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Case: DCPS Public Budget Hearing



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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR
DCPS PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING

Tuesday, October 29, 2019

6:00 p.m.

MAURY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1250 Constitution Ave., NE
Washington, DC 20002

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- 1 SPEAKER LIST
- 2 GRACE HU
- 3 ALEXANDRA SIMBANA
- 4 MELINDA FULLER
- 5 REBECCA REINA
- 6 MAGGIE KOZIOL
- 7 ALICIA RUCKER
- 8 REBECCA DAVIS
- 9 ANNA RAMSEY
- 10 SUZANNE WELLS
- 11 JESSICA SUTTER
- 12 YASMIN ROMERO LATIN
- 13 LAURA FUCHS
- 14 NEO HILLARY MORAKE
- 15 SARAH WOLF
- 16 CATHY REILLY
- 17 GWENDOLYN WASHINGTON
- 18 JHONNA TURNER
- 19 EMILY GASOI
- 20 PETER BOYCE
- 21 EMMANUEL CAUDILLO
- 22 ERIN MARTIN

- 1 JACOB MARTIN
- 2 JAIME L. WOLFE
- 3 SERENITY RAIN
- 4 NANCY HUVENDICK
- 5 ELIZABETH MITCHELL
- 6 CEDRIC R. HENDRICKS
- 7 JAMES MELLO
- 8 CHARLES BOSTON
- 9 GINA FARANDA
- 10 ANNE TAYLOR
- 11 ANTAWAN HOLMES

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

2 6:13 p.m.

3 CHANCELLOR FEREBEE: Good evening,
4 everyone. Please be seated. So, we are going to get
5 ready to get started. I want to honor your time this
6 evening. I know we have a number of individuals that
7 are signed up to speak tonight. So, if everyone
8 that's here for the public hearing would take their
9 seats, please, we'd greatly appreciate it.

10 I am Lewis Ferebee, Chancellor for the
11 District of Columbia's public schools and also here
12 with me this evening is Deputy Chancellor, Dr. Amy
13 Maisterra. We will be facilitating the discussion
14 tonight and we're really thrilled and excited to hear
15 from you and your perspectives about our budget, our
16 opportunities, our strengths, and, again, we look
17 forward to coupling this voice with the voices of our
18 students, we had the opportunity to also sit in on a
19 hearing with our students on yesterday afternoon.

20 At this time, please join me in
21 recognizing our Principal, our host principal this
22 evening is Principal Payne Chauvenet. Would you like

1 to make brief remarks? I know you have an amazing
2 school facility that we recently opened. We'd love to
3 give you a few minutes to talk a little bit about
4 your school.

5 PRINCIPAL CHAUVENET: Thank you,
6 Chancellor Ferebee, and welcome to everybody here. We
7 are very appreciative of what a budget can do and
8 this is evidence -- our building and we're also
9 happy to host because, you know, as a growing school
10 it's always new positions that you're clamoring to
11 get. But we know that there's needs and costs to the
12 city so, hopefully, this can be a productive for all
13 of us. Thank you.

14 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Good
15 evening, everyone. It is my pleasure to formally kick
16 us off for the evening. I'm going to start us out by
17 framing a little of the structure tonight and I will
18 turn it back over to Dr. Ferebee to talk about our
19 goals and priorities moving forward.

20 So, let's get started. Okay. So,
21 tonight, as we mentioned, we're really here to hear
22 from you. This is a really exciting time for us

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1 because we're just beginning to think about our
2 priorities for the upcoming fiscal cycle, which is
3 2021 and, so we are, as you can see from our agenda,
4 the bulk of the time will be to hear from you, hear
5 your testimony, your thoughts and ideas for what will
6 make DCPS an even stronger with innovation moving
7 forward.

8 We will then move to wrapping up giving
9 you a sense of next steps -- what happens next from
10 this experience. How do we use the information and
11 what are the ongoing engagement opportunities that
12 we'll have? We want to emphasize, and you'll hear
13 this a bit from us tonight: this is the beginning of
14 the process so we're really excited to start with
15 you. Dr. Ferebee shared that, yesterday, we met
16 without students and that was really wonderful to
17 hear from them. And we will continue the conversation
18 as we move forward. So, it's now my pleasure to turn
19 the microphone back over to Dr. Ferebee and he will
20 talk to you a little bit about our various new
21 agency. Dr. Ferebee.

22 CHANCELLOR FEREBEE: Thank you. So, we

1 want to ground our conversation this evening in our
2 capital commitment and our priorities as we think
3 about the budget development process and where we
4 want to continue to invest in ensuring that we are
5 making progress towards our next phase of excellence.

6
7 Our capital commitment is grounded in
8 six big areas where we have goals that we are
9 tracking towards for years 2022. And among these six
10 there are several areas that we are making
11 tremendous strides. So, the first area I'll call up
12 is our Goal Six which is our desire to have 54,000
13 students involved in the District of Columbia Public
14 Schools. This is important because there was a time
15 period in DC Public Schools where we saw declining
16 enrolment and we're really pleased that we have seen
17 a significant surge in enrolment over the last
18 consecutive years. And most recently, we've seen our
19 largest gain in enrolment that we've had in decades.
20 In fact, we grew by over 2,000 students from the
21 2018-19 school year to the 19-20 school year with an
22 enrolment of over 51,000 students.

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1 [Applause.]

2 CHANCELLOR FEREBEE: This is
3 significant -- thank you, thank you. I really want to
4 -- thank you, it's good to give you this context and
5 to celebrate that because that really has set us on
6 the trajectory to not only build our schools with
7 students but also allows us to have additional
8 resources and we believe we'll be on track to 54,000
9 students.

10 We also have a goal around all of our
11 students feeling both challenged and prepared. We've
12 seen some progress there, but we know there's still
13 more work to do.

14 We also have a goal around ensuring
15 that all of our schools are highly rated, and this is
16 important because you'll hear from me further tonight
17 one of our priorities specifically for this school
18 year is a great school in every neighborhood and
19 every community.

20 We're also continuing our focus on
21 early literacy. We want our students to be prepared
22 and on grade level as relates to their literacy

1 skills leaving kindergarten, first, second grade and
2 transitioning grade three. As students transition in
3 grade three, we have also targets around proficiency
4 for students in our PARCC Assessment, that prepares
5 students to be college- and career-ready. And this is
6 another area where we have some celebrations. We just
7 announced recently this is our fourth consecutive
8 year of gains on our PARCC Assessment. Many of our
9 students saw double digit gains and we see consistent
10 gains in achievement across sub-groups. This has
11 prepared us well for our common goal that Lift-Up has
12 ensured that our students are college- and
13 career-ready. And we have modified our expectations
14 around graduation and monitoring to ensure that all
15 of our students are earning the appropriate
16 credentials and skills to go on and be successful in
17 the next phase of life after graduation.

18 So, moving forward, as we ground in
19 those capital commitment goals it was important for
20 me, earlier in my tenure to listen directly from our
21 stakeholders in a number of informal and formal
22 forums from my favorite Friday events, focus groups,

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1 and direct conversations with students, staff, and
2 our families. And there are a couple things that I
3 heard from those conversations -- I won't touch on
4 all of the themes, but two that resonates with the
5 conversation tonight I think when we talk about
6 Project 1 is, rebuilding trust. And so, part of our
7 budgeting process is continue to enhance
8 transparency. I think transparency is one of the ways
9 that we can continue to build trust with our families
10 and our stakeholders.

11 The other is ensuring that we will
12 continue on our path of a great neighborhood in every
13 school and every community. And we heard from a lot
14 of families who said they felt really good about
15 maybe their elementary school and not so much about
16 their middle school. Or, maybe the high school and
17 not the elementary school and that they had to travel
18 across neighborhoods to get to a school that they
19 were comfortable with. And we want to ensure that
20 every family, if they choose their neighborhood
21 school, has great confidence in that option. And we
22 want to resource our schools accordingly to ensure

1 that they have the best necessary resources and tools
2 to be that great school for their community members.

3 And so, grounding in the capital
4 commitment and connecting it to what I heard from our
5 constituents, we then created some priorities for
6 this school year and tracked this towards our six big
7 goals in our capital commitment. Again, one of those
8 areas I've touched on several times is a great school
9 in every neighborhood at every grade level. But also,
10 inherently, connecting that to greater equity and
11 transparency, particularly about how we allocate
12 resources to our schools and then ensure that all of
13 our students are prepared for post-secondary success.
14 So, if a student wants to go directly into the
15 workforce after graduation, they have the credentials
16 and skills to do so and then they're prepared, not
17 only to be admitted to a higher ed (sic.) institution
18 and enroll, but actually go on to graduate as well.

19 So, if we think about the priorities
20 for this school year and our capital commitment, one
21 of the areas that we are working on now, as we think
22 about the budget development process is, how do we

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1 truly get better at this notion of equity and
2 transparency. We want to be a little bit more
3 specific on this by -- to help you better understand
4 what we're solving for. So we often hear -- or we may
5 even hear tonight that there are school communities
6 who have this belief, and advocate, that their school
7 doesn't have enough resources to serve their
8 families. And I haven't talked to a school community
9 that doesn't have that perspective. And so, we want
10 to ensure that we are, in fact, being responsive,
11 ensuring that we are allocating our resources, but
12 also, we are differentiating the allocation process,
13 so those communities and families who need more are
14 actually receiving more. And we're researching,
15 analyzing, and studying our budget to ensure that we
16 are continuing going after that level of
17 differentiation and customization in our schools who
18 have very unique needs.

19 And then the other area that we're
20 responding for is financial stability. And so DCPS
21 has seen significant rising costs -- costs that are
22 very much so valued. One in which we have done a

1 great job with compensating our educators who have
2 very competitive teacher salaries. But we see those
3 salaries -- average salary from teaching increase,
4 operational costs increase, benefits cost increase
5 and, over the years, our revenue, while we're very
6 grateful for investments in DC Public Schools, have
7 not tracked with those rising costs. And so, we want
8 to create a sustainable model for how we allocate
9 dollars to schools.

10 And then, finally, we want all of our
11 families to have a line of sight of how resources are
12 allocated to schools. So, what we've heard from a lot
13 of our constituents is that, I'm not really sure how
14 my school is receiving their resources and why a
15 school may be receiving more or less. And so, we
16 wanted to ensure that our stakeholders understand our
17 budgeting process and they know how decisions are
18 being made.

19 So, as a result we have drafted a
20 timeline that is a two-phase approach for getting us
21 to a better place in addressing equity, transparency,
22 sustainability, the way that we would like to do so.

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1 So, for the current year that we're in as we're
2 preparing for FY21. When we talk about FY21, we're
3 referring to the 2021 school year, we are in
4 refinement mode and so, what you see before you is
5 the engagement process that we're in now, the ways
6 we're thinking about developing the budget and, when
7 we talk about refinement, we anticipate that there
8 will be smaller tweaks to the budgeting model and
9 then, for FY22, we will see more significant shifts
10 to address the three goals that we are trying to
11 accomplish with equity, transparency, and
12 sustainability. And so, as we go forward, we'll
13 ensure that the community understands that this is
14 our timeline and, we want to address things like our
15 comprehensive staffing model, we want to address
16 at-risk funding, which is another area where we've
17 received a lot of questions. We want to also be
18 really helpful around, how do we support schools that
19 may be struggling with student achievement or may be
20 struggling with the kind of enrolment. All these are
21 areas we care a lot about, and we want to have the
22 best system to allocate our resources to our

1 schools.

2 So, that is the backdrop that we want
3 you to have as we think about the budget development
4 process and we look forward to spending the remaining
5 of the evening listening directly to you. Thank you.

6 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you,
7 Chancellor.

8 (Applause.)

9 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: So, just
10 a couple more notes about ways to be involved and,
11 again, we'll come back to this after we open up for
12 comments. First, as you know, we have a robust
13 website with a lot of information that we've worked
14 to make available to you. We continue to update that
15 information annually. So, we do have the -- I think
16 DCPS Interactive Data Center. I want to make sure I
17 got the name right and you can go to that any time
18 to look at a lot of background information and data,
19 as well as information about the budget development
20 process and additional resources are posted there
21 regularly.

22 And then also, as you know, every

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1 school has a Local School Advisory Team -- the LSAT -
2 - and one of the referrals of that team is to advise
3 on the budget development process and, really, flesh
4 out priorities that represent what families and
5 communities see as most important. And it's the
6 principal's goal to really engage with the LSAT and
7 work through that planning process jointly and come
8 to a final plan that folks feel comfortable with.

9 So, as we're moving forward and, again,
10 we're at the beginning of the conversation. We just
11 wanted to remind you that those are some primary
12 vehicles for information. Here's a little bit more
13 about the LSAT, the Local School Advisory Team and
14 what our expectations are for that team and the
15 engagement process as we move forward.

16 And then, just one last note, we are
17 starting the conversation tonight. We are going to
18 ask that every speaker adhere to the three-minute
19 limit because we really do want to hear from all of
20 you and, the other thing to know, is that we will not
21 be responding directly to your comments. We're really
22 here to listen and take notes, gather information.

1 So, there will not be a lot of conversation with us
2 and that's because we want to make sure that we hear
3 during this time. But we don't want that to imply
4 that we're not taking this information in and
5 treating it very seriously. This is a very important
6 part of the process for us as we're in the early
7 stages of developing our plan for the budget model.

