schools in southeast are facing challenges

4   of budget cuts, and school closures due to a

5   continuously decreasing student population.

6   Jackson Reed High School in northwest was

7   designed to hold 1,550 students. However, the

8   student population was 2, 2300 in school year 21-22.

9   DME data shows that 25 percent of the Ward 7 and Ward

10   8 high schoolers traveling to northwest attended

11   Jackson Reed during that same year.

12   I propose creating a top performing

13   selective middle and high school Ward 7 and Ward 8

14   modeled after our top performing DCPS selected

15   schools. These selected schools will benefit the

16   entire system, relieving overcrowding in northwest

17   schools, increasing student capture rates for Ward 7

18   and Ward 8 schools, creating a pseudo feeder pattern

19   for families living east of the river, and

20   addressing current systemic educational inequities.

21   This proposal is not contradictory to the

22   Anne Beers, Randle Highlands PTOs and help our civic

1   community association proposals for the use of the

2   Winston Educational, excuse me, elementary school

3   facility. They're not mutually exclusive, and I

4   look forward to speaking with you all further about

5   these issues, thank you.

6   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you. Thank you.

7   And our next group will be Aniyah Watkins, Suzanne

8   Wells, Tiffany Brown, Amy Daniels, and Allison

9   Stephen. And we'll begin with Aniyah Watkins.

10   MS. WATKINS: Good evening. My name is

11   Aniyah Watkins. Can you all hear me okay? Perfect.

12   I'm the Education and Community Manager for the

13   Musicianship. Our mission is simple. To change

14   lives with music. We've been able to raise funding

15   and win grants that have helped us serve over 1,000

16   students with free music programing throughout the

17   district.

18   It's our hope to continue to provide a

19   safe place for students to learn and grow. While our

20   role is increases the gap, we are also attempting to

21   disrupt the school to present guidelines. With the

22   partnerships of DCPS and their Department of Parks

1   and Rec, we've been able to provide an abundance of

2   programming and opportunities.

3   We've even given out over $5,000.00 in

4   scholarships. It's my understanding that the new

5   budget model will enforce security costs on non-DCPS

6   sponsored programming. History has shown that music

7   and arts programs are typically cut from school

8   budgets, so we want to fill in this gap.

9   We have developed a beautiful partnership

10   with DCPS to provide free programing, which address

11   their near for more enrichment programming, and gives

12   parents options when after care is full. Every

13   partnership has a give and take. DCPS provides

14   space and security. We provide professionals,

15   programming materials to run these programs. This

16   model has been very successful.

17   After school programs should not bear this

18   cost, as it will force us to have to charge schools

19   and parents for programming. We are constantly

20   getting more and more requests from DCPS music

21   teachers for us to program after school sites, and we

22   want to continue to support DCPS at the school, we

1   just need your help to do so. Thank you for your

2   time.

3   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you Ms. Watkins, and

4   my apologies for mispronouncing your name. And next

5   we'll hear from Suzanne Wells.

6   MS. WELLS: Thank you. My name is Suzanne

7   Wells, and I'm the President of the Ward 6 Public

8   Schools Parent Organization. I am testifying this

9   evening about the need to increase the salaries of

10 DCPS educational aides, school based technology and

11 librarians.

12   Based on the information from the American

13 Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees,

14 the pay scale for new, educational aide in 2021, was

15 $16.62 an hour. The starting salary of educational

16 aides is only 52 cents above the minimum wage in DC.

17   After 10 years of service the pay of an

18 educational aide rises to only $21.16. According to

19 DCPS's educational aide job description, these

20 positions require the educational aide on a daily

21 basis to work with students individually, and in

22 small groups, reinforce daily lessons, motivate

1   learning, assess progress, and assist with classroom

2   management.

3   An educational aide is a partner with the

4   classroom teacher in implementing the daily lesson

5   plans, and reinforces student learning. Educational

6   aides seamlessly move into the teacher position when

7   the classroom teacher is absent. All of these tasks

8   are important to raise student's performance per

9   grade level, and to narrowing the achievement gap.

10   I have been substituting for DCPS since

11 2016, when students returned to in person instruction

12 in 2021 I began substituting almost full-time because

13 the need for substitutes was so great. During this

14 time I substituted primarily as an educational aide

15 because schools have had the most difficulty filling

16 these positions.

