



Grace Hu
November 16, 2022
Digital Equity in DC Education
DigitalEquityDC@gmail.com
DCPS Budget Hearing

Good evening. My name is Grace Hu and I am a parent at Amidon-Bowen Elementary. Today I am here on behalf of [Digital Equity in DC Education](#), a citywide coalition of parents working to close the digital divide and to provide a 21st century education for our children.

We've come a long way with DCPS technology since we first met with DCPS leadership in 2018. While DCPS has made significant progress in some areas, such as the provision of devices to students and teachers, it is still faltering in areas such as school-level asset management and digital literacy instruction.

1) Devices

We were encouraged to see the FY 2023 budget investment in student and teacher devices. Moving forward, we ask that you maintain the 1:1 student-device ratio for grades 3-12 throughout the school year and continue to provide a device for every teacher.

Additionally, we urge you to plan for and fund a robust tech refresh cycle with sufficient contingency inventory of devices to account for annual device loss. After three years of the Empowered Learners initiative, we expect that you have better data on device loss rates and tech refresh needs. At this point, we should be able to replace devices before school buildings close for the year so they are ready to go on the first day of school.

2) Classroom Technology

We are encouraged by recent investments in new Smartboards. However, the Smartboard installation project has been a failure. We understand that the selected installation vendor was only able to install a small number of Smartboards a day and that some schools have been struggling with outdated equipment in the classroom while Smartboards have been sitting in boxes waiting to be installed. We urge you to resolve the installation issues as soon as possible so that schools can make use of Smartboards that you have invested in. Additionally, we urge you make sure all classroom technology is ordered, installed, and ready to be used on the first day of school.

3) Tech Support/Asset Management

IT asset management continues to be a significant challenge for schools and has real impacts on learning. This past year, some schools struggled with keeping their school IT inventories updated. Since DCPS relies on the school inventories to determine the number of computers to provide to schools, outdated school inventories led to delays in Central Office provision of the correct number of student devices. We still do not understand why DCPS has not provided additional asset management support to schools, including requesting that OCTO provide more support to schools in this area. Why does DCPS continue to place the whole burden of managing devices, including inventory updates, on school staff when OCTO technicians are already in school buildings? Until we address challenges with asset management and IT support, we will not be maximizing the use of our technology assets to provide a seamless teaching and learning experience.

4) Digital Literacy

Digital literacy skills are critical for effective use of technology, yet we are not seeing consistent support and teaching of digital literacy skills at schools. The extent to which digital literacy skills are taught often depends on whether a school principal or school staff have prioritized instruction in this area. We urge you to provide teachers and schools with the time and supports to fully integrate digital literacy instruction into curriculum. Without robust digital literacy skills, students cannot perform well in the online annual standardized tests or grade-level assessments.

DCPS Digital Equity Act of 2022

This past September we were delighted to see the DC Council pass the DCPS Digital Equity Act of 2022. As you know, we have been advocating for a comprehensive, multi-year technology plan and school technology assessments that are mandated by this law. Until DCPS has a funded, multi-year comprehensive plan, tied to instructional goals and budgets, technology will continue to be managed in an unpredictable, costly, and inefficient manner. We look forward to working with you on implementation of this important law. Any delay in implementation greatly impacts our DCPS students and schools, which need predictable, reliable technology supports for teaching and learning.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Juniper Ho
4th Grader at Amidon-Bowen Elementary
DCPS Budget Hearing
November 16, 2022

My name is Juniper Ho, and I am a 4th grader at Amidon Bowen Elementary School. I would like to ask you to spend more money on increasing aide and substitute salaries, putting money into computers, and giving schools good materials.

I think you should put more money into funding teacher aide and substitute salaries. Teacher aides and substitutes get paid much less than general teachers. Also, DCPS leadership gets paid a huge amount which is unfair! Teacher aides get paid on average only a little more than the minimum wage. Substitutes get paid about \$160 per day if they work. That can result in money problems for them and can mean if something bad happens, they may have a hard time doing their job or even getting to their job. I have seen in my years in Amidon-Bowen that the teacher aides and substitutes work very hard at managing kids. Meanwhile, other people may not work half as hard but still get paid more. I think the aides and substitutes should have an increase in their salaries.