8 So, we're going to move forward now and
9 open up the floor and I have a list of folks who have
10 signed up to testify. And what we're going to do to
11 just make sure that we move smoothly through the
12 process, is we will share names two at a time. So,
13 we'll ask you to come up and then, the second name
14 that I call, just be ready to come up. I was told to
15 use a sporting analogy, but I don't know how to do
16 that.

17 [Laughter.]

18 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Something
19 kind of like, coming up to bat, maybe? I have to rely
20 on my expert here. So, and Gerry from our team is
21 going to help us keep track of our time as well
22 together. Okay. So, with that, we'll get started and

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1 we will have Grace Hu followed by Alexandra Simbana.

2 MS. HU: Good evening, my name is Grace
3 Hu and I'm a parent and LSAT member at Amidon Bowen
4 Elementary in Southwest D.C. Today I'm here on behalf
5 of a city-wide coalition of parents to discuss the
6 continuing technology gaps in our schools. Last year
7 we began an advocacy effort to address the unreliable
8 and outdated technology in a school system that's
9 heavily reliant on computer-based testing for
10 everything from reading and math intervention
11 programs to assessments in multiple subjects and the
12 end-of-year PARCC test. Despite this reliance on
13 computers, the burden has gone to individual schools
14 to find the money to refresh their technology and
15 many have struggled to do this.

16 We appreciate the \$4.6 million in the
17 2020 budget for student computers as part of the new
18 Empowered Learners Initiative, but one-year funding
19 is not enough to close the digital divide in our
20 schools. We urge DCPS to follow through and provide
21 funding in the '21 budget to continue to move schools
22 to a one-to-one student-device ratio. Additionally,

1 we urge DCPS to take the following into
2 consideration: (1) empowering students to use
3 technology. Simply providing computer hardware won't
4 solve digital inequity. While many students use
5 smartphones and social media, they lack knowledge on
6 the range of technology applications such as word
7 processing, PowerPoint, and email. We need DCPS to
8 look closely at the support, or lack of, for
9 providing students with technology skills that they
10 will need for the jobs of the 21st century. Since the
11 announcement of Amazon's selection of Arlington as
12 new headquarters, neighboring localities have decided
13 to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in regional
14 institutions of higher education for technology
15 research and education. DCPS graduates should be
16 prepared to take advantage of these local
17 opportunities.

18 (2) Support for teachers. We also need
19 DCPS to look closely at supporting training for
20 teachers to effectively incorporate technology into
21 instruction. This is an issue worth scaling up. While
22 DCPS currently provides some voluntary professional

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1 development opportunities, it is not sufficient to
2 ensure the whole teacher workforce is equipped to use
3 technology effectively to achieve educational goals.
4 We also continue to hear that some teachers are not
5 issued a laptop by their school because the school
6 cannot afford to purchase laptops for their staff.

7 (3) As part of the Empowered Learners
8 Initiative additional tags and requirements have been
9 placed on our schools such as regularly to update
10 school technology inventories and plan for device
11 distribution. This work is being placed on current
12 school staff. As we saw last year some schools have
13 struggled to complete their technology inventories
14 due to staff capacity and IT support for fixing
15 computers is still inadequate. If computer devices
16 are not paired with adequate support for managing
17 them at a school level, we will continue to have an
18 equity issue, as the schools with the least staffing
19 capacity and resources will be the most
20 disadvantaged. For a technology initiative that truly
21 empowers our students and teaching staff, we need an
22 equal system of supports, not just computer hardware.

1 And in the addendum to my testimony, I've also
2 included the five areas we've identified for
3 additional attention as needed in implementing the
4 Empowered Learners Initiative. Thank you for the
5 opportunity to testify.

6 MS. SIMBANA: Good evening. My name is
7 Alexandra Simbana and I'm a parent at Cleveland
8 Elementary, a school with a significant percentage of
9 at-risk and ELL students. I want to start my
10 testimony today by saying I'm here tonight to
11 emphasize how important it is that DCPS develop,
12 implement and fund a technology plan for elementary,
13 middle school, and high schools. Despite having given
14 birth to two babies a week ago, I am here because,
15 like many other DCPS parents, we continue to advocate
16 and fight for what we see is lacking in our education
17 system which we deeply hope and thrive, despite years
18 of underfunding and continued unaddressed
19 challenges.

20 Last year, a group of parents from
21 around the District came together collectively to
22 demonstrate what has long been known at the school

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1 level: that our children's access to technology was
2 beyond inadequate. We are encouraged by, and happy
3 to have, new technology and computer devices for
4 third, sixth, and ninth graders, but that's not
5 enough to close the digital divide in our schools. We
6 need a comprehensive approach to addressing school
7 technology challenges, one that not only addresses
8 computer hardware but also the inadequate IT support
9 and maintenance, repairs and training students and
10 teachers to use the technology effectively. Until all
11 of these aspects of school technology are addressed
12 and funded, we will fall short of achieving digital
13 equity for DC schools.

14 Other technology issues that are not
15 currently being addressed include school communities
16 are still paying out of pocket to supplement the
17 existing curriculum of computer-based programs which
18 have more robust learning techniques to fully support
19 their students. Learning programs used to teach our
20 students should be reassessed with direct input from
21 teachers. Paying for access of these computer-based
22 programs is expensive. But that additional support

1 should not be dependent on whether a Title I school
2 community can manage to raise enough money to provide
3 the opportunity for their students. Many schools
4 still have non-functioning smartboards and there's no
5 plan for maintenance or repair of these.

6 Next, I would like to address directly
7 with both of you, the ongoing issues of trust between
8 DCPS and the parent-family communities around town.
9 Parents spend their time and dedication to volunteer
10 at schools because we value and want these school
11 communities to succeed. When families are restricted
12 from participating in their own child's education
13 because of a clearance process which is
14 discriminatory -- all members of that school
15 community lose. I urge you to find a solution to the
16 volunteer process which is currently in use. During
17 these political times parents and families should not
18 feel threatened out of being actively involved in
19 their child's education.

20 Lastly, I would urge DCPS to reexamine
21 how they approach work with parents and family
22 members on matters that pertain to educational

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1 planning. We have examples across the city where
2 parents feel as though DCPS is fighting against us as
3 we advocate for funding, school site retention,
4 educational planning, and open records access. We are
5 your constituency. We are the source of revenue for
6 local tax dollars, property taxes, providers and
7 caregivers of the students who attend our public
8 schools and, too often, the unpaid volunteer
9 fundraisers and champions of our school community. We
10 do this for our children, our own and our neighbors,
11 but this work is made more difficult when barriers,
12 broken promises, and mistrust is what we get. The
13 role of DCPS should be to supports the efforts and
14 work of the city population, who wants them to grow
15 and succeed.

16 In that spirit I ask you to work
17 towards opening the Shaw Middle School at Banneker
18 without further delays. Work with the community
19 surrounding the current Banneker at Rhode Island site
20 with a cohesive community-informed plan. Work with
21 the community to return the use of DCPS properties
22 for use by DCPS schools as a priority and not

1 surrender them to charter or private schools. I'm
2 sure there are many more examples that my fellow
3 parents will give throughout the night but thanks
4 very much for your time.

5 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.
6 And congratulations. The next two individuals are
7 Melinda Fuller and Rebecca Reina.

8 MS. FULLER: Good evening. My name is
9 Melinda Fuller and I'm a teacher at Houston
10 Elementary School. I'm speaking on behalf of my
11 school and I'm asking that DCPS focus on improving
12 special education services by funding and providing
13 adequate staffing. Houston Elementary desperately
14 needs a third special education resource teacher to
15 serve all grade levels effectively. We also need
16 full-time related arts teachers to ensure sufficient
17 teacher planning time and increased students access
18 to a well-rounded curriculum. An additional \$250,000
19 of funding would allow us to hire each related arts
20 teacher full-time.

21 Focusing again on special education, I
22 want to note that the DCPS Fiscal Year 2020 budget

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1 guide includes a small school allocation chart on
2 page 52. The chart guidelines are designed for
3 schools that service 65 or fewer special education
4 resource students. Based on these guidelines, schools
5 that serve between 25 and 35 resource students,
6 including Houston, are entitled to three resource
7 teachers. The budget guide explains that "these
8 allocations ensure that schools receive sufficient
9 staffing to provide services across their entire
10 grade distribution." Houston currently serves 27
11 resource students across 8 grade levels but only has
12 two resource teachers, not three as required. Despite
13 petitioning in February and again in September, our
14 special education allocation has not been adjusted to
15 meet the minimum staffing allocation outlined in
16 DCPS' own budget guide. One of DCPS new strategic
17 priorities is to "strengthen instruction for special
18 education students" but we can only strengthen
19 instruction for these students with adequate special
20 education staff. This includes teachers and separate,
21 school-based special education leadership positions,
22 i.e. special education coordinators. A copy of

1 Houston's September budget petition and page 52 of
2 the DCPS Fiscal Year '20 budget are attached to my
3 testimony.

4 Finally, the city began a new fiscal
5 year on October 1 and those funds are needed
6 immediately to address over-enrolments at certain
7 schools. Furthermore, there should be a clear and
8 streamlined process to request additional staffing
9 after the school year has begun. Going forward DCPS
10 and DC Charter Schools need to follow the same budget
11 planning process in order to improve transparency and
12 equity across the two sectors. Thank you for your
13 time.

14 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.
15 Ms. Reina?

16 MS. REINA: Hi there. I'm Becky Reina,
17 Chair of the Ward 1 Education Council. I'm actually
18 sharing my testimony with Emily Gasoi, the Ward 1
19 representative of the State Board of Education.
20 She'll take up where I leave off.

21 DCPS in Ward 1, like DCPS schools
22 throughout the city, are struggling with their yearly

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1 budget. At the Ward 1 Education Council meeting in
2 March, we asked for a show of hands from DCPS
3 stakeholders whose schools were losing one or more
4 staff positions due to inadequate funding in their
5 SY19-20 budget. Reps from 10 or 12 DCPS schools
6 raised their hands. Cleveland is in need of a general
7 reading interventionist and has only two special
8 education teachers to serve the entire school. H. G.
9 Cook struggles to provide appropriate support for its
10 many English language learners. Tubman lost eight
11 positions going into this school year despite
12 enrolment increase. Tubman was projected to have 534
13 students this fall and funded for that level,
14 although enrolment not been under 550 in years.
15 Bancroft ES was unable to cover the cost of two early
16 childhood intervention staff positions. CHEC, one of
17 the largest schools in the city sees its per-pupil
18 funding go down each year. A CHEC staffer emailed us
19 to say, they were looking to cut two staff members
20 and unable to hire two more that they wanted to hire
21 for the school year. Cardozo E.C. must figure out
22 how to staff multiple, distinct programs with largely

1 inflexible budgeting while their International
2 Academy student population falls precipitously, which
3 is no surprise given the current national climate --
4 and its 9th and 10th grade mainstream classes
5 simultaneously swell.

6 Schools struggle with their operating
7 budgets as well. The Cardozo community have alerted
8 us to the fact that all DCPS schools must deal with a
9 purchasing freeze lasting over a month at this time
10 of year, while the budget office's reasons vary
11 yearly, the yearly Student Activities Fund and P Card
12 freeze and the budget office's unresponsiveness does
13 not vary.

14 School facilities maintenance is
15 inadequate. Tubman has been waiting for an HVAC
16 renovation and roof repair for three years. Although
17 Cardozo's building is managed by RDW Consulting
18 neither DGS nor RDW responds to maintenance requests.
19 Door locks and elevators remain broken.

20 Playground repairs requested by
21 Cleveland last school year remain unfinished. Lead
22 abatement of pour-in-place playgrounds surfaces

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1 remain unresolved throughout the city. Holes remain
2 in the capital improvement plan. Washington Met, the
3 last un-modernized DCPS high school, has been dropped
4 from CIP without clarity on the future of that
5 program. Anna Beers Elementary School in Ward 7 is
6 not in the capital budget. An additional Ward 7
7 middle school needs to be open to feed Woodson High
8 School. Shaw Middle School at 800 Euclid Street needs
9 to be added to the CIP to strengthen the Cardozo
10 feeder pattern and continue the very strong DCPS
11 enrolment gains in Ward 4 and alleviate crowding and
12 impending crowding surrounding Ward 1 in Deal, Hardy,
13 Frances Stevens, and MacFarland.

14 Additionally, the Banneker High School
15 modernization should not include a football field. I
16 was at the student hearing earlier today and Laquan
17 Brown, who is a Banneker High School student, both
18 runs track and plays football, requests a track. He
19 specifically asked me to tell you all that Banneker
20 would much prefer a track to a football field. They
21 feel that that would benefit their population better.
22 Thank you.

1 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.
2 And just a reminder, if you could submit your written
3 testimony to either Jerry or myself this evening,
4 we'd appreciate that to make sure we capture
5 everything. Okay, and thank you for sharing your time
6 [talking off mic]. Okay, yes, that makes sense. Would
7 you like to come up now? If that's alright with--.
8 Okay.

9 MS. GASOI: Thank you. My name is Emily
10 Gasoi. I'm the Ward 1 representative on the State
11 Board of Education. I'm going to talk about some of
12 the broader issues underlying individual school
13 struggles for some solutions. I just wanted to
14 mention that these have been gathered from our
15 schools -- these are directly from principals and
16 families.