17   The low salaries are the primary reason

18 people are not attracted to the position. The

19 educational aides I have worked with are

20 professionals, and dedicated to the students. DCPS

21 should raise their salaries in school year 2024, to

22 be commensurate with their responsibilities.

1   DCPS has made significant progress in

2   recent years in achieving a one to one device to

3   student ratio. Our organization fully supports the

4   testimony of digital equity in DC education. We

5   urge DCPS to fund a robust device, refresh cycle,

6   resolve the issues with smart board installations,

7   provide school level funding for asset management and

8   IT support, and integrate digital literacy in the

9   classroom curriculum.

10   Finally, our organization fully supports

11   funding a librarian at every school, and providing

12   funds to purchase books. Certified librarians and

13   robust book collections support a love of reading,

14   enhance student learning, and bring equity across

15   schools. Thank you for the opportunity to testify

16   this evening.

17   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you Ms. Wells. And

18   now we'll hear from Tiffany Brown.

19   MS. BROWN: Thank you. Good evening, and

20   thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony

21   tonight. My name is Tiffany Brown. I am a DCPS

22   parent, teacher, and elected ANC Commissioner

1   serving the Hillcrest Area and Ward 7. And I'm also

2   the former LSAT Chair of Capitol Montessori, so I

3   have been in this fight a long time.

4   I currently serve on three LSATs to all of

5   the schools I'm connected with. Although this is the

6   beginning of the budget process, I am unclear of what

7   the budget process will be. This year I will like

8   DCPS to provide a transparent budget process that

9   everyone is able to understand how and what is

10 funded.

11   Briefly, some things I would like to see

12 in the budget are job embedded training for all

13 staff. The job embedded training must meet the needs

14 of the teachers because the LEAP is not doing it. We

15 also need updated technology, like smart boards and

16 updated computers for staff and students.

17   I would also like to see equity in all

18 schools in all wards. My children attend schools in

19 Ward 1 and 7, and I teach in Ward 6. The learning

20 experiences are different in all three wards. I hear

21 the Chancellor talk about high impact tutoring, but

22 what exactly is that? To close the achievement gap

1 between black and brown students with their white

2 peers, we need high impact teaching, not tutoring.

3   To truly address this we need a research

4 base reading curriculum for the elementary school

5 level. There is a move within DCPS to train teachers

6 in the science of reading, but this is not system

7 wide, which is needed. This is a system wide failure

8 of equity for students.

9   Equity is also needed with staff. At my

10 former school, there was an incident of harassment

11 and bullying amongst staff, in which I was a victim

12 of. To date, DCPS has not provided training, or any

13 restorative practices at that school. I believe if

14 this incident happened at another school, in another

15 ward, it would have been addressed swiftly.

16   DCPS can say it's an anti-racist school

17 system, but students and teachers of color do not see

18 it. We do not feel the love, but rather feel

19 unprepared to deal with the challenges we face.

20   Lastly, I would like the Mayor/DCPS to do

21 whatever it takes to provide teachers with a fair,

22 equitable contract with the Washington Teacher's

1   Union. Now is the time. You cannot continue to say

2   you put students first by putting teachers last.

3   Thank you for your time. I believe everyone knows

4   how to contact me if needed. Have a good evening.

5   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you Ms. Brown. And

6   now we'll hear from Amy Daniels.

7   MS. DANIELS: Can you hear me?

8   DR. MAISTERRA: Yes, good evening.

9   MS. DANIELS: Good evening. My name is

10   Amy Daniels. I'm really thankful to be here tonight,

11   and I'm especially thankful for each and every one of

12   you, Chancellor, Deputy Chancellor, and all of the

13   folks giving testimony tonight. I'm truly grateful.

14   I'm a parent of two children at Maury

15   Elementary School, and I'm also on the local school

16   advisory team. I'm a Ward 7 resident, and a 13 year

17   DC resident, and unyielding advocate for public

18   school. I'm well aware that the resources available

19   here in our city far outstrip any other in the

20   nation.

21   With the Mayor's FY 23 budget of 19 and a

22   half billion, with a B, billion dollars for our

1   roughly 705,000 DC residents, resources are not the

2   problem. Compare our 19 and a half billion dollar

3   budget for less than a million people with a 16

4   billion dollar budget for more than three times that

5   in Chicago, as one reference point.