Another thing I think you should consider is putting more money into computers. I have seen for myself that sometimes computers don't work or are very slow. I also see that there are not enough spare computers all the time so sometimes a student takes another student's computer and when that student looks for their computer, they can't find it. Then, that can cause confusion that disrupts the entire class. The thing is, computers are an important part of learning these days, so every child needs a good quality computer. I think you should either put money into more spare computers or put money into making sure the computers are working well.

You should also give schools enough decent quality materials. When the school year started, there were not enough headphones, dry erase markers, and pencil sharpeners. Also, sometimes dry erase markers stop working and parts of headphones break off. Without headphones, when students are working on their online work, they hear all the other computers, and they cannot focus on their own work. School supplies are essential to learning and students like me need them. As some of the top people in DCPS, it is your responsibility to provide materials that work to schools. It is not the responsibility of teachers to buy them. I think you should use your money to provide enough decent quality materials for the schools.

Thank you for listening to me.

DCPS Budget Hearing
November 16, 2022
Testimony of Sandra Moscoso – School Without Walls High School and Ward 2 Ed Council

Good evening DCPS Budget Team and Chancellor Ferebee. I am Sandra Moscoso, a member of the School Without Walls High School Home and School Association (HSA) and LSAT and an officer of the Ward 2 and Ward 6 education councils.

Our schools need budget stability. Unfortunately, year after year, central office has not been successful in securing budgets that meet the needs of our schools. Funding gaps are only filled after citywide fights that require DC Council to intervene.

The erratic budget process is exacerbating teacher turnover. Please correct this by providing schools with adequate budget envelopes from the start.

Even in circumstances when communities succeed in restoring budgets and positions, trust is lost and educators leave, seeking stability.

At School Without Walls, this played out in SY22 when a foreign language teacher's position was cut. After months of city-wide advocacy, the position was restored. However, the damage was done, and the teacher, a 10 year veteran at the school, left. On paper, the position was funded, but in reality, many students paid the price of a chaotic semester without a teacher.

What will happen in SY24? Under the current DCPS budget model, when DCPS' mystery temporary stability funds are gone, as things stand, School Without Walls will lose 3 staff members. Not due to a drop in enrollment, not due to a drop in student needs, but due to DCPS' underfunding of the school.

DCPS must fund new requirements, not force schools to cut programming.

Changes to DCPS policy and requirements that don't come with budget support cause damage to school programming. We learned this lesson from Hardy's LSAT about the devastating impact a change in Special Education funding requirements had on the school's scheduling and student access to music, foreign language and more. New policies or funding needs should not require principals to cut existing school resources and programming.

Fund, implement, maintain, and provide oversight of technology.

I support Digital Equity in DC Schools' calls for strengthening rollout of devices for students and teachers, implementation and replacement of smartboards (School Without Walls HS is in dire need of working smartboards), improving tech support and asset management, and strengthening digital literacy.

Finally, please finalize the WTU contract with an agreement that is fit for 2022. An agreement that addresses wages, planning time and job flexibility.

Thank you.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify tonight. Let me start by saying that I believe we have the same goals for all DC students, and that is for all students to flourish. But it's easy to give lip service to equity, and a lot harder to actually implement equitable policies and allocate resources equitably. How DCPS allocates resources tells the story about what and who DCPS cares about. I want to raise awareness about 3 parts of this story:

- 1) We're not telling the truth about how much we're spending on students, and we're spending less on targeted students than we say we are. DCPS did not give schools adequate funds in the SBB base weight to cover basic general education costs – like the assistant principal, grade-level teachers, and a minimum number of related arts teachers. For example, Amidon-Bowen was short in the SBB base weight funding by \$377k to cover the assistant principal, grade-level teachers, kindergarten aides, and a minimum number of related arts teachers. That means that the school had to use \$377k of its targeted funding on basic education costs. When you look at the targeted funding for Amidon-Bowen, you don't get an honest picture of how much funding was truly supplemental and could be targeted to bolster student learning for students behind grade level. It makes it more difficult to have these conversations with DC leadership if DCPS isn't straightforward about what is covered in various buckets of money. The bare minimum staff needed for a school to operate should be under the SBB base weight and not under targeted funds, period, so that we can have honest conversations about how much funds are truly supplemental and whether these targeted resources are sufficient for the work at-hand.
- 2) DCPS continues to use self-contained special education classrooms as an unfunded mandate. For example, DCPS opened three new CES (autism) classrooms at Amidon-Bowen this year, despite none of the staff having any relevant trainings for serving students in these classrooms. The school had to spend over \$50k of its budget on training for staff so that staff would be adequately prepared. Self-contained classrooms are DCPS run, and DCPS should cover all of the costs of these classrooms and not push these costs down to the school. DCPS's posture for these self-contained classrooms should be, how can I set up these students for success, and not, how can I do the bare minimum and push the costs and burden down to the individual schools.
- 3) Given that teachers haven't had a new contract within 3 years, DCPS continues to tell the story that DC is a toxic place for teachers to work. It is beyond time to change that narrative. Let's start with a teacher contract.