17 So, to start, there are several now
18 predictable practices that cause general budget
19 instability for our schools: (1) last school year's
20 late release of school budgets and the unreasonably
21 short turnaround time was not conducive to thoughtful
22 decision-making for any leadership team. But

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1 especially for schools with budgets that do not
2 adequately cover costs, having to rush decisions
3 about which positions to cut is detrimental to
4 student learning and to morale of the entire school
5 community. Of course, a greater effort should be made
6 to get budgets to schools on time. But when they are
7 late, school leaders have advised me that they need a
8 minimum of two weeks to fully review them with their
9 teams and make the best decisions for their school
10 communities.

11 (2) The city school count day is in
12 October, as you know, even as there is predictable
13 student mobility throughout the school year. This
14 handcuffs DCPS' system-wide budget from the city,
15 inadequately providing for our schools of right, but
16 it need not be directly reflected in DCPS individual
17 school budgets. We suggest different enrolment
18 projections could be used for different purposes and
19 there should be focus on improving the internal
20 enrolment projections used to fund our schools.

21 (3) While all types of schools are
22 impacted by such budget instability, as Becky pointed

1 out in her testimony about CHEC and several of our
2 elementaries serving fewer than 500 students, the CSM
3 is most predictably harmful to our largest and
4 smallest schools. We know DCPS is evaluating whether
5 to move away from the CSM. Before we throw out this
6 admittedly imperfect funding model away, we should
7 first try to fully fund our DCPS schools and we have
8 outlined several specific recommendations related to
9 this in our written testimony.

10 Finally, as with most everything
11 education-related, this is an equity issue. While the
12 majority of Ward 1 schools have had to haggle each
13 year or get creative with their budgets, our sister
14 schools in Wards 7 and 8 were hit hardest in this
15 year's budgeting. Schools east of the river are more
16 likely to have declining enrolment and to be forced
17 to absorb the most significant budget reductions.

18 And, in closing, a system in which
19 there are hundreds of losers is not, and never will
20 be, an equitable system. When problems are
21 predictable as all of these budget issues are, there
22 is no excuse to continue with business as usual. It

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1 is time to make the changes necessary to bring
2 stability and equity to our funding process so that
3 all our schools, from Ward 1 to Ward 8, are fully
4 and fairly funded. Thank you.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MAISTERRA: Thank
6 you. We now have Maggie Koziol -- I apologize if I'm
7 mispronouncing your name -- followed by Ahmad
8 Nurridin.

9 MS. KOZIOL: Hi, my name is Maggie
10 Koziol. I am a Shaw resident and a parent to a
11 kindergartner and preschooler. This past spring Mayor
12 Bowser chose not to build a well-designed
13 thoughtfully programmed -- middle school for the many
14 children whose families live inside the city. This
15 while parents and community leaders clearly
16 demonstrated through publicly available data that
17 children, potential students, exist in the catchment
18 area and beyond and that schools like School Without
19 Walls, Wells and Frances Stevens are already
20 bursting at the seams. The early enrolment numbers
21 for 2019 and 2020 also show that there's a great need
22 particularly at the middle school level for DCPS

1 seats. And recently while attending the Ward 1
2 Education principals meeting I heard from the
3 principals of -- Education Campus, -- Middle School
4 and Roosevelt High School about how cold their
5 schools already are and their concerns about how
6 further growth will impact students and their
7 education.

8 Of course, there's a positive side to
9 the growth as well. I a lot of people during our
10 fights, characterize parents' efforts last year by
11 drawing on Brookland Middle School as an example. And
12 yet, this year, they saw a 34% increase in enrolment.
13 And when you look at the extremely impressive numbers
14 at Ida B. Wells in its first year and the fact that
15 they will be bursting at the seams within two years,
16 it becomes even more evident that there is a need for
17 Shaw Middle School Cardozo feeder pattern.

18 Fortunately, there's a path forward.
19 DCPS's very strong enrolment increase has shown the
20 need to now build and plan the school. And thanks to
21 legislative amendments, which are now law, Shaw
22 Middle School will have a new home at 800 Euclid

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1 Street. Currently, today, in DCPS's budget, sits a
2 pot of money, just over \$1m. This money is designated
3 to work on planning, programming, and design of what
4 Shaw Middle School on Euclid Street would look like.
5 And even more fortunately, I am pleased to tell you
6 that over 150 parents and community members are
7 working diligently on planning and programming for
8 what they want and need in middle school on Euclid
9 Street. The location, again, that DCPS is legally
10 bound to plan around for its City Center Middle
11 School. We have been meeting and discussing. We have
12 a survey. We have been gathering input from parents
13 and stakeholders and we are meeting with DC
14 government officials. Just in August we met with
15 Patrick Digas and discussed the planning process
16 which he guaranteed was happening. Yet, that money
17 sits in the budget untouched. Why?

18 We need and expect real immediate
19 action on this and DCPS is legally bound to do so. Of
20 course, beyond planning we recognize that we need
21 budget allocated in the -- to renovate and prepare
22 800 Euclid St. for its new students. DCPS should be

1 preparing and working with students currently housed
2 at the Cardozo Education Campus -- building. And, not
3 only that, DCPS should be considering consolidating
4 both middle school programs at Cardozo and at Frances
5 Stevens at the new Shaw Middle School. This will
6 allow for better programming at School Without Walls
7 and for Cardozo to focus on its high school students
8 while, simultaneously, addressing serious
9 overcrowding issues at Frances Stevens.

10 There is much to do in Shaw and Center
11 City. My hope is that DCPS can rise above politics
12 and do what is right for students, who have been
13 waiting for over a decade for a middle school in the
14 heart of our great city. Thanks.

15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.
16 Now Mr. Ahmad Nurridin? Okay, we will keep moving
17 along. Amayowa Osunsade followed by Alicia Rucker.
18 Ms. Osunsade and then Ms. Rucker.

19 MS. RUCKER: Before my three minutes
20 starts, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my
21 neighbors all for coming and thank you, Dr. Ferebee
22 and your team for this enormous work that you're

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1 doing every day for our children. I know that you all
2 are working hard. So I just want to put that out
3 there.

4 Preamble: in order to effectively plan
5 for the priority goals that you all have outlined,
6 our students, which are human resources, must have a
7 school health professional at the LT and RA level or
8 above immediately, every day the school's in
9 session. Nurses in every DC public school now,
10 tomorrow. Currently, at my son's school, I was
11 informed that the nurse is there Monday and Tuesday,
12 Wednesday by 'phone, Thursday and Friday, school
13 health tech. Unacceptable. I have spoken with
14 Councilmember Gray at his leadership meeting last
15 week. He has indicated that nurses have been fully
16 funded for this current fiscal year and it does not
17 allow for student health techs. Our children deserve
18 the very best so that every child can access the free
19 and appropriate public education. If the above action
20 step is not met with a nurse in every school, every
21 day that school is in session, why not?

22 My action steps include the following:

1 (1) would like to see music-based education for all
2 pre-K through 12 students immediately because we well
3 know the documented research on how education
4 improves test scores. Not that I'm a great proponent
5 of that but our children deserve the best. In
6 addition, I'd like to request budget support from
7 Council and Mayor to have a blank check. You know I
8 always say that Dr. Ferebee, and when I say 'blank
9 check' I mean with well evidence programs that are
10 best practices. This is where I'd like the money to
11 come from so, if anybody has a direct connection to
12 the Mayor or to City Council, please quote me. I'd
13 like 3-5% from sports betting that is dedicated to
14 DCPS and IC. I'd like 3-5% from traffic tickets and
15 red-light cameras dedicated to DCPS and IC. I like
16 this because we must -- if we're Washington DC --
17 then we need to have the resources behind everybody
18 here to get done for our children what needs to be
19 done. Last, but not least, I really need to see the
20 HIP program revamped, for real, so that it serves all
21 students, so that, if you have a child who is out for
22 a week, and block program school, that means a tutors

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1 walks in with them that day that they come back and
2 goes to each and every class and supports that
3 students with a plan on how they're going to catch up
4 with their work. And it shouldn't take away from the
5 current teaching and learning that's going on. Again,
6 thank you everybody, and the fellow rabble rousers,
7 it's great to see you here. Oh! The last thing is: we
8 need to really make sure that soap and water and
9 paper towels are in each rest room in DCPS. We talked
10 about this 20 years ago and it's not happening. And I
11 don't mean any harm, but the best way that we can
12 combat infection is handwashing. That's to say your
13 alphabet twice slowly and lather up every inch of
14 your hand, including the backs of your hands, in
15 between your fingers and your thumbs. So, I want to
16 thank you all again for everything.

17 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you,
18 Ms. Rucker. Okay, our next two participants are
19 Chantal Fuller and Rebecca Davis. Ms. Fuller? Okay,
20 Ms. Davis.

21 MS. DAVIS: Good evening. I was really
22 happy to see the slide on Equity, Sustainability, and

1 Transparency because that's actually what I'd like to
2 speak about this evening regarding science education
3 throughout DC. My name's Rebecca Davis. I'm an
4 environmental education consultant and contractor and
5 I live and work in Washington D.C. in Ward 1.

6 I work with the Metropolitan Washington
7 Council of Governments group called Clean Air
8 Partners on air quality and climate change education.
9 I'm also a member of the DC Environmental Education
10 Consortium and, as such, part of our Community
11 Partners for the DCPS Science team. I've volunteered
12 as a teacher trainer for Engineering is Elementary --
13 EIE cornerstones. I stand before you as a witness
14 and contributor to DCPS and DCPCS science education
15 for the past 14 years and equitable access to science
16 education has been, and continues to be, an issue in
17 DCPS.

18 I'm excited that there are new science
19 teaching requirements as of 2019: 45 minutes per day
20 for one semester for grades K-2 and 30 minutes a day
21 for grades 3-5. But to understand this DCPS
22 commitment to this change I would like to make sure

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1 that we appropriate the funding to DCPS science team
2 to support their ability to sustain this change. And
3 also, that we have professional development in place
4 for elementary school teachers to support this
5 shift. And also, to have some kind of accountability
6 mechanism to make sure that elementary schools are
7 implementing this requirement.

8 It is the responsibility of a society
9 that depends on science and technology to education
10 and prepare its youth with basic science and
11 engineering principles. And, what I found as I've
12 been to visit quite a number of schools in DC is that
13 there are a lot of students who, for example, have
14 asthma but don't know the basic structure and
15 function of their respiratory system or why, and how,
16 their asthma is triggered. We also have students that
17 eat fish out of the Anacostia who don't understand
18 the food web and the bioaccumulation of the toxins in
19 it.

20 Humans are born curious. I see my
21 granddaughter, who's about a year old, testing the
22 velocity and friction of her body on playground

1 slides. She doesn't know yet, but she is playing
2 with scientific principles and methods. Our job as
3 educators and parents is simple, it is to encourage
4 curiosity and observation, embolden youth to ask a
5 million questions, whether we know the answers or
6 not, and support their countless experiments that
7 follow. But let us be clear, scientists don't just do
8 science experiments to test their hypotheses, they
9 read about science, they write about science, and
10 they talk about science. We can encourage our
11 students to do the same. Science education's not an
12 either-or. Teaching science explicitly supports
13 literacy and numeracy development and achievement.

14 Our job is to find ways to keep
15 students interested in the sciences as they finish
16 elementary school when we see significant drop-off
17 interest in science. Our job is to find ways to
18 encourage interest in science and engineering through
19 middle school and high school to create
20 scientifically literate citizens who understand and
21 can act on important issues that will be facing
22 their generation such as climate change. But, most

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1 importantly, understanding health disparities, life
2 expectancy being shorter than their parents. We can
3 do this by (1) increasing and having transparency
4 regarding the science budget for DCPS, if not in
5 dollar amount then at least a percentage compared to
6 ELA, Math, and Social Studies; (2) developing ready
7 set science cornerstones for all grade bands and
8 providing professional development; (3) assessing and
9 measuring the success of the changes made to the
10 Elementary Science Scheduling Requirements.

11 As Neil deGrasse Tyson stated, "The
12 problem in society is not kids not knowing science.
13 The problem is adults not knowing science. They
14 outnumber kids five to one, they wield power, they
15 write legislation. When you have scientifically
16 illiterate adults, you have undermined the very of
17 what makes a nation wealthy and strong."

18 Thank you for allowing me to address
19 this important topic.

20 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.
21 We next have Anna Ramsey, followed by Suzanne Wells.
22 Ms. Ramsey?

1 MS. RAMSEY: Good evening. My name is
2 Anna Ramsey and an English Language Specialist at
3 Frances Stevens. I am here to support the
4 modernization project at Frances Stevens. I am
5 testifying today in order to (1) paint a clear
6 picture of the spatial challenges that specialist
7 face within our building and (2) to make our plight
8 known for another ESL position.