6   Resources are not the problem. In this

7   context, school budgets need not, indeed should never

8   be, a zero sum game. I'm not here to argue to give

9   my school more resources and take anything away from

10 any other school. We've had some really compelling

11 testimony this evening.

12   We need you to fight for DCPS students,

13 and represent the budget concerns that you're hearing

14 tonight in the broader city leadership context. Tell

15 us how we can help you, but together we must ensure

16 that our school budgets are a top priority in this

17 city awash in resources.

18   No one here tonight would disagree that

19 our students are the future of this city. I stand

20 with so many parents, students, DCPS staff, to

21 implore you to prioritize education in the city

22 budget. We don't lack for resources here in

1   Washington, D.C. It's a question of allocation. We

2   ask that you ensure funding decisions aligned with

3   services and resources that the students need.

4   The specific concern that I bring to the

5   table here tonight is that the funding formula failed

6   to serve Maury Elementary equitably, and I echo what

7   we've heard in earlier testimony. This school year

8   we are worse off for it in many ways, and you'll hear

9   more about that from the subsequent testimony.

10   Maury's per pupil funding was the lowest

11 of 72 elementary schools in DCPS at less than

12 $11,000.00 per student. It was nearly $1,000.00 per

13 pupil less than the next lowest school. That's a

14 lot. That's a big difference.

15   I appreciate the diversity of school

16 context, populations, needs, school specific

17 missions, however, even after creating a

18 statistically valid subset of ten peer school

19 comparators, most similar to Maury, in dimensions of

20 at-risk population, English language learners,

21 special education, and overall school population and

22 enrollment growth trends, the results from the

1 funding formula are utterly inexplicable for Maury,

2 despite that we're comparing apples to apples.

3   Maury is strongly enrolled. It grew by

4 about 30 students, more than a full classroom, yet no

5 new teachers. The models seemed to penalize Maury

6 with a 3 percent per pupil funding reduction in the

7 context of merely 8 percent inflation year on year.

8 No other schools saw per pupil --

9   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you Ms. Daniels.

10 Thank you, if you could share your full testimony

11 with us we will make sure to review it.

12   MS. DANIELS: Yes, I've done that. Thank

13 you. I just implore that you please take a look at

14 the funding formula.

15   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you. And next we'll

16 hear from Alison Stephen.

17   MS. STEPHEN: Hi. Good evening. I'm

18 going to build on what Amy Daniels just said about

19 Maury Elementary. My name is Alison Stephen, and I'm

20 a parent of two children at Maury Elementary. As a

21 lot of parents noted, and advocated last February, to

22 no avail Maury's per pupil funding for 22-23 is the

1   lowest of all the elementary schools by a lot.

2   I strongly request reconsideration of the

3   funding formula that was used, and the detriments of

4   the shortfall have been really very real and hurtful

5   to our students. Maury's student body increased by

6   30 students this year, but despite touting a strong

7   return to in person learning and support for kids who

8   fell behind during virtual learning, DCPS reduced

9   funding for special education staff, and funded no

10   additional teachers for interventionists for Maury

11   despite the growth of student population.

12   Also, there are four classes of third

13   graders last year, and they were funneled into three,

14   oversized fourth grade classes because no funding was

15   provided for the obviously needed additional fourth

16   grade teacher. And once again, there was no

17   additional front office support provided or funded

18   for the overburdened single front office staff,

19   despite its increased enrollment.

20   Also, despite DCPS's position that COVID

21   prevention and sanitizing are high priorities, there

22   is no enough soap funded for, or disinfecting wipes,

1   or tissues, so the teachers ask parents to fund those

2   items.

3   I'll note that our special staff has been

4   especially ill served by the budget shortfall. In

5   five our specials, a single teacher was serving 500

6   kids per week last year, and because no new

7   specialist teachers were funded to reduce this

8   burden, the school switched to a rotation of three

9   specialists, and the 1.5 PE teachers were expected to

10   cover two classes per week per requirement.

11   Of 530 students, so that's over 1,000

12   student hours per week. Speaking of PE, the

13   retracting wall that should divide the main

14   multi-purpose room into a cafeteria gym is broken,

15   and will not close. And while begging for this

16   repair for four years, the PE teachers have conducted

17   their classes in a room where a few hundred kids are

18   having lunch, and there is no wall to keep balls in

19   the gym during PE.