Along those lines, schools have been short-staffed since before the pandemic, and the pandemic has made it worse. Schools can't find enough paraprofessionals and substitutes to hire, in part because the pay for these positions is embarrassingly low. Staffing shortages means that students are shifted around to other classrooms during the day when teachers are absent, and no learning happens; so learning loss is happening every day, and nothing is being done about it. A recent education study found that incentive pay worked to recruit substitutes to work in underserved schools in Chicago Public Schools. DCPS should implement policies to ensure there is equity for students, in terms of adequate staff coverage in underserved schools, and also equity for workers, in terms of having more reasonable wages for paraprofessionals and substitutes.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on **the FY24 DCPS Budget** – November 16, 2022

My name is Cathy Reilly and I have the privilege and opportunity to facilitate and manage the Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals and Educators,(SHAPPE) as well as the Ward 4 Ed Alliance and C4DC Coalition for DC Public Schools and Communities.

We are very pleased that enrollment is up and strongly up in 9th and 10th grade. DCPS will need to maintain high school funding as well as ensure the elementary and middle schools are invested in and stable to keep these students living in the District and enrolled in DCPS. DCPS is in a competitive environment.

These are the items that rise to the top of the list now:

- We need a contract with the WTU with issues of workplace flexibility and safety as well as salary addressed.
- Safety – locks and alarms, protocols,
 - Buildings have to be secure. This means alarms on doors in secondary schools; classroom door locks quickly repaired and most importantly front doors repaired to lock automatically upon closure. Many of the issues are in modernized buildings. This just cannot be alright
 - Collaboration and training for safe passage workers and school staff at hotspots like bus stops and the metro. Look into having students use their ID number if they do not have their card. Reduce points of friction as much as possible.
- The FY24 school budget allocations have to give schools the additional funds for salary and supply cost increases. A constant budget with inflation and higher salaries is a substantial budget cut. DCPS can do this regardless of what the Council does.
- Whether it is XQ or ESSER funds, there has got to be a plan when outside money runs out. DCPS is a system, not a bunch of independent schools. There are advantages. DCPS can leverage central office and the resources of a whole system. It is not only about accountability and standardization. It can be about creativity and opportunities across schools like being able to offer advanced language, math or elective options sometimes virtually or with part time teachers with flexible schedules.
- For the buildings:
 - Maintenance: DCPS is in charge of a number of areas including the equipment in CTE programs. For example at Roosevelt the freezer and refrigerator periodically malfunction. Ovens on the stoves don't work.
 - Advance and fund the digital equity work, for devices and connectivity
 - Modernization- You will hear today from Whittier, the building has deteriorated since its rating in the PACE act. The organizing effort by this community is in response to conditions that need to be addressed for the health and safety of the students and staff.
 - HVAC and access to drinking water remain as issues that have not been addressed. We need your help, your voice and your advocacy on this.
- DCPS is one of 69 Local education agencies however DCPS has over half of the public school students. DCPS has been underrepresented in a number of citywide settings like budget, lottery for example. We need you to fight harder, and use staff and advocates strategically on this especially with the Facilities Master plan and adequacy study work coming in 2023. Ensure that the DCPS voices of over 50,000 students and their families are passionately represented.

Abigail Paulsen
Hardy Middle School PTO co-president
DCPS

Good Evening All,

I am Abi Paulsen, co-president for the Hardy Middle School PTO, DCPS parent of a Jackson-Reed 9th grader, and Hardy 6th grader. I have been part of DCPS since 2014 and at Hardy Middle School since 2015.

Hardy Middle School is here today as the bell weather of unintended consequences that stem from the current budget model. 8 additional participants are here from Hardy to speak about their lived experiences with the implementation of this formula. Chancellor the follow-up from our meeting may have slipped through the cracks, but here are some of the answers we were looking for. The majority of classes at Hardy are at or significantly over contracted class sizes. I use the word significantly as out of 86 sections 74 sections are at or above capacity, 43 sections are at 30 students or more with our highest in an 8th grade science class with a class of 35 students. This is not due to a master schedule mismatch. This is due to not enough staff members to cover the number of students needing to be in a classroom at any given time.