9 Last year I shared a room with one of
10 our other ESL teachers. When her middle school
11 classes were held in our classroom, I had to find an
12 alternative space to teach in. Sometimes I was able
13 to push into classrooms, but other times I had to
14 teach in the balcony of the auditorium without desks,
15 tables or technology. Sometimes we had to sit on the
16 floor in the back of the library while other classes
17 were in session. It was a challenge to block out the
18 noise of the library class in order for us to focus
19 on our own academic conversation. Unfortunately, this
20 is the same situation that's happening to more
21 specialist in our school this year. Currently the
22 middle school ESL teacher does not have a designated

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1 space to teach in. She pulls students to small tables
2 in the back of an overcrowded classroom of 27 to 30
3 students. This is a problem for our beginning
4 language learners as they need and deserve a quiet
5 safe space away from their native speaking peers in
6 order to attempt to use the English language without
7 the anxiety or fear.

8 In my testimony I'll let you read Part
9 C that's also on behalf of the special education
10 teachers who could not be here. So please read that
11 at your earliest convenience. And then, in regards to
12 another ESL teacher position at our school, it's
13 greatly needed. We currently have 85 English learners
14 and we're short one position. It is our obligation
15 under Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to take
16 affirmative steps to ensure that our English
17 learners can meaningfully participate in our
18 educational programs. The shortage of a position,
19 combined with servicing kindergarten through 8th
20 grade, it really poses a challenge for us.

21 Now, in addition to the lack of space
22 to teach in, and needing another ESL position, we

1 deal with mice, sewage smells, lack of hot water in
2 the bathrooms, along with broken bathrooms. We are a
3 strong, successful school and we do not want this
4 success to lead to our downfall. My colleagues and I
5 are here to support the moving of our total
6 modernization today. Please do not keep pushing it
7 back. Thank you for your time.

8 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Ms. Wells.

9 MS. WELLS: Thank you for the
10 opportunity to testify this evening. My name is
11 Suzanne Wells. I'm the president of the Ward 6 Public
12 Schools Parent Organization and our organization is
13 a member of the Coalition for DCPS and Communities
14 for C4DC. First, I want to congratulate DCPS on the
15 enrolment increases sought this year. This enrollment
16 growth is due to the hard work of principals and
17 teachers, the efforts of the DCPS enrolment team to
18 promote -- , the modernization of our city school
19 buildings and confidence families have in DCPS and
20 much more. This year's enrolment growth gives us hope
21 DCPS will meet, and hopefully exceed, its enrolment
22 target for 24,000 by 2022. This hard work must

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1 continue because there is still much work to be done
2 to ensure every neighborhood has a high quality by
3 right, school. It can't be emphasized enough that
4 enrolment growth is important because school budgets
5 are determined primarily by a school's enrolment.

6 Currently schools are allocated funds
7 to support a comprehensive staffing model. This model
8 ensures a baseline number of teachers,
9 administrators, related arts teachers and other
10 staff. The City Council has proposed legislation and
11 there have been discussions that DCPS to move towards
12 a school-based budgeting model. Ensuring all schools
13 have librarians, music, art, and PE teachers is
14 important to ensuring a well-rounded education for
15 children. I strongly encourage DCPS to conduct
16 careful analyses and comparisons between the
17 comprehensive staffing model and any budge model
18 considered in order to fully understand any
19 trade-offs made before moving to a new model. I
20 encourage DCPS to engage stakeholders early in the
21 process or analyzing the impacts of a new model.

22 Members of our organization have been

1 very involved in ensuring at-risk funds are used in
2 ways that are expected to improve student
3 achievement. In the past at-risk funds have been
4 used for purposes not directly related to supporting
5 at-risk youth. I encourage DCPS to share more with
6 schools the available research-based evidence as to
7 what has been impactful in raising performance among
8 at-risk youth to help inform school-based decisions
9 and to ensure school budgets are transparent about
10 how at-risk funds are used.

11 Our members as well have also advocated
12 for DCPS to continue funding for school technology
13 and the Empowered Learners Initiative in the 2021
14 budget. We will not achieve digital equity until all
15 students and all grades have access to working
16 computers as well support for becoming computer
17 literate.

18 Finally, and looking at FY19 approved
19 budget for the public education system in DC, it
20 lists over \$63m for non-public tuition and \$90m for
21 special education transportation. I believe these
22 line numbers are directly related to DCPS not

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1 providing adequate educational services for special
2 education youth neighborhood schools. As DCPS works
3 to strengthen its by-right public school system, I
4 encourage DCPS to always use its lens for
5 programming equity and supporting work to have more
6 students with special needs at already equipped
7 schools.

8 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.
9 Next, we have Teressa West followed by Jessica
10 Sutter. Is Ms. West here? [No] Okay. Ms. Sutter.

11 MS. SUTTER. Good evening. Thank you,
12 Chancellor Ferebee and Dr. Maisterra for the chance
13 to speak this evening. My name is Jessica Sutter and
14 I'm honored to represent Ward 6 on the DC State Board
15 of Education. I testify today in my personal
16 capacity.

17 Over the past year I have toured DCPS
18 schools all across Ward 6. As I've chatted with
19 principals and staff, I've noticed a consistent theme
20 about resources in schools: inequity. We talk about
21 neighborhood public schools right as though they are
22 an equal opportunity public resource. But, touring

1 our Ward 6 schools makes it clear: our neighborhood
2 schools are resourced in inequitable ways. Much of
3 that inequity is driven by unequal access to
4 resources outside of the EPSFF.

5 Maury Elementary, where we sit today,
6 is my zoned neighborhood school. I toured this
7 beautiful facility earlier this month and listened as
8 parent tour guides educated community members about
9 the school. I learned that every classroom has a
10 teacher's aide and that the PTA fundraises to hire
11 those staff positions. I also learned that Maury
12 students have Chinese language instruction as a
13 special class and that every 5th grader gets to go to
14 Space Camp. Again, thanks to the generosity of
15 year-long fundraising effort. These are wonderful
16 assets for a public school and ones I would be
17 thrilled to see every child in the District access.
18 But since these assets are outside -- funding
19 formula, students and families at Maury had a
20 different experience of public education than schools
21 without an active and dedicated PTA with significant
22 fundraising capacity.

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1 At Van Ness Elementary, also in Ward 6,
2 an intentional school design focused on the whole
3 child gives every decision about work in the school
4 building, including budgeting. As I toured Van Ness
5 with a partner organization Transcend Learning, I saw
6 joyful students in calm productive classrooms
7 designed to set just the right tone to help students
8 focus on the work of learning every day. I also
9 learned that Van Ness has a full-time psychologist, a
10 full-time social worker, to video techs, and a
11 consulting board-certified behavior analyst.
12 Principal Robinson-Rivers is candid about the outside
13 grants they secured to cover the cost of additional
14 staffing and training for all school staff to make a
15 model like theirs work. But she is also candid about
16 her belief that this level of staffing is what is
17 needed for all schools to adequately serve students
18 in the District.

19 As DCPS plans its budget for FY2021 and
20 2022, I hope the system will begin from the vision
21 level, rather than starting from the inequity we all
22 know exists. What does it look like to serve the

1 whole child in every school in ways that are truly
2 equitable? What could it look like to make models
3 like Maury's or Van Ness's available to all students
4 in all neighborhoods in all wards of the District?
5 What stands in our way? If we fail again to give
6 every school and every student as worthy of these
7 opportunities to start from an equitable foundation,
8 we will continue to fail our students. Thank you.

9 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.
10 Next we have Alfonso Stringfield, followed by Yasmin
11 Romero Latin. Mr. Stringfield? Ms. Latin? And after
12 Ms. Latin, we'll have Ms. Fuchs.

13 MS. LATIN: Good evening, my name is
14 Yasmin Romero Latin and I have a both 9th grader and
15 11th grader who go to Columbia Heights Education
16 Campus -- CHEC. I'm also a very active member of the
17 school Parent Teacher and Student Organization --
18 PTSO and the School Community Board. Also, I'm ANC
19 Commissioner in Ward 1. I came here today to implore
20 this committee to do right by my two children and
21 their peers at CHEC. I simply can't understand why
22 resources to CHEC are denied. While there is an

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1 urgent need to provide surplus funding for the
2 increase in CHEC student enrolment from 1210 in
3 school year 2018-2019, to the current enrolment of
4 1489 in school year 2019-2020, an increase of 239
5 students, a 23% increase over the school year
6 2018-2019. The practice of inequitable per pupil
7 allocations in schools is unfair to the students
8 especially larger schools like CHEC and Wilson, that
9 results in a larger class size and reduced ability to
10 address individual student needs.

11 One of my sons is an English Language
12 Learner (ESL) and needs all the help that DCPS can
13 provide. There is a problem of significantly under
14 funding of older students at CHEC, particularly ELL
15 and at-risk students. There seems to be a possible
16 unintended practice of considering CHEC students as
17 less -- or less deserving than their peers in other
18 schools. This has gone on for far too long because my
19 daughter, who graduated in 2019 was constantly
20 challenged, as were we as parents, by these same
21 conditions over her five years in middle and high
22 school . This isn't the first open platform that we

1 have used to express our collective frustration at
2 these disparities. If the true purpose of DCPS is to
3 improve the lives of all students in the District,
4 then what is happening at CHEC is certainly worthy of
5 your consideration. On behalf of our PTSO, I ask for
6 your assistance in providing equitable funding for
7 CHEC. In addition, CHEC is a city-wide school. We
8 attend students from Ward 1, 4, 5, 7, 6, and -- thank
9 you. Muchos gracias.

10 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Okay, Ms.
11 Fuchs and she will be followed by Neo Hillary Morake.

12 MS. FUCHS: My name is Laura Fuchs. This
13 is my thirteenth year at H.G. Woodsen and I sit on
14 our LSAT. Today, I'd like to focus on highlighting
15 the budget where it concerns serving the needs of our
16 special education students.

17 Because our schools are budgeted based
18 on projected enrollment, I understand that it would
19 be very difficult to predict how many kids are going
20 to be walking through the doors, and this year
21 happened to be a pleasant surprise. We're already
22 over 67 students beyond our overall projected

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1 enrollment but I got two today, so ... And our
2 special education population appears to have a
3 similar percentage of over-enrolled students.

4 When it comes to special education, the
5 challenges are even deeper than what we see on paper
6 in terms of numbers because we don't know what our
7 IEP hours are going to be and what programs they need
8 until they're in front of us. If they're bringing
9 students to us. So, right now, we're seeing also an
10 uptick in the hours -- from 10-15, that's what I'm
11 hearing from a lot of our teachers. So, not only do
12 we have more students that we predicted we also have
13 more hours to service them, than we had predicted
14 based on our averages from before.

15 So, one suggestion that I have would be
16 to try to make our staffing a little more flexible
17 city-wide. One way to do that would be to end the
18 practice of mutual consent that Michelle Rhee put
19 into our contract in 2009. If we allow excess
20 teachers who've good evaluation scores to stay in a
21 pool of available teachers and so we kind of know
22 whether -- who's walking through the door in August,

1 we might be able to place them quickly without
2 needing to worry about consent because, honestly, I
3 can't speak for my principal but, it seems like we'd
4 really take just about anyone at this point. And if
5 they have decent evaluation scores and they know DCPS
6 and have worked in that field then we'd probably take
7 them because we need people. We've got, you know,
8 vacancy problems and we have program and enrolled
9 class problems. And, when it comes to special
10 education, that's not acceptable.

11 Another thing that I'd like to add is
12 the Special Education Coordinator back to the
13 Comprehensive Staffing Model. I won't claim to be the
14 expert on what threshold it should be for when a
15 school is guaranteed that, whether it is total number
16 of students, number of hours, percentage of the
17 student population. The fact is, it's not optional
18 staffing for a school like H.G. Woodson where we're
19 usually close to 30% of our population. We just did
20 it out of our discretionary funds to afford it. Yeah,
21 we got it gifted but it created a huge disruption to
22 our program this year and we're really feeling the

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1 pain of losing our Special Education Coordinator and,
2 while we have someone in the loop, that didn't have
3 to happen, she would have stayed, if this hadn't
4 happened to us.

5 And then, we just probably need a
6 little more transparency when it comes to
7 transparency on the, kind of, how our special
8 education funds are allocated to the schools. As an
9 LSAT member, that's never been clear to me and I'm
10 not an expert but, if there's any way to break down
11 why we get the certain number of teachers that we do,
12 based on the hours and also to then make sure that we
13 are expending the funds appropriately and by law. I
14 think LSATs again would like me to have special ed
15 members on our team because the rest of us aren't
16 necessarily trained and it sometimes became very
17 unclear to us if we are doing what we're supposed to
18 do, or if money's kind of starting to get diverted
19 and when we have such a large number of students it
20 seems like we are potentially supplanting special
21 education funds the same way that at-risk funds are
22 getting supplanted. Thank you.

1 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.

2

3 MS. MORAKE: Good evening. My name is
4 Neo Morake and I am a proud product of the DCPS
5 system, having graduated Amidon-Bowen, Jefferson
6 Middle School, and then from Banneker Academic High
7 School. I'm here on behalf of my neighborhood
8 elementary school from Southwest DC, Amidon-Bowen,
9 where I am concerned about the lack of access to
10 technology, lack of basic school supplies and the
11 staffing problems facing the school.

12 The proverb, "It takes a village to
13 raise a child," recognizes that parenting is a shared
14 responsibility -- a community affair. Growing up in
15 Southwest DC during the '90s, the neighborhood
16 community totally embodied this proverb. Being a
17 product of that community, I felt compelled to
18 continue in that tradition upon my return to the
19 Southwest neighborhood. My alma mater has always, and
20 continues, to serve a high-need population with over
21 70% of students categorized as at-risk and less than
22 25% scoring proficient or higher on the most recent

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1 PARRC test.