20   So I really implore that this repair be

21   funded and implemented with haste. Maury is also

22   bursting at the seams, and I ask you again to look

1   ahead at where students will be accommodated. Some

2   of our hallways have open spaces for student

3   learning, have been converted into offices like for

4   the school therapist, who must provide confidential

5   services in a hallway space that does not have four

6   walls, or a door.

7   To conclude, I request that the budget

8   formula be corrected to provide adequate funding for

9   additional interventionists, and second full-time PE

10   teacher, another fourth grade teacher, additional

11   staffing in the main office, and adequate funding for

12   baseline materials and supplies. Thank you.

13   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you. And our last

14   group we have Jocelynn Johnson, Andrew Holod, Antawan

15   Holmes, Chris Bergfalk, Danielle Drissel and Melody

16   Molinoff. And we'll begin with Jocelynn Johnson.

17   MS. JOHNSON: Okay. I don't know how to

18   get it on. It's not letting me start the video.

19   DR. MAISTERRA: Okay, well we can hear you

20   Ms. Johnson.

21   MS. JOHNSON: It's not letting me, okay.

22   Anyway, my name is Jocelynn Johnson. I'm the ANC

1   Commissioner for 4B03, that includes Whittier, which

2   is across the street from Coolidge, and Ida B. Wells.

3   I submitted my testimony, but I'm going to

4   just kind of paraphrasing it because in comparison to

5   the stories that I have heard tonight, and the emails

6   and stories that I have read in the last month from

7   parents and supporters of Wells, I'm sorry, of

8   Whittier, I just wanted to kind of talk about the

9   situation.

10   I am just floored to think that these

11   conditions of some of the things that I've heard

12   tonight and read still exist. I am a graduate of DC

13   Public Schools. I graduated from Coolidge in 1972.

14   50 years ago I went to Coolidge, and before that

15   Paul, as a junior high school, and back then we had

16   schools that were cold, and we wore coats all day.

17   And we had situations where the stench

18   would be throughout the building. No ramps, I guess

19   back then they didn't even deal with ramps and stuff

20   like that, but to think that in 2022 you don't have

21   ramps going into the building. You have such,

22   there's disgusting situations in DC schools in Ward

1   4.   It just boggles the mind.

2   I thought that I would ask the question,

3   and maybe you all could talk about it or answer it

4   before the hearing is over tonight, as to when

5   exactly is the fall of 2023 for the modernization of

6   Whittier? I figured either it's now, and that's the

7   reason why when I heard the DGS testify at a hearing

8   that Middleton had a couple weeks ago, they acted

9   like oh, just no problem.

10   We've got Whittier scheduled for

11   modernization in fall of 2023. It must be now and

12   not a year from now, so to think that it's okay to

13   let the students and the staff and the faculty work,

14   and go to school and function in these kinds of

15   conditions where roof leaking, and continually going

16   back to before the COVID pandemic.

17   There's something wrong with the picture.

18   So my testimony has it outlined, but I just wanted to

19   add that I think that with so many DC officials that

20   life in Ward 4, to include the Mayor, I can't imagine

21   how the system has allowed Whittier to stay in this

22   condition so long.

1   The Mayor has a daughter, I don't believe

2   that her daughter when she's school aged, she would

3   allow her daughter to attend a school that is in a

4   condition that Whittier is in, and maybe some of

5   these other schools, but just Ward 4, since she lives

6   in Ward 4. I cannot imagine it, so I wanted to just

7   bring that up.

8   And probably Mr. Ferebee you have heard

9   this. Your expressions from your face you haven't

10   made too many expressions, I don't know if anything

11   you heard tonight has shaken you as it's shaken me,

12   but hopefully it will and it has compelled you to

13   know that something needs to be done. And it doesn't

14   need to wait until another year from now to be done

15   to affect the conditions that these students and

16   faculty are subjected to every year.

17   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you.

18   MS. JOHNSON: Thank you.

19   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you Ms. Johnson.