For those of you not aware of what happens when your enrollment grows under the current budget model, Hardy lost 3 teachers and additionally is unable to fund more than one front office person, and has the principal as a grade level head since we don't have an assistant principal for each grade. A class period was removed from the course schedule, our block schedule has 90 minute periods for 11-14 year olds, we have 2 lunch periods to service 566 students in a 2 hour period. On paper, everything at Hardy should be fine. In reality, Hardy is not fine. It has been argued that no other school has as many Arts choices as Hardy. That may be true but we also need to consider that Hardy doesn't have things other middle schools do have like IB programming and language immersion. Certainly those schools receive additional funding to support those programs. Hardy is known and celebrated city-wide for our Arts programming and if identifying our school as a STEAM school is what needs to happen in order to check the box to allocate funds to maintain the program that already has a proven track record of success then let's do the work to make it happen before our great program is lost due to a lack of vision and creative problem solving. We are used to doing hard things at Hardy. We are ready.

For school year 22/23 we ask for the reinstatement of the Hold Harmless funds back to Hardy the budget. For school year 23/24 and moving forward we ask for the next conversation with the budget office to work through what the funding model looks like for Hardy Middle School and by extension MacArthur High School.

There aren't many of us left who remember where Hardy was just a short 8 years ago. Declining enrollment, pitiful in boundary participation, miniscule parent and community involvement, and student safety in their school was in question. We have turned all of these things around. Don't cut us off at the knees. We are sliding. I am here to affirm that things are

sliding and parent confidence is wavering. Hardy needs DCPS to look up from counting the beans to see if the outcome is really what you are intending because we are the test case. If nothing changes, outcomes will be dire.

Joy is not prescriptive. It is organic. We have the data that shows that our pairing down, and pairing down is not getting the results we need. PARCC scores are down. Teacher retention in the process of falling off a cliff. DCPS has the lowest at 51 of salary in comparison to the average salary for the "State". The lowest, last, worst. Imagine you are tasked with providing the environment where joy is supposed to flourish and grow and your classes are overcrowded, your work environment feels punitive instead of collaborative, and supportive. You have worked through 2 years of Covid and counting. Students are at their limits. Parents are at their limits. And you as the teacher are at your limit. Imagine being that person and carrying the weight of the future of these young minds, and their success. How are we expecting that the joy of learning will be present in our schools when we have not provided the conditions necessary for joy to happen. How can we not do more? Most people would want to do more. As a collective we need to swallow the frog. Delaying further because we are anticipating something is going to be hard doesn't serve any of us. The decision is going to be hard regardless. We just have to choose our hard. We can pay now and invest in our future—a better future, or pay later to clean up the mess of our making due to a lack of courage to make the hard decision when it was presented to us. If the answer was easy, it would have been solved already. One thought that comes from my days of teaching back in the early 2000's at a middle school in large urban school district in San Diego is to push staff from Central Office into the schools. Having additional personnel at the school sites to assist with supervision during passing periods and lunch recess will support a safer school environment for all. Additionally, this model reminds the policy makers what it really feels like to be in a school. Take in the energy of the school. Create partnerships and trust with the frontline workers. See the needs first hand and remember what it is like to actually work directly with students. We are all educators after all.