2 As an elected community representative
3 on LSAT, I experienced first-hand the anguish
4 Principal Sykes, teachers, and parents go through as
5 they consider how the decrease in their annual budget
6 will impact on financing for supplemental and
7 constructional support, staff support for school
8 culture, and STEM, language, or arts staff. With the
9 population increase in Southwest, including the
10 opening of a new family shelter blocks away from the
11 school, and an additional decrease in funding from
12 the loss of its Head Start status, Amidon-Bowen will,
13 and continues to be placed under further stress to
14 support nonetheless accelerated student achievement.

15 As a member of the Southwest DC
16 community, I want to see my alma mater adequately
17 funded and staffed so that children have access to
18 high quality instruction, socio-emotional support,
19 mental health services, and enrichment classes such
20 as art, music, and physical education.

21 While the Southwest DC community is
22 trying to help the school, we cannot compensate for

1 inadequate funding of the school. As vital partners
2 of our village, we need DCPS and the city to continue
3 to prioritize a commitment to excellence and equity
4 by providing adequate resources to its students.

5 Thank you for the opportunity to
6 testify.

7 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Now we
8 have Sarah Wolf, who will be followed by Cathy
9 Reilly. Ms. Wolf?

10 MS. WOLF: Good evening. My name is
11 Sarah Wolf and I'm the parent of a kindergarten
12 student at Peabody Elementary School. I've been a DC
13 resident since 2003 and I live in Ward 6. I'm also a
14 member of the Peabody School Improvement Team, which
15 was set up in September 2019 to address safety and
16 maintenance concerns on the school playground.
17 Peabody is the early education campus of the Capital
18 Hill Cluster School in Ward 6. It educates 226
19 students in grades PreK3, PreK4, and kindergarten. It
20 is a diverse school that draws students primarily
21 from the Capital Hill neighborhood. Eighty-one
22 percent of students attending are in-boundary. Eight

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1 percent of students are economically disadvantaged,
2 and a high percent have special needs.

3 In 2018, when our son Rowan was offered
4 a PreK4 spot at Peabody through the lottery, we were
5 delighted. Peabody prides itself on providing a
6 joyful learning environment for kids ages three to
7 six. The school's a bright cheerful place decorated
8 with kids' artwork. The teachers are kind and the
9 program provides a gentle introduction to school
10 life. My son loves it.

11 You can imagine my shock on the first
12 day of school, at dismissal, to see Peabody staff
13 attempting to drive out of their parking spaces in a
14 playground full of little children. The situation
15 struck me as potentially dangerous and not at all in
16 keeping with the safe, supportive learning
17 environment that that Peabody endeavors to provide.
18 Over the course of the last and this academic year I,
19 along with other parents, witnessed many close calls
20 between kids and cars. The school has a policy of
21 honk and freeze. The teachers honk their horns and
22 the kids are supposed to freeze. However, we have

1 seen kids completely ignore the honk and instead of
2 freezing, run straight towards the moving car. We've
3 witnessed kids obey the honk and freeze, but freeze
4 behind a car that is backing up. We've seen 10 to 12
5 cars that are double-parked, try to maneuver through
6 a busy playground with caregivers and parents trying
7 to direct traffic, and kids are still running into
8 cars. In all cases, accidents were avoided due to the
9 efforts of parents and drivers working together to
10 keep kids safe. But other times it was pure luck that
11 the child running behind the car did not get hit.
12 These close calls are too frequent and put our kids
13 in an unnecessarily risky situation.

14 Playgrounds were established to provide
15 a safe place for kids to play that's free from cars.
16 I cannot believe that if the city were designing a
17 playground today, they would place cars within it
18 with no barriers or fencing to separate the kids. The
19 Mayor's Vision Zero Initiative seeks to reduce
20 traffic accidents and fatalities involving
21 pedestrians. I find it inconsistent that we focus on
22 pedestrian safety on the way to and from school, but

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1 once they're at the school site, there are no such
2 safety or traffic measures in place.

3 In addition to parents worrying about
4 keeping their kids safe from cars, the playground
5 itself has become unsafe over the years. There are
6 three major problems that are leading to injuries
7 including broken bones. The playground surfacing
8 includes black top, poured rubber and wood chips. The
9 black top and poured rubber have uneven surfaces,
10 gaps and sinkholes and provide insufficient padding
11 in some places especially under ladders.

12 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Ms. Wolf,
13 if I could ask you to just summarise --

14 MS. WOLF: Sure.

15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.

16 MS. WOLF: So, in summary, the
17 playground is in need of an overhaul. We understand
18 that Peabody had Phase 1 funding for modernization
19 planning in 2013. The playground was not included in
20 that funding. So, under the new Pace model we are
21 looking at some kind of funding well after 2024. So,
22 I urge the Education Chancellor to address these

1 concerns in the next budget. Thank you.

2 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Ms.
3 Reilly.

4 MS. REILLY: Thank you for this
5 opportunity to testify. I'm here as the Executive
6 Director for SHAPPE, which is the senior alliance of
7 parents, principals, and educators and I also
8 facilitate the Ward 4 Ed Alliance and a member of the
9 Coalition for DC Public Schools.

10 First, I'd really like to congratulate
11 you on the enrolment increase for DCPS and
12 particularly if the neighborhood schools saw
13 enrolment and so did the secondary schools. So, it's
14 just a moment to take to say congratulations.

15 Last year DCPS added application seats
16 at the high school level by opening Bard DC and
17 expanding Banneker. Bard families are legitimately
18 concerned about the promises made and how their
19 building needs will be met. But it's my hope that,
20 this year, there will be a focus on how to build on
21 attracting families to the schools of right --
22 strengthening the feeder patterns and strengthening

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1 the staffing and options at the neighborhood high
2 schools. These are difficult issues to balance
3 between new schools DCPS has opened and obligations
4 to the schools of right. We strongly support a
5 five-year DCPS master education planning process
6 that would inform a master facility plan for DCPS.
7 And I welcome your outreach on that level. It could
8 provide us criteria and input as well as
9 predictability and stability.

10 As far as S.H.A.P.E., the priorities
11 expressed in our meetings and echoed in other
12 meetings and echoed here tonight, are partly
13 Roosevelt High School Global Studies School and
14 Roosevelt's STAY, have outgrown their ability to
15 partner as currently configured day programs at the
16 Roosevelt campus. And you know they're both mutually
17 supported but now we have close to 1500-1600
18 students at that school with two DCPS high schools
19 sharing that space and it's become untenable and very
20 difficult as we build and work for a lot of
21 attraction. Our enrolment pre-schools and continuing
22 to our middle schools. To have that happening at

1 Roosevelt is just really -- we would like to see a
2 plan for next year formally written out so that's
3 alleviated.

4 I also echo what has been said about
5 Wards 1 about -- the new School and Shaw and Ward 7
6 getting a middle school. I'd also like to echo what
7 people -- it's been interesting to me that, in our
8 meetings both in Ward 4 and SHAPPE, the staffing
9 model for the special education students has come up
10 repeatedly. Where schools don't feel they're in
11 compliance, there's a problem with the lack of -- the
12 coordinator being part of the comprehensive staffing
13 model. So, I'd like to echo what's been said there.

14 With the enrolment increase, there's
15 been a demand for additional teachers that have been
16 impossible to meet in the fall. A suggestion was made
17 to reinstate a provisional certification for
18 otherwise qualified candidates so that, like Woodson
19 said, CHEC said, and Roosevelt felt there is not the
20 staffing so we have overcrowded staffed classes.

21 Finally, I -- there's other things you
22 can read -- but DCPS is a city agency dependent on

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1 other agencies for different services including
2 things like the clearance process. While we will
3 continue to advocate to the Mayor and the Council on
4 these issues, we also need your voice. For example,
5 with DGS we are dependent on them for critical
6 repairs on the HVAC system at Roosevelt and the fact
7 that there are still areas in the older buildings
8 that don't have a heating system. So we want to work
9 with you on that and I also -- schools across the
10 city we have -- our children. We want to work with
11 you on that, and I look forward to your support.
12 Thank you.

13 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: And next
14 we have Gwendolyn Washington, to be followed by
15 Jhonna Turner.

16 MS. WASHINGTON: Good evening. My name
17 is Gwendolyn Washington and I am the parent of one
18 Deal student and a Shepherd Elementary student and I
19 am speaking this evening on behalf of the Deal LSAT
20 as I'm a parent rep there.

21 Deal Middle School is the largest
22 middle school I the District of Columbia -- nearly

1 three times larger than the next largest DCPS school.
2 Our population serves students from every ward in the
3 city and our populations of special ed and at-risk
4 students are comparative to, or greater than, many
5 other DCPS schools.

6 Now, there are two areas of concern
7 that I'd like to share today with you, Dr. Ferebee
8 and Deputy Chancellor Maisterra. The first is that,
9 of the 1500 middle school students -- Deal Middle
10 School students -- they've a wide range of needs and
11 of the social-emotional needs, these students are
12 amplified by the sheer number of adolescents packed
13 in close quarters. The current level of
14 social-emotional support does not -- staffing doesn't
15 meet the emotional needs of all Deal students. We
16 have currently three school counselors, three and a
17 half social workers, and only one school psychologist
18 for 1500 students. The DCPS comprehensive staffing
19 model allocated one counselor for every 400 students.
20 The Washington Teachers' Union DCPS collective
21 bargaining agreement outlines that there should be at
22 least one social worker for every 250 students. In

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1 short, Deal needs increased budgeting support for
2 social and emotional learning and the Collaborative
3 for Academic Social and Emotional Learning -- CASEL -
4 - statistics show that, when there is
5 social-emotional learning, students do better and
6 have the tools to meet all the challenges that and
7 adversities they face every day. Every DCPS school,
8 no matter whether it's designated as a Title 1 school
9 or has a student body composed of predominantly
10 socio-economically upwardly mobile families, needs
11 social-emotional learning and it can only be achieved
12 through DCPS budgets.

13 Second, we renew our need -- our
14 request for the District to invest in technology. At
15 this point, the funding allocation that we have here
16 is insufficient to meet the needs of the Deal
17 students and it leaves nearly 1,000 Deal students in
18 7th and 8th grades with outdated supplies. It's
19 imperative that all students have access to reliable
20 and updated technology, technological tools to close
21 the digital divide. In addition, we need further
22 support for our smartboards as they are not being

1 serviced, they're not able to be used. Thank you so
2 much for you time.

3 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.
4 Now we have Ms. Turner, followed by Mr. Ronald
5 Thompson.

6 MS. TURNER: Hello, my name is Jhonna
7 Turner. I'm here representing the Village of
8 Brookland Traditional Public Schools, which is an
9 alliance of parents, community members, educators,
10 and advocates who believe that each child has the
11 worth, value, and inherent right to a high quality
12 education. We, the Village of Brookland believe the
13 Empowered Learners Initiative is a fabulous step
14 towards closing the digital divide. For this
15 initiative to thrive, implementation is more
16 providing the machine and, a course, good digital
17 citizenship but it's also building the capacity in
18 providing the skills for students to optimize their
19 learning experience for maximum growth and
20 utilization. The focus of ELI is to push students to
21 become college and career ready. Strangely enough, it
22 seems the Standardized Strategic Plan is nowhere to

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1 be found concerning ELI.

2 Students at Brookland Middle School are
3 coming from various points of computer familiarity.
4 One scholar may be into coding, while another may not
5 know how to copy and paste a photo to a document. The
6 fact of the matter is, teaching fluently is a taught
7 skill. Understanding Microsoft Word, Googledocs is a
8 skill that needs to be mastered before high school.
9 To be fully engaged in the digital world, students
10 must also know how to create PowerPoint,
11 spreadsheets, navigate the World Wide Web. This
12 technological mode of operation needs to be taught
13 and not assumed. All students learning how to utilize
14 a laptop should not take away from instructional
15 time. Therefore, we are asking, in general, from
16 DCPS, a clear definition of computer literacy,
17 standards for computational thinking, which includes
18 creating and designing integrated computational
19 skills across various subjects.

20 For Brookland Middle School, we are
21 asking for a part-time teacher dedicated to ensuring
22 all students are building the skills necessary that

1 they need for computer integration of across
2 subjects, and something simple. Protective cases help
3 keep the devices protected and durable. Transparency
4 in direction will help move our scholars forward. Our
5 asks are not high and, in the long run, are
6 economically prudent. Creating a path for our
7 scholars to prosper is not just supplying the bricks,
8 but is creating a path and a clear direction that
9 helps them navigate the modern digital world.

10 While I have the time - this is off the
11 cuff -- I just want to make this point, and I do not
12 have this written down: right now, PE is taught by a
13 man. PE teachers at most schools have to also teach
14 sex ed. It is very hard for a girl to talk to a man
15 about their bodies. There should be some type of
16 gender-based approach when it comes to girls and
17 their health especially if they are LGBTQ. Having a
18 comfortable safe place to talk about what's going on
19 with them, is critical to social-emotional health.
20 And also attached are Massachusetts standards of
21 computer literacy and an example of how to protect
22 one-to-one devices if a school district is using

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1 them.