20   MS. JOHNSON: You're welcome.

21   DR. MAISTERRA: And next we will hear from

22   Mr. Antawan Holmes.

1   MR. HOLMES: All right. Good evening

2   Chancellor Ferebee and DCPS staff. My name is

3   Antawan Holmes. I am the ANC Commissioner for 7CO

4   7D, as well as the Chair of ANC 7C, but more

5   importantly I'm a proud DCPS parent for my daughter

6   over at Houston Elementary School. As we go through

7   a lot of communities to listen to what people have

8   issues with the school, a lot of these things come

9   up, and I wanted to bring this to your all attention

10   tonight.

11   One of them is a lack of a standard

12   framework to remove a student from an autism

13   self-contained classroom to a general education

14   classroom. There's no full emergent classroom model

15   being used with the co-teaching model. It's not

16   being used at all that leads to the river. What I'm

17   hearing more of is there's a push in model that's

18   been used and pull them in and take them back out

19   self-contained.

20   In addition, I have special ed families

21   tell me that they're not being educated about the

22   different types of special education models that are

1   out there. What's CES vs. SLS and all the other

2   acronyms. In addition to those issues, I'm also

3   hearing about there's a lack of a comprehensive

4   technology plan to include, you know, sustainable PC

5   upgrades, internet access, best in class technical

6   support.

7   In addition, specifically for use in

8   elementary there is no equitable dual language middle

9   school option located east of the river. For

10   Houston, there's also since Houston came, Stokes also

11   came up, Global Citizens is trying to come along, so

12   you have a lot of parents who have students doing

13   dual language, but nowhere equitably to go after

14   that.

15   One of the things that was done during the

16   Houston Elementary modernization, they were asked to

17   see if they could upgrade it to an education campus

18   for six to eight to support that initiative. And

19   then, you know, also the people from pre-K three to

20   Ph.D. people want to know, be able to think about

21   what it is it's supposed to do beyond just DCPS, and

22   not seeing any real equitable options for local, like

1   UDC, since that's located west of the river.

2   You know, as we think about -- as the

3   people talk about the national capitol region, with

4   all of the jobs from federal government,

5   multi-national corporations, Amazon, et cetera, we

6   talk about all these IT tech creators and STEM

7   creators that are out there, but we don't have the IT

8   infrastructure, or annual infrastructure in budget.

9   We'd like to see that be done from DCPS to

10 address one to one student PC ratio. It's at three

11 to fifth at Houston, but it's not through K through

12 second. And again, those devices they pretty much

13 stay onsite, they never go out, so we lose

14 opportunities to be able to do at home digital

15 assignments.

16   So hopefully, we can go ahead and try to

17 come up with a bold plan to eliminate the homework

18 gap here, and to address the digital divide that's

19 plagued a lot of the Title I schools that are in Ward

20 7 and in Ward 8. In terms of -- sorry about that, in

21 terms of talking about, you know, the feeder pattern

22 right now for Houston, for dual language, they would

1   have to go to McFarland and to Roosevelt, which are

2   both located in Ward 4, as others have mentioned

3   before.

4   That type of hype has been well documented

5   in newspaper and articles everywhere, but that is a

6   hardship on families, so we would like to see DCPS

7   come up with a feeder pattern that can address --

8   that will address dual language students to be able

9   to attend schools east river, and not put that burden

10   of travel on families.

11   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you Mr. Holmes.

12   MR. HOLMES: And the one last thing I just

13   want to say, and I will send the rest of my testimony

14   after this, but just say that we want to see

15   something bold, and to talk about, you know, because

16   of the pandemic we haven't talked about other options

17   like Saturday school, or small group tutoring options

18   or extended school year.

19   So hopefully, we can have those

20   discussions as well to try to come up with a solution

21   to help bridge this gap that our children are having,

22   thank you.

1   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much. And

2   next we'll hear from Chris Bergfalk.

3   MR. BERGFALK: Hi. Good evening.

4   DR. MAISTERRA: Good evening.

5   MR. BERGFALK: Thank you. I'm a DCPS

6   veteran teacher of 20 years, a DCPS graduate, and a

7   parent of two DCPS graduates, and a current DCPS

8   student. I'm testifying today as a concerned

9   citizen on all those fronts because of the priorities

10   of DCPS in the budget process.

11   The data show that money and resources are

12   being disproportionately allocated to the DCPS

13   Central Office instead of the local school. As

14   students and teachers know every day, education,

15   teaching and learning, the real work of the school

16   system happens in the classroom between teachers and

17   students every day.