Course	Section Description	Description	SecNo	SecType	Num
P12-001		Health & Phys Ed 8	1		GYM
ST11-016		Design & Modeling	16		119
ST11-018		Design & Modeling	18		119
SS4-2i		Science 8	2i		226
P10-005		Health & Phys Ed 6	5		102
P11-006		Health & Phys Ed 7	6		GYM
HC2-011		World Geography & Cultures	11		325
MMX-001		Algebra I MS	1		132
MMX-9		Algebra I MS	9		132
M08-100		CC 8th Grade Math	100		132
SS2-011		Science 6	11		323
HC2-012		World Geography & Cultures	12		325
E02-001i		English 8	001i		220
EE2-005		Language Arts 6	5		326
AD6-005		MS Drama I	5		344
SS3-04		Science 7	4		130
MMV-007		Accelerated 6th Grade Math	7		318
MMX-004		Algebra I MS	4		132
E02-010MK		English 8	010MK		127
E02-004i		English 8	004i		220
P12-005		Health & Phys Ed 8	5		GYM
L3C-001		Italian 2	1		302
AD6-004		MS Drama I	4		344
SS2-010		Science 6	10		313
SS3-03		Science 7	3		130
SS3-07		Science 7	7		226
HC4-002		US History & Geography: Growth & Conflict	2		222
HC4-009		US History & Geography: Growth & Conflict	9		128
HC2-004		World Geography & Cultures	4		321
HC2-005		World Geography & Cultures	5		321
HC3-006		World History & Geography: Ancient World	6		128
MMV-002		Accelerated 6th Grade Math	2		320
M08-006		CC 8th Grade Math	6		332
E01-003		English 7	3		133
E01-007i		English 7	007i		319
E01-4		English 7	4		133
U11-001		Music 7	1		166
SS2-01		Science 6	1		313
SS4-007		Science 8	7		224
L6A-003		Spanish I-A	3		301
HC3-005i		World History & Geography: Ancient World	005i		125
HC3-12		World History & Geography: Ancient World	12		321
M08-002i		CC 8th Grade Math	002i		227
E01-002		English 7	2		133
E01-008		English 7	8		133
P10-003		Health & Phys Ed 6	3		102
E41-MK1		Journalism MS	MK1		127

EE2-008		Language Arts 6	8		326
EE2-001		Language Arts 6	1		326
EE2-007i		Language Arts 6	007i		319
AD6-003		MS Drama I	3		344
SS2-04		Science 6	4		313
SS2-07		Science 6	7		323
SS3-02		Science 7	2		130
SS4-008		Science 8	8		224
SS4-002		Science 8	2		224
SS4-1		Science 8	1		226
L6A-002		Spanish I-A	2		301
HC2-002		World Geography & Cultures	2		325
HC3-003i		World History & Geography: Ancient World	003i		125
MMV-008		Accelerated 6th Grade Math	8		318
M07-011i		CC 7th Grade Math	011i		320
M08-12		CC 8th Grade Math	12		332
ST11-014		Design & Modeling	14		119
E02-009		English 8	9		220
E02-3MK		English 8	3MK		127
E41-MK4		Journalism MS	MK4		127
EE2-3		Language Arts 6	3		326
SS3-06		Science 7	6		226
HC4-018		US History & Geography: Growth & Conflict	18		222
HC2-003		World Geography & Cultures	3		325
HC3-004		World History & Geography: Ancient World	4		125
HC3-007		World History & Geography: Ancient World	7		125
MMV-001		Accelerated 6th Grade Math	1		320
MMV-005		Accelerated 6th Grade Math	5		318
E02-011		English 8	11		220
P12-003		Health & Phys Ed 8	3		GYM
L3B-003		Italian I-B	3		302
EE2-006i		Language Arts 6	006i		319
U10-002		Music 6	2		157
SS3-01		Science 7	1		130
SS4-001		Science 8	1		224
HC4-017		US History & Geography: Growth & Conflict	17		128
M08-004		CC 8th Grade Math	4		332
L3A-002		Italian I-A	2		302
L6C-001		Spanish II MS	1		301

Total	Max	Schedule	Term
39	25	M,W,F1(1)	S1
35	25	T,TH,F2(2)	S1
35	25	T,TH,F2(4)	S1
35	28	T,TH,F2(2)	FY
34	25	T,TH,F2(2)	S1
34	25	T,TH,F2(2)	S1
34	25	M,W,F1(1)	FY
33	28	M,W,F1(1)	FY
33	28	T,TH,F2(2)	FY
33	30	T,TH,F2(1)	FY
33	25	T,TH,F2(2)	FY
33	25	T,TH,F2(4)	FY
32	28	M,W,F1(1)	FY
32	28	T,TH,F2(1)	FY
32	25	T,TH,F2(2)	S1
32	28	T,TH,F2(2)	FY
31	25	T,TH,F2(2)	FY
31	28	M,W,F1(2)	FY
31	25	T,TH,F2(1)	FY
31	28	M,W,F1(4)	FY
31	25	T,TH,F2(4)	S1
31	28	M,W,F1(4)	FY
31	25	M,W,F1(4)	S2
31	28	M,W,F1(4)	FY
31	28	T,TH,F2(1)	FY
31	28	T,TH,F2(1)	FY
31	28	T,TH,F2(1)	FY
31	28	T,TH,F2(1)	FY
31	28	M,W,F1(2)	FY
31	28	T,TH,F2(1)	FY
31	28	M,W,F1(4)	FY
30	28	T,TH,F2(4)	FY
30	25	M,W,F1(2)	FY
30	28	M,W,F1(4)	FY
30	28	T,TH,F2(2)	FY
30	28	T,TH,F2(4)	FY
30	25	M,W,F1(4)	FY
30	28	M,W,F1(2)	FY
30	28	T,TH,F2(2)	FY
30	25	M,W,F1(1)	FY
30	28	T,TH,F2(1)	FY
30	28	T,TH,F2(4)	FY
29	28	T,TH,F2(1)	FY
29	28	M,W,F1(1)	FY
29	28	T,TH,F2(1)	FY
29	25	M,W,F1(4)	S1
29	25	T,TH,F2(4)	S1