2 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.
3 Mr. Thompson? And next we have Elizabeth Davis. Ms.
4 Davis? Okay, we'll keep moving. We have Mr. Peter
5 Boyce, following by Emmanuel Caudillo.

6 MR. BOYCE: Chancellor, Deputy
7 Chancellor, guests and residents. Thanks for this
8 opportunity to provide some input into the budgetary
9 process that relates to our beloved school system.
10 Thank you for your difficult work and your valuable
11 service you've done in the names of our children here
12 in the District of Columbia. I am Peter Boyce of Ward
13 3, President of Community Affairs Consultants and the
14 proud parents of two past and two present DCPS
15 students: a 7th grader at Alice Deal Middle School
16 and a 9th grader at Woodrow Wilson High School. My
17 older sons, now 29 and 27, both attended Janney
18 Elementary School before graduating from Harvard and
19 Yale Universities. I served as school president of
20 the Alice Deal Community Association last year and
21 this year I'm serving at ACDA Liaison to the LSAT.
22 Fittingly, I endorse the earlier

1 remarks by Ms. Washington, representative of the LSAT
2 at Alice Deal Middle School and I urge the budget
3 decision-makers to allocate more monies towards
4 social-emotional learning since underfunding in this
5 area would force more undue challenges on the
6 instructional delivery of non-special Ed teachers.
7 With that said, I now reference one of the many
8 yearly written articles that attempt to rate and
9 grade our schools from elementary to tertiary level.
10 Forbes magazine July 31, 2018 published an article
11 written by Renee Morad titled "States with the best
12 public school systems." And although that survey did
13 not rank our DCPS very well, I believe they did our
14 system valuable service. If only we would heed the
15 prerequisite to better school performance from one of
16 the researchers cited in this article, Laura Hsu,
17 assistant professor at Merrimack College, and I
18 quote: "more than any factor, teacher quality seems
19 to be the strongest predictor of student achievement
20 ... recruiting and retaining strong teachers would
21 ideally be the priority for every school," she
22 informed. Yet, she acknowledged that such performance

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1 is linked to budgets. But, unfortunately, and
2 realistically, Barbara Jeanne Erwin, clinical
3 professor at Indiana University at Bloomington, has
4 acknowledged, educators are asked to do more with
5 less funding. Whatever our funding, teacher training,
6 recruitment, retention, and pay should be priorities
7 of our school budgets. So should be the procurement
8 of up-to-date textbooks and continued introduction
9 and fast delivery of classroom technology especially
10 units needed to prep and take tests. Thank you for
11 your time and for your prompt action. Once again,
12 let's give a shout-out to Banneker because Banneker
13 has a 100% retention -- I got that tweet today -- so,
14 kudos to Banneker. Thank you.

15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.
16 Mr. Caudillo. And then following Mr. Caudillo, we
17 have Erin Martin and Henry Martin.

18 MR. CAUDILLO: Good evening. Good
19 evening, Chancellor. Good evening, Deputy Chancellor.
20 You will -- I will send the -- my hardcopies of my
21 testimony. I'll email them so you'll be able to read
22 them.

1 My name is Emmanuel Caudillo I'm the
2 co-chair of the DC Education Coalition for Change. We
3 seek change in order to make DCPS more equitable for
4 all our students. We focus on educational issues in
5 all wards. I live in Ward 4, but we have numbers in
6 every ward. We are students, teachers, families, and
7 community members. And we've been working on this
8 effort for quite a while. In fact, community schools
9 was one of our first priorities and we've been happy
10 to see that it's become integrated through your
11 Connected Schools Initiative that started this year.
12 So, we look forward to hearing the result of the
13 implementation this year and in years to come.

14 As we look into the 2021 budget, we are
15 hard at work at ensuring that this year budget
16 priorities that constant affect all our students
17 especially our at-risk students. We are looking at
18 where the need is in order to ensure that they have
19 access to success no matter what school they attend
20 in DC. DCPS enrollment has grown but we want to make
21 sure that it's not just enrolling students, but
22 serving them as well. Now today I've asked that you

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1 consider us as partners as you develop your budget.
2 We want to make sure that all of our student needs
3 are met in the budget early on so that we're not
4 racing trying to fix shortfalls at the end of it.

5 For instance, on November 14 we are
6 holding a transportation town hall at CHEC at 6:30.
7 Everyone here is welcome to attend and be a part of
8 this town hall. One of the issues that has risen in
9 regards to our members is transportation.

10 Transportation issues, for instance, our students say
11 they want reliable and safe transportation to ensure
12 they and their siblings are at school on time but
13 also be able to safely return to their homes
14 afterwards.

15 Another issue that's come forth is
16 mental health supports. We want to make sure that our
17 students have access to any needs they have to ensure
18 that they can focus in the classroom on learning and
19 not focusing on things that may prevent them from
20 learning.

21 And finally, we're looking at equitable
22 funding. We should hear about schools -- you know, we

1 should not hear how schools with more at-risk
2 students are having their school budgets cut. We want
3 to make sure that all funding, including at-risk
4 funding, is being used for students that need the
5 funding and not necessarily just to supplement
6 shortfalls. And so we want to make sure that it's
7 fair for all schools, no matter where a student goes
8 because we want to make sure that they have all the
9 resources needed to ensure their success. So,
10 consider us as partners in your budget priorities.
11 Our organization is powered by our stakeholders and
12 they're the ones -- direction. So you're not hearing
13 the budget priorities from me, but you're hearing
14 from the community in which we entrust our children
15 to you to ensure that they are safe and
16 comprehensively prepared for college and career,
17 because that's all we want and need. And so, consider
18 us as partners as you develop these priorities. Thank
19 you so much for your time.

20 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you
21 very much. Erin Martin followed by Henry Martin.

22 MS. MARTIN: Good evening, distinguished

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1 members of the panel, parents and representatives. My
2 name is Erin Martin and I am a parent representative
3 on the School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens' Local
4 School Advisory Team. In the interests of time I'll
5 cut to the second paragraph. In seven past years, the
6 School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens has
7 experienced all the growing pains that a school under
8 new leadership and branding would experience. through
9 the vision, commitment and unyielding work of our
10 principal, we have realized incredible gains in
11 academic performance, school climate, and an
12 enrolment increase. We have grown from a school of
13 223 students to a school of 474 students in the
14 2018-19 school year. Currently, according to our
15 enrolment numbers, we are enrolled at 105%
16 over-capacity. Though the building capacity is 513
17 students we have 537 students attending our school.
18 It is anticipated that our student population will
19 continue to rise due to an increase in new enrolments
20 and an increase in re-enrolments at all levels. DCPS
21 projects that we will reach 656 students in the
22 school year 2025.

1 Although the largest growth is
2 occurring at the middle school level right now, it
3 has had a significant impact on students and staff at
4 all levels. Though we are physically situated in the
5 affluent West End neighborhood of Ward 2, we have
6 maintained a racial, socio-economic, and geographical
7 diversity ensuring all 8 wards are welcome at
8 Francis-Stevens and valued in our community.

9 It is part of our mission to provide
10 access to a quality education and educational
11 experience to as many students as possible. We
12 strongly believe we are a model for what DCPS is
13 trying to achieve especially at the middle school
14 level. As DCPS struggles to keep students enrolled
15 after elementary school, we are finally drawing
16 students who would like to feed into our middle
17 school program. With a high-quality instructional
18 program intact, it is time for DCPS to stop
19 retrofitting temporary fixes and throwing away money
20 to convert one space into another.

21 Lack of space is our primary issue. We
22 are removing computer labs to create instructional

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1 spaces. We are holding classes in the cafeteria and
2 demonstration kitchen. Our students are experiencing
3 classrooms that have been cut in half to make two
4 classrooms. We have open storage spaces under
5 stairwells and storage pods and everywhere. However,
6 we are also experiencing significant facilities
7 issues. There are rodents in the hallways, in the
8 classrooms, and in the hallways, in the classrooms,
9 and in the FoodPrints kitchen area. Properly
10 functioning safety doors are not all functional. In
11 the preschool classrooms we have dealt with sewage
12 leaks and lack of access to bathrooms. We are asking
13 that DCPS and the city of DC move our modernization
14 up to begin in the 20-21 school year as it has been
15 moved back twice. Thank you.

16 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.
17 Mr. Martin followed by Mr. Wolf.

18 MS. MARTIN: We have a quick
19 substitution. My younger son, Jacob, is going to read
20 his testimony.

21 MASTER MARTIN: Good evening, community
22 members. My name is Jacob Martin and I'm a fourth

1 grader at School without Walls at Francis-Stevens. It
2 is the only school I have attended since I started
3 there in Grade 3. When I was in preK4, I remember
4 that my parents wanted to involve me like this one to
5 keep the school open when DCPS proposed closing it
6 along with many other schools. My mom and dad and
7 lots of other parents worked hard to keep my school
8 open and they focused on getting the best teachers
9 they could, and they didn't ask for DCPS for a new
10 building.

11 Now, several years after the almost
12 closure we need a new building because the one we
13 have is full of kids. There are no lockers and the
14 building is failing. Our classrooms are filled and
15 some kids like me have full classes that are in half.
16 Me and my school friends are trying to learn in a
17 space that is too small. Our school doesn't have
18 lockers; that's a problem because kids have heavy
19 books and different bags that are heavy to lug around
20 the school. So please include lockers. In conclusion,
21 the current school is failing its students. With no
22 lockers, no hot water, and no third floor boys

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1 bathroom and not enough space for the current
2 students, these problems hurt our learning. The good
3 news is that all these problems have solutions. My
4 school was scheduled for a modernization several
5 years ago but the funding was redirected to other
6 projects. Enrolment has grown because people want to
7 come to my school. It is time to replace the old
8 building with a new one so learning can be improved
9 and our futures can be made that is much brighter.

10 [applause]

11 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.
12 Mr. Wolf followed by Serenity Rain.

13 MS. RAIN: Good evening everyone. My
14 name is Jaime Wolf and I am a kindergarten/first
15 grade educator and LSAT board member at School
16 without Walls at Francis-Stevens.

17 I have had the pleasure of being a part
18 of this wonderfully school community for six years.
19 When I first began my tenure in 2014, there were
20 still empty classrooms and it was an educational
21 institution in transition navigating its way through
22 growing pains, figuring out what it aspired to

1 become. With each passing school year, as our
2 recognition and reputation for academic excellence
3 grew, so did our student body. Even scholars from all
4 eight wards of our city wanted to wear their Tiger
5 pride. Each and every day, the most talented,
6 dedicated cadre of educators with whom I have had the
7 honor and privilege to teach inspire and challenge
8 our students, perpetuating our tradition of
9 excellence.

10 Those once-vacant classrooms are now
11 teeming with engaged critical thinkers -- every
12 school's ultimate goal. Yet, conversely, those same
13 creative spaces potentially serve as harbingers of
14 the future for our -- school is seemingly penalized
15 for its success.

16 Currently School without Walls at
17 Francis-Stevens, a public school once slated for
18 closure due to poor performance and low enrolment, is
19 now significantly over-crowded due to the coveted
20 rigorous academics and highly talented faculty our
21 school boasts. Our current enrolment of 546 students
22 far surpasses our building capacity of 513 and

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1 enrolment projections continue to skyrocket past 600
2 students through school year 2022-2023. Renovations
3 have now been postponed twice. However, the influx of
4 young learners cannot be deferred, nor should it.
5 Twenty-six fourth graders are constrained to have
6 classrooms designed for no more than 10 students. Our
7 youngest most vulnerable learners are not response to
8 intervention because we do not have enough school
9 support staff to service our burgeoning population.
10 In order to best accommodate our over-enrolled middle
11 school program, lower elementary students are
12 compelled to adhere to a developmentally
13 inappropriate schedule, one including a break-free
14 three-hour stint in classrooms through the entirety
15 of the afternoon.

16 DCPS has set a lofty goal of 100
17 percent of its K-2 students reading on or above grade
18 level by 2022. Yet, how can our students flourish
19 when their learning environment is over-crowded,
20 outdated, and, in certain instances, crippling and
21 dysfunctional. It is not commonplace to smell a
22 pungent odor of sewage, see an "out of order" sign

1 plastered to the front of the boys' bathroom due to
2 failing plumbing. Trip over nails protruding from
3 century-old classroom doors or dodge peeling paint
4 cascading from the ceilings of our stairwells.

5 Mice and other vermin are also familiar
6 pests. Due to the fact that we cannot control the
7 temperature in our classrooms, our air conditioners
8 must run strong in the dead of winter simultaneously
9 alongside sonic hot grate heaters.

10 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you,
11 Ms. Wolf. Could you summarize?

12 MS. WOLF: Sure. School without Walls at
13 Francis-Stevens evokes an inspirational proverbial
14 rags-to-riches story. Seven years ago a steadfast
15 group of families and educators believed in the
16 potential greatness of our school and they fought
17 hard to keep it open. Our school surpassed even their
18 vision. Unless our school is renovated to meet the
19 demands of a 21st century learning environment, we
20 run the risk of more than just our infrastructure
21 deteriorating. Morale, student success stories and
22 re-enrolment will undoubtedly follow suit. Thank you.

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DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Ms. Rain?