18   I learned 20 years ago that if an

19   administrator or Central Office employee doesn't come

20   to work there is no break in student learning.

21   However, if a teacher doesn't come, no learning

22   happens. The priority of any budget should be the

1   local school, and the individual classrooms.

2   However, it would compare to the other school systems

3   in our country, that is not the case in DCPS.

4   Instead the data show that the Central Office is the

5   priority in our city.

6   The US Census Bureau conducts an annual

7   survey of school system finances. The Census Bureau

8   has a table that shows how many per pupil dollars

9   each of the 100 largest school systems in the

10   country allocate to specific areas. Over the summer

11   I downloaded the most recent data they had, 2019, and

12   I want to highlight some of those areas.

13   Teachers salary -- DCPS has the third

14   highest teacher's salary behind New York City, which

15   allocated more than $2,000.00 more per pupil for

16   teacher salaries, and Boston, which allocated

17   $1,700.00 more per pupil. For teacher benefits, DCPS

18   ranked 35th behind New York City again, which

19   allocated $5,313.00 more per pupil, and we ranked

20   below Montgomery County, our much higher performing,

21   and immediate neighbor, which allocates $1,300.00

22   dollars more per pupil.

1   But when it comes to administration the

2   trend is reversed. For local school administration,

3   DCPS ranked first, allocating $300.00 more per pupil

4   than the second ranked system, and $435.00 per pupil

5   more than Montgomery County. But the real stories

6   with the general administration or the Central Office

7   in DC.

8   DCPS again ranked first, but this time by

9   a landslide. DCPS allocates almost two and a half

10   times more than the next -- per pupil, than the next

11   highest school system in the country, Boston. We

12   allocated $1,452.00 per student for general

13   administration, compared to only $599.00 for Boston,

14   which ranks second.

15   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you Mr. Bergfalk.

16   MR. BERGFALK: Well I don't believe I

17   reached my three minutes. I never saw my timer, so

18   I'm going to finish. Montgomery County, the highest

19   --

20   DR. MAISTERRA: So if you could wrap up

21   thank you.

22   MR. BERGFALK: We did 12 times more per

1   pupil for general administration than Montgomery

2   County, 12 times more. They only allocate $120.00

3   per pupil. You could read my full testimony. I

4   emailed it, thank you.

5   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you very much. And

6   next we'll hear from Danielle Drissel.

7   MS. DRISSEL: Good evening and thank you

8   for your endurance. I appreciate your sitting

9   through all of our testimony and can hear how

10   passionate all of us are about the work you and we

11   all do to support our students and families. My name

12   is Danielle Drissel. I'm a Ward 6 parents. I have

13   students at Brent Elementary and Stuart-Hobson Middle

14   School.

15   I'm also a member of the Ward 6 public

16   school parent organization, and I'm the Capitol

17   Cluster PTA Advocacy Chair, but I'm speaking here

18   today on my -- in my personal capacity. I'm

19   testifying this evening about the need for the fiscal

20   year 2024 budget to meet three key goals.

21   One, initial DCPS budgets that are stable,

22   and ensure full staffing, targeted support for before

1   and after school needs for working families at all

2   DCPS schools, and strategic budget allocations to

3   address learning loss and capital investments to

4   avoid losing federal resources that DC is being

5   provided in connection with the pandemic.

6   On the first point, our schools need full

7   and consistent budgets. The annual stress of needing

8   to advocate to fully fund existing payroll is

9   unnecessary and inefficient. In this era of teacher

10   and staff attrition the message that full staffing is

11   not a budget baseline is extraordinarily

12   demoralizing, and the Central Office budget's for

13   each school should fully fund payroll at existing

14   staff levels for each school unless there is

15   demonstrated enrollment attrition on a significant

16   level.

17   Unfunded mandates are unacceptable. If

18   schools will be required to implement new staffing

19   mandates and program content in an upcoming year,

20   each school's budget should include the funds for

21   the additional staff to meet those needs. New

22   requirements without new funds force schools to cut

1   existing programming.

2   Budgets also need to reflect the true cost

3   of staffing. At many schools, unfilled positions

4   directly attributable to insufficient budget. Mental

5   health needs are unmet because particularly in the

6   elementary schools, because of the underfunding of

7   those positions. Librarians need to be a permanent

8   fixture in all DCPS schools.