3

Serenity Rain? Followed by Ms. Huvendick, Nancy

4

Huvendick.

5

MS. RAIN: Good evening. Thank you for

6

allowing me to testify today. My name is Serenity

7

Rain and I'm a parent and LSAT chair at Anne Beers

8

Elementary School with three children, one in preK4,

9

one in first grade, and one in fourth grade. I am

10

also Food Prints teacher at Anne Beers providing

11

hands-on environment, cooking, and nutrition

12

education. I'm here today to express my frustration

13

with the lack of funding, support and space for our

14

school.

15

I've been a parent at Anne Beers for

16

five years, a Food Prints teacher for three years,

17

and the LSAT chair for a year. I love Anne Beers.

18

It's a awful school with a great foundation full of

19

wonderful teachers and staff that are like family.

20

But we are bursting at the seams. Our classes are

21

over-crowded, our teachers and staff are over-worked

22

because of the lack of classroom support due to

1 funding. No matter how great our school is, we can
2 only do so much with limited resources, funding and
3 support.

4 DCPS is doing our students and children
5 a disservice and it's unacceptable. How can we change
6 things? How can we work together? We need more space,
7 resources, and funding. The number of students in our
8 classes are too big and some support staff, like
9 myself, don't even have space to successfully run
10 programming. It poses an inequitable challenge. Why
11 do schools east of the river seem to get the short
12 end of the stick? We received Phase 1 of our
13 renovation over five years ago and we have yet to
14 receive an update about Phase 2 or 3 of our
15 renovation. And we just recently found out that we're
16 not even in the budget to receive modernization
17 within five years. Why is that? Where is the
18 transparency?

19 We have no sprinkler system in our
20 auditorium, which also functions as our gymnasium and
21 it's unsafe and inaccessible. What happens when there
22 is a real fire in our auditorium or gymnasium? This

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1 outcome has the potential to be devastating. There's
2 no adequate teachers' lounge or place where teachers
3 can take a break or a breather or eat lunch without
4 interruptions from students. As a FoodPrints teacher,
5 it truly breaks my heart when I've been to other DCPS
6 schools with Food Prints partnerships and they have
7 nice teaching kitchen classrooms. I have to use a
8 cart loaded with my cooking and teaching materials
9 and push it to each classroom, which not only takes
10 away from the Food Prints experience, but is a major
11 inconvenience for me and more physically taxing. I
12 also have to use a small teachers' lounge to house
13 and clean my materials. I have to do double the work
14 as my other Food Prints colleagues, deliver the same
15 curriculum and services and it's beyond unfair. Where
16 is the equity?

17 I knew that there was inequity across
18 the city. I grew up in the city, I'm from Ward 7. But
19 I didn't know that the inequity in the DCPS system
20 was so profound until I became a parent, a teacher,
21 and LSAT chair. It appears that I have power because
22 I wear many hats but, honestly, I feel overwhelmed

1 and disempowered because it seems like our voices are
2 not being heard. This is totally unacceptable, and
3 something needs to be done. Our children deserve the
4 best. There should be equity amongst all DCPS
5 schools. So, I leave the following questions with
6 you: will we put our children first? What are you
7 planning to do to make things equitable across all
8 DCPS schools? Will we get our Phase 2 and 3? And will
9 you add more money to our budget so we can
10 successfully serve the students that we have? Thank
11 you.

12 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.
13 Nancy Huvendick? Thank you. And after Ms. Huvendick
14 will be Elizabeth Mitchell.

15 MS. HUVENDICK: Good evening. My name is
16 Nancy Huvendick. I am DC Programs Director for the
17 21st Century School Fund. I thank you for this
18 opportunity.

19 The 21st Century School Fund has been
20 studying and championing my organization of the
21 District's DCPS school buildings and grounds for the
22 past 25 years. My two children are DCPS graduates.

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1 All five of the schools they attended were desperate
2 in need of our organization. Those children are off
3 on their own now and the school buildings they
4 attended are not fully modernized neighborhood
5 assets. But out of 111 DCPS school buildings now in
6 active use, we have come a long way by completely
7 modernizing all but 20 of them and those remaining
8 have largely been very well stabilized and updated.

9 However, we must pay attention to those
10 schools that have been largely -- but not completely
11 modernized and which are not in the current Capital
12 Improvement Program. These are school that have had
13 very substantial Phase 1 modernizations but have not
14 had the advantage of starting from the ground up with
15 the complete facilities re-planning that would get
16 them the full modernization done all of a piece.
17 Beers is one of those schools. Other examples would
18 be, for instance, Bunker Hill, Burrville, Hart,
19 Johnson, Seaton, or Whittier; an assessment of Phase
20 1 modernizations should prioritize these buildings
21 for completed modernizations. These neighborhood
22 anchors need to find a place in the upcoming CIP.

1 We have complaints of heat and AC
2 malfunctions, roof leaks and other problems in newly
3 modernized buildings. Attention to maintenance and
4 repair is critical for students and teachers and
5 essential to those communities' trust in DCPS and
6 DGS. With the more complicated systems in our new
7 buildings, maintenance is more important, more
8 time-consuming, and more expensive. While this fact
9 may be a truism for facility managers it must be
10 acknowledged with the general public. Modernized
11 buildings are world's better for teaching and
12 learning, but modernized buildings are complicated
13 and costly and their maintenance is critical.

14 Families want to secure pathways from
15 elementary school through middle school to high
16 school. This is critical for early children private
17 programs that open next fall at Stevens and those
18 projects planned for Old Miner and Old Randle
19 Highlands. By-right feeder patterns need to be
20 assigned. Determining a near-by feeder for Stevens,
21 such as Francis-Stevens, would help families who opt
22 for Stevens for preK3 and preK4. Discussion within

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1 the Francis-Stevens community about assigning its
2 6th-8th grade students to the new Shaw Middle School
3 expected at 800 Euclid Street, would be appropriate
4 right now. This could provide sufficient classroom
5 space at Francis-Stevens and assure those 6th
6 graders with a full middle school program in a
7 stand-alone facility.

8 Overall providing by right early
9 childhood assignment for preK3 and preK4 in
10 neighborhood DCPS schools serves families very well
11 and it would help the District's budget too. Families
12 prefer to use their neighborhood schools. My
13 organization funding maintenance and repair costs
14 on-going should be compared to the facilities
15 allowance for each charter school student. The
16 additional \$3,335 per student on top of the funding
17 formula in the add-on charter facilities allowance is
18 a savings represented by every additional DCPS
19 student. Thank you.

20 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.

21 Ms. Mitchell. Followed by Mr. Cedric Hendricks.

22 MS. MITCHELL: My name is Elizabeth

1 Mitchell and I have two children at Janney Elementary
2 School. Recent budgets have significantly undercut
3 the ability of neighborhood schools like ours to meet
4 their commitment to high-quality education for all.
5 These budgets continue the steady decline of
6 foundational dollars and capital budget of the public
7 school system we've come to expect. It's
8 unconscionable that in a city with such a large
9 budget surplus, we have an established tradition of
10 undercutting, underfunding our neighborhood schools.
11 Janney is an outstanding community of learners built
12 on a foundation of achievement, inquiry, equity,
13 reflection, collaboration, and experimentation. Our
14 students contribute to an atmosphere centered on
15 inclusion, respect, and community. Our experienced
16 staff and students support these high ideals by
17 functioning as competent co-learners in this
18 inclusion model.

19 All students, regardless of educational
20 needs, are taught in the general education setting
21 for as much of the day as possible, with the supports
22 they need to be successful. This model, which is the

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1 DCPS vision for all of its schools, means we need to
2 have appropriate staff in place to serve 752 students
3 with varying educational needs across 33 classrooms.
4 Past budgets have put those supports and staff at
5 risk and made our inclusion model seem
6 unsustainable. Budget cuts and shortfalls are not
7 circumstantial. It is the continuation of flawed
8 practices and methods in budgeting that need to be
9 addressed to move forward. We ask, again, that the
10 budget process begin earlier, take into account the
11 individual needs of schools, and allow school
12 communities and LSATs the necessary time to do our
13 jobs.

14 Early in the process, a needs
15 assessment should be conducted with schools that will
16 allow the unique characteristics of schools, programs
17 and students to be thoughtfully planned for during
18 the budget process. LSATs should be given initial
19 budget allocations with at least 2-3 weeks' time to
20 digest and provide input on the budget. DCPS should
21 also provide schools with flexibility to alter their
22 budgets to better their needs. There also has been an

1 inadequate rise in per-student funding. There was a
2 modest increase last year that was still beneath the
3 annual increase in local schools' costs of doing
4 business, less than both inflation and salary
5 increases. It was below the per-student cost to offer
6 educational adequacy and DCPS knew the security costs
7 that were previously carried by the central DCPS
8 budget.

9 We also need to address the DC laws and
10 practices that have led to under-enrolment especially
11 in high poverty schools, making the schools more
12 expensive to operate. We've had the deepest cuts made
13 to neighborhood schools that are already struggling
14 with enrolment challenges. These cuts come on top of
15 previous cuts which are taking these schools in a
16 death spiral. Because so much funding is dependent on
17 enrolment, when a school loses enrolment it loses
18 budget dollars, which requires a cut to programming,
19 which leads to families choosing different schools,
20 and the cycle goes on. We need a stimulus tied to
21 serious planning effort aimed at bolstering the
22 city's neighborhood DCPS schools and feeder systems.

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1 Matt Frumin has made a number of proposals that I
2 agree with. We desperately need a budget that
3 addresses the extreme overcrowding we're experiencing
4 in Ward 3. Building better feeder networks across the
5 city will help, but we absolutely need a plan.

6 We're projected to be 25% over capacity
7 in the near future and we are looking at a middle
8 school with over 2,000 students. Our current
9 enrolment predictions require five additional
10 schools in Ward 3 to accommodate the students we're
11 expecting and that doesn't even include the thousands
12 of additional students the Mayor's housing plan will
13 bring.

14 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Please Ms.
15 Mitchell, would you summarize?

16 MS. MITCHELL: That's it.

17 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.
18 Mr. Hendricks following by James Mello.

19 MR. HENDRICKS: Good evening. Let me
20 start by thanking you two for coming out tonight,
21 speaking with all of us who have, as you have, come
22 out, brought information to share, not just -- but

1 for the good of the whole here tonight. Chancellor
2 Ferebee, I pretty much follow you around as you've
3 come to town and I applaud the fact that you made
4 yourself accessible, available. That you've gone out
5 and, I think with a fury and engaged. Clearly from
6 what I've heard there are a lot of problems and
7 challenges on your plate. And I wish you the best in
8 handling things. Needless to say, though, I'm here to
9 speak on behalf of our school, the School without
10 Walls at Francis-Stevens, where I'm grateful to serve
11 as the chair of the Local School Advisory Team.

12 I don't want to restate all of what
13 you've heard from my colleagues that are here
14 tonight: the parents, the faculty and I'm pleased to
15 see our administrator too. I just want to make two
16 points. First, as you know, we're over capacity right
17 now too. One of the consequences of that is that, in
18 this current year, we find ourselves now in need of
19 teachers that we don't have current budget for. We
20 kinda went into this year anticipating 495 students
21 and, as you heard, now we're at 546. So, in addition,
22 to having challenges with the classroom space, we

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1 have instructional needs that, I think, we're going
2 to need to figure out. I know we're here to talk
3 about the next year's budget, but the immediate
4 concerns that we have really require some figuring
5 out. How to ensure that students get the instruction
6 and support that they need.

7 Second thing I simply want to mention
8 is, as you know, on the 16th we had the opportunity
9 to participate in an ANC two-ways meeting.

10 Chancellor, I'm glad you were out there that night as
11 well as Mayor Bowser and the ANC did approve a
12 resolution in support of moving our modernization
13 forward. They proposed moving it up to FY2020. I
14 think that speaks to their sense of the urgency of
15 the situation. I know they sent the resolution to
16 yourself and the Office of the Mayor. I just wanted
17 to make that part of the conversation tonight because
18 we know our situation is one that, I think, does
19 benefit from our ANCs in the vicinity of the school
20 really studying the situation, trying to be
21 supportive of us in bringing your -- to the table to
22 make sure that our needs are heard. So, I thank you

1 for this opportunity and I wish you well in tackling
2 the challenges on your plate.

3 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.
4 Mr. Mello followed Mr. Charles Boston.

5 MR. MELLO: Good evening. I'm Jake Mello
6 I'm a parent of a PK-4 student and upcoming PK-3
7 eventually at Anne Beers. I wanted to talk today
8 specifically about the Mayor's Capital Improvement
9 Plan and the total lack of funding and just -- where
10 our school is.

11 So, we completed Phase 1 in 2015. It
12 was rushed. It did not include installation of major
13 life safety systems like sprinklers, which were, I
14 suppose, grandfathered in. A decision was made after
15 the fact. Earlier in 2019, there was a fire in our
16 cafeteria caused by old wiring, is my understanding,
17 and there's no sprinklers and there's no PA -- it
18 reached -- the gym, which is directly above.

19 Our school's already over capacity. The
20 fourth grade classes operate in trailers. At the end
21 of the Phase 1, the school was rated for 430
22 students. Our enrolment this year is 520 so we're

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1 already over-utilized and we're expected to go over
2 110% by the end of next year. We also have severely
3 limited -- spaces. We've got a very small gym, a very
4 small cafeteria, and it creates a lot of problems
5 getting kids in and out and able to sit down for
6 lunch and there's no opportunity to use those spaces
7 as -- spaces very much. I've lived in the
8 neighborhood for 13 years and in the last five years
9 there's been a large change in the demographics. We
10 have a lot of new families and it is just -- we would
11 like to see this school as a resource and it's a
12 great -- it's a good school, it's great staff, you
13 know, it's a good feeling but we're stretched and
14 it's, you know, gotten -- old facility and Phase 1
15 just didn't live up to what it was supposed to be and
16 we never heard a peep about the other phases.

17 We've been fighting for five years to
18 get sprinklers. We think they were supposed to be
19 installed but we still need more. We'd like you to
20 consider moving up the total Phase 2 Phase 3 or a
21 total reimagination of the school earlier than 2026.
22 Thank you very much.

1 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.

2 Mr. Boston followed by Latashia Franklin.

3 MR. BOSTON: Good evening, everyone. My
4 name is Charles Boston, I'm a Ward 7 resident and
5 here today as a parent first, concerned resident
6 second, and tradesman third. I would like to see the
7 2020-2021 funding directed to address the gross
8 academic and skills achievement gaps that have
9 existed, and increased, over the past 40 years, which
10 has led to mass incarceration, substance abuse, and
11 economic castration of many District families. There
12 needs to be funding for career and professional
13 careers in all junior high schools to encourage and
14 support all schools in exploring and discovering the
15 talents and passions. Our students are more than
16 reading and math. Whatever career field or track that
17 a student wants to pursue after high school, i.e.,
18 plumbing, or business ownership, or post-secondary
19 education, students should be thoroughly prepared and
20 able to sustain. There needs to be more funding to
21 promote academics over athletics. We need more math
22 and science programming and clubs K-12 as an

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1 extracurricular for this techno world we now live in.

2

3 I was in an under-achieving middle
4 school the other day and there were more trophy cases
5 than anything else. Our kids have the potential and
6 should be expected and encouraged to contribute to
7 this world other than entertainers and athletes.

8 Nothing against Vernon Davis Dunbar or Dave Chapelle
9 or Duke Ellington who both mean a lot to the city
10 and, coincidentally, have days dedicated to them. But a
11 true scholar and much, much more the late Mayor
12 Marion Barry was a chemist and doctoral studies
13 before politics and most schools don't even know that
14 or even can name other black chemists for that
15 matter. So DCPS needs to direct more money towards
16 academics.

17 There needs to be more funding for
18 drivers' education, beginning as a junior in high
19 school, to incentivate and motivate students to
20 graduate. There needs to be funding for driver's Ed
21 or vocational education for any former student under
22 25 years who was academically deprived, with an

1 emphasis on those without a high school diploma, or
2 tested below the 9th grade level. There needs to be
3 more funding at all high schools with a
4 university-college connection like the relationship
5 with School without Walls and George Washington
6 University to challenge and prepare our students to
7 attain an associate's degree before graduation. If
8 there isn't already, there needs to be incentives
9 for teachers who live in the District of Columbia or
10 even for teachers who live in the community of the
11 schools in which they teach. Teachers also need a
12 parent aide or assistant in the classrooms to bridge
13 the parent-teacher relationship gaps.

14 Lastly, there needs to be funding for
15 every middle and high school to provide classes for
16 urban agriculture and building industrial trades,
17 i.e., mechanical, technical, residential, commercial,
18 and industrial. Cons boundaries. DCPS students
19 represent a fraction of the city but all of our
20 future. They are certainly deserving of a school
21 system that prepares them for - not only to take
22 tests, but for life and beyond. Thank you for the

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1 opportunity to voice my opinions.

2 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Ms.

3 Franklin? Latashia Franklin followed by Gina Faranda.

4 Gina? Okay, we'll keep going. Anne Taylor? You're

5 Gina? Okay, and so Anne Taylor will follow you.

6 MS. FARANDA: Thank you. I am parent at
7 the Capital Hill Cluster School. We'd just like to
8 take a moment to thank you for DCPS continued funding
9 of our inter-campus shuttle bus. The shuttle is a
10 total of three buses. We transport 169 students
11 between the clusters, two primary school buildings,
12 Peabody and Watkins. The service is vital to our
13 school and to the broader community. Currently,
14 there's even a waitlist for the preK4 shuttle.
15 Because of our school's unique nature, with our
16 elementary school being split between two buildings
17 about a mile apart, it's not possible for families
18 with kids at both schools to get to both schools on
19 time.

20 The shuttle also allows families
21 without a car who live a mile or more away from their
22 inbound school to get their children to school on

1 time. These buses also greatly reduce traffic in the
2 community and minimize what would be otherwise
3 dangerous congestion.

4 The shuttle has been successful in the
5 community for well over a decade and our PTA would be
6 interested in brainstorming ideas to expand it to
7 other schools.

8 We understand that funding for the
9 shuttle has been a continuing commitment for DCPS.
10 From each of the families who children ride the bus,
11 we just wanted to -- and we're happy to brainstorm
12 ideas for making this kind of service more impactful.
13 Thank you.

14 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.
15 Ms. Taylor followed by Antawan Holmes.

16 MS. TAYLOR: Hi, my name is Anne Louise
17 Taylor and I'm here speaking as a Seaton Elementary
18 School parent. I'm testifying in support of inclusion
19 of the Shaw Middle School project at 800 Euclid St,
20 Northwest in the Capital Improvement Plan.

21 The first point I wanted to make is
22 that Shaw Middle School fits into the Strategic Plan

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1 for mid city. Since 2008, when Shaw Junior High was
2 moved out of its previous location, it since
3 occupied several temporary locations, and it's still
4 in a temporary location in 2019 at the Cardozo
5 Education Campus, where the middle school and high
6 school share a budget, a building, a budget and a
7 principal. Right now neither the middle school or
8 high school students at Cardozo have the resources
9 that they need to succeed. As a result, it's routine
10 for students who are thriving at one of the
11 elementary schools in the Cardozo feeder pattern to
12 leave it after the 5th grade, or before, in search of
13 a predictable middle school feeder. A stand-alone
14 middle for Shaw students would better serve the
15 middle school students who are being short-changed.
16 It would allow Cardozo leadership to focus on the
17 needs of the high school students and the
18 International Academy at Cardozo as well as English
19 Language Learners.

20 Neighborhood elementary school
21 enrolment will also benefit when families know that
22 their students would be able to attend a great

1 by-right middle school. The entire feeder pattern
2 would benefit. Middle grades have their own building,
3 budget and principals.

4 At the last PTO meeting at Seaton, DCPS
5 was giving a presentation about the planned Stevens
6 early learning center and mentioned that Cardozo
7 feeder pattern's a priority area of enrolment for
8 DCPS. Creating and supporting a by-right middle
9 school for the mid-city area is critical to
10 increasing and retaining enrolment in all schools in
11 the Cardozo feeder pattern.

12 Number 2: Shaw Middle School is an
13 immediate priority for DCPS. It's been part of the
14 plan for mid-city since 2014 and the Council voted
15 for a budget amendment this spring to locate Shaw
16 Middle at 800 Euclid St NW. The enacted FY19
17 supplemental budget includes \$1m to begin the
18 planning process for the Shaw modernization. At that
19 location, Banneker is scheduled to move out for the
20 upcoming school year 2021-2022. DCPS should ask the
21 Council to fund modernization of the Euclid Building
22 so it can start construction as soon as the high

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1 school is moved out.

2 In August the Chief Operating Officer
3 of DCPS met with a group of interested parents and
4 community members and said DCPS was developing a
5 scope of work for the design of the middle school. We
6 were pleased with this but recently were told that
7 the Deputy Chief of Facilities said RFP will only be
8 for a feasibility study examining locations for a
9 potential middle school, because there isn't enough
10 money to cover the entire design and construction.

11 The choice to delay planning now baffles me.

12 Francis-Stevens is, as we have heard, overcrowded and
13 the students from Thompson and Ross are currently
14 contributing to that by attending Francis-Stevens
15 until Shaw Middle reopens. This modernization doesn't
16 require use of another -- space and it doesn't call
17 for a feasibility study and it should be included in
18 the Capital Improvement Plan.

19 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you,
20 Ms. Taylor. Mr. Holmes, and then followed by Julia --
21 .

22 MR. HOLMES: Good evening, everyone. My

1 name is Antawan Holmes and I am a proud parent of a
2 pupil at Fort Houston Elementary School as well as I
3 am the Advisory Commissioner and chair for ANC 7C
4 that is host to Aton, Houston, Berville, Drew
5 Elementary, Kelly Middle School, H.D. Woodson and --
6 high school. I just want to focus on the needs for
7 these schools.

8 First, we'd like to see an increase of
9 funding for the modernization at Houston. It's a
10 great education campus, double expanding.
11 Spanish/dual-language program up to grades 8, much
12 like -- we'd like to see the same thing happen at
13 Houston Elementary School. In addition, we'd like to
14 see funding for additional special ed resources to
15 help create an inclusive environment and also and
16 then -- .

17 We'd like to also see that there is
18 fully funded positions for arts, music, homerooms
19 teachers, librarians, etc. These special elected
20 class are open to our general edu-placement classes.
21 And Special teachers to teach -- foreign aid
22 students. Student groups and programs in between and

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1 we have something that does that but a reduction in
2 funding has occurred. It has had a measured impact
3 for our students.

4 In addition to that funding we also
5 want to see that our nurses, are dedicated to the
6 schools and they are there for the entire day. We
7 have lots of children there that may require
8 medicine, etc. And we want to make sure we have
9 somebody that can address the problem there. The
10 teacher will not be able to do it.

11 We would like to also talk about
12 including a before care program because we have many
13 working parents who need to be at work at the same
14 time school is starting, so this will definitely
15 help our working parents to be able to go -- have
16 their kid at school as well as get to their job on
17 time.

18 In addition, we want to make sure
19 there's funding for sensory motor tools, for autistic
20 special needs students. In addition, we'd like to see
21 again that dedicated funding to go on for IT assets,
22 IT support staff as well as required software like

1 LEXICOR that has an input onto the school budget. So
2 that's something that should be centrally managed. In
3 addition, we'd like to also see that there's -- again
4 -- at least a partnership of funding between DCPS
5 schools as well as to UDC. As we say, all the time
6 when we talk about how do we get these kids from
7 pre-K 3 straight to a PhD and we'd like to make sure
8 that we can do that for STEM programming. To try to
9 make sure that we're not only the first east of the
10 river but also a full STEM school to include
11 agriculture. And we've been talking about-- we'd like
12 to ensure that there is a funding for a modernization
13 academic system a parent portal for us to be able to
14 manage all of the programs. Thank you.

15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.

16

17 Hello, I'm a junior at School without
18 Walls High School. I would like to thank DCPS for
19 hosting and for allowing different people to put in
20 their input. I wanted to talk specifically about the
21 importance of ensuring that student voices are
22 involved as well as remain relevant to the entire

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1 budget process. As a student of DCPS, I believe that
2 student voices are integral to that process and that
3 personnel and policy makers may under-estimate the
4 benefits of student participation.

5 As students who are directly affected
6 by different issues that affect DCPS students:
7 overcrowding, access to mental health services, lack
8 of safety in our schools, I think our voice are
9 integral to the policy-making process. Our daily
10 experiences can add a new and often under-represented
11 voice as policy-makers decide how to allocate money
12 into certain programs that directly affect us every
13 day. Moreover, such expanded student roles will
14 prepare us to explore further collaborative social
15 experiences into adulthood with and across diverse
16 communities, institutions, and disciplines.

17 Lastly, by participating in the
18 decision-making process and helping policy-makers
19 make some decisions on how to spend money, students
20 can develop critical thinking skills, contribute to
21 culture renovation and propose new school or
22 community process. For example, students can develop

1 cross- relationships and share -- insights affecting
2 -- across the city. Not only students and schools
3 benefit from community involvement, engagement in
4 education issues will also foster a deeper sense of
5 community and inspire better cooperation on issues
6 that matter most to us as it is essential to the
7 democratic policy-making process and the -- .

8 Lastly, I want to thank Chancellor
9 Ferebee for hosting the student budget roundtable
10 yesterday. It has contributed in a positive way. So,
11 thank you.

12 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR MAISTERRA: Thank you.
13 It's fitting that we're closing out our time together
14 with the voice of a student. So thank you. We are
15 going to close out by thanking all of you for joining
16 us this evening. We know it takes a lot to come here
17 and spent these late hours with us.

18 So, just to close out, as I noted
19 there's a couple of upcoming opportunities to
20 continue the conversation. I want to point those out
21 -- you see that December 10 we have a community
22 budget forum at Coolidge High School and then we have

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1 another forum on December 11 at Ballou. So we hope to
2 see you there and I will not turn it over to the
3 Chancellor to close our evening.

4 CHANCELLOR FEREBEE: Good evening and
5 thank you so much for the opportunity to hear
6 directly from our families, our constituents and also
7 our students. We look forward to continuing the
8 engagement as we think about our budget and the
9 upcoming school year. We appreciate your time. Thank
10 you.

11 (Whereupon the meeting was adjourned at
12 8:27 p.m.)

13

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