9   These funding gaps are consistently

10   attributed to DCPS not offering salaries that are

11   competitive with skilled professionals in other

12   district employers in neighboring schools. As you

13   also heard we have paraprofessional openings because

14   the pay grade isn't commensurate with the demands of

15   the position.

16   Passion for serving students only goes so

17   far when you can make more money stocking shelves at

18   a grocery store. Second priority is subsidize before

19   and after school care based on the financial need of

20   the family, regardless of which DCPS school the

21   child is attending.

22   DCPS has strong policies to ensure

1   families at Title I schools have before and after

2   school care needs met, but the support for working

3   low-income families only at Title I schools, it's

4   essential, but it's insufficient. No DCPS student

5   should be turned away from their school's childcare

6   provider due to an inability to pay.

7   And finally, we need to be strategic to

8   address the capital needs and learning loss needs of

9   our schools to avoid leaving federal funds unspent.

10 In fiscal year 2024, our schools will face

11 non-recurring significant needs to address pandemic

12 learning loss and capital investment.

13   We want to give teachers classroom budget

14 to buy learning materials, address the facility's

15 needs that we've identified through the pandemic for

16 both HVAC and door lock issues, and also in Ward I

17 we've identified significant non-recurring capital

18 needs for like Eastern High School, and the

19 auditorium at Stuart-Hobson, and we can leverage

20 these one-time funds that the federal government is

21 providing us to meet those time sensitive needs.

22   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you.

1   MS. DRISSEL: Thank you very much for your

2   time.

3   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you. And next we

4   will have Melody Molinoff. Ms. Molinoff.

5   MS. MOLINOFF: Good evening. My name is

6   Melody Molinoff, and I am the parent of two

7   Jackson-Reed High School students, and currently

8   serve as the Jackson-Reed LSAT Chair. So

9   congratulations, you made it to the end.

10   And I am going to just send you my

11 testimony, and I'm just going to close with one very

12 brief remark. I really hope that tonight your

13 takeaway is that we really do recognize that you

14 embarked on improving a flawed budget model. And

15 that you attempted to provide more transparency, and

16 equity, flexibility, but I hope that you heard all of

17 us tonight, and what we were saying was that's not

18 what we're experiencing with this new budget model.

19   And there were some really important

20 things that came out tonight, which I know that

21 you're absorbing, but I think most importantly we

22 really need to increase base funding. And that

1 would be the ultimate way to provide stability, and

2 to provide transparency for all of your stakeholders.

3   So thank you so much for your time and for

4 giving us this space for listening, and we look

5 forward to working with you and continuing these

6 conversations because we're really invested, as we

7 know you are, in making sure that every student in

8 every school has what they need to succeed, and so

9 thank you.

10   DR. MAISTERRA: Thank you as well. Have a

11 good evening. And I believe we are ready to wrap up.

12 Thank you so much everyone for sharing your input

13 with us. We recognize the commitment of time, and

14 the passion we heard, which we share to make sure

15 that this model, and that our work supports the best

16 schools within the Capitol.

17   So with that we're going to close. For

18 those of you who are still on with us, just to share

19 a few next steps, and these are next steps that we

20 take every year as a part of this process. We could

21 thank you, move to that slide, great.

22   So, you'll see here just an overview of

1   the budget development process, and again we're

2   starting now, meeting with you, and also with our

3   students to receive input on priorities, as we begin

4   the process of budget development. We also will

5   finalize our enrollment projections, working with the

6   Office of the State Superintendent of Education.

7   And as I noted earlier, we will begin our

8   office hours and supports to the LSATs at every

9   school. Beginning in January we continue our LSAT

10   supports. We provide more targeted information and

11   resources. We have a community budget session

12   series, and then we also release our school budget

13   allocations, and begin working with our school

14   leaders and teams, and of course the LSATs.

15   And that work will take place between

16   January and March. And then in late March, early

17   April, we will finalize our budget submission, and

18   the Mayor will present a budget to DC Council, and

19   of course, you will be updated along the way. Again,

20   thank you very much for your input tonight.

21   We really appreciate your time, and the

22   issues you raised will be considered very carefully.

1   May you all have a lovely evening. Thank you very

2   much.

3   CHANCELLOR FEREBEE: Good evening, thank

4   you.

5   (Whereupon the Hearing concluded at 9:13

6   p.m.)

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