29	25	M,W,F1(4)	FY
29	28	M,W,F1(1)	FY
29	28	T,TH,F2(1)	FY
29	25	M,W,F1(4)	S1
29	28	T,TH,F2(4)	FY
29	28	M,W,F1(2)	FY
29	28	M,W,F1(4)	FY
29	25	T,TH,F2(1)	FY
29	28	M,W,F1(4)	FY
29	28	M,W,F1(4)	FY
29	28	T,TH,F2(2)	FY
29	28	M,W,F1(4)	FY
29	28	M,W,F1(1)	FY
28	25	M,W,F1(1)	FY
28	25	M,W,F1(1)	FY
28	25	T,TH,F2(4)	FY
28	25	M,W,F1(4)	S1
28	28	T,TH,F2(1)	FY
28	28	T,TH,F2(2)	FY
28	25	M,W,F1(1)	S1
28	28	T,TH,F2(4)	FY
28	28	M,W,F1(2)	FY
28	25	M,W,F1(4)	FY
28	28	T,TH,F2(1)	FY
28	28	M,W,F1(2)	FY
28	28	T,TH,F2(4)	FY
27	28	M,W,F1(2)	FY
27	28	M,W,F1(2)	FY
27	25	T,TH,F2(4)	FY
27	25	M,W,F1(2)	S1
27	28	T,TH,F2(4)	FY
27	28	M,W,F1(4)	FY
27	25	M,W,F1(2)	FY
27	28	M,W,F1(2)	FY
27	28	M,W,F1(2)	FY
27	35	M,W,F1(1)	FY
26	25	T,TH,F2(2)	FY
26	28	T,TH,F2(2)	FY
26	25	T,TH,F2(4)	FY

**Testimony of Cedric R. Hendricks
Parent Chair of the Local School Advisory Team, and
Member of the School Improvement Team
School Without Walls @ Francis Stevens
at the DC Public Schools FY 2023 Budget Hearing**

November 16, 2022

I am the parent of a six grader now attending the School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens, a public school in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood within Ward 2. We are, however, presently operating out of the former Banneker High School site due to our ongoing school modernization project. I presently serve as the Chair of the Local School Advisory Team and a member of our School Improvement Team.

My testimony will touch on the operating budget for our school, the state of our swing space at Banneker and the proposed design for the modernization of our home site.

For SY 2023 we received a budget of approximately \$8.9 million. This included one-time Recovery and Hold Harmless funds that enabled us to begin the school year appropriately staffed and with desired programming in place. As we await your delivery of our proposed budget for SY 2024, we respectfully request that our current funding level be sustained.

We also began this school year with the launch of our long-awaited Modernization Project and the hope that our school's future would, as the result, be a brighter one. What we have experienced, thus far, however, has been challenge and disappointment. We find our school today with problems that need your immediate attention and assistance.

This morning, I dropped my son off at the old Banneker school building that lacks heat and is suffering from water leaks. Our Administrative Team has brought these problems to the attention of the DCPS Central Office, but yet they persist. The Central Office has promised that our heating system will be fully operational by Friday, November 18th. We are hopeful, but not confident, based on our past experience securing needed repairs. As you know, night-time temperatures have dropped to the 30s. Colder temperatures lie ahead this week. Wet floors are an extreme safety hazard. It is unacceptable for our students and teachers to have to learn and teach in such conditions. I invite you to meet me at the school first thing tomorrow morning to see for yourselves. Please bring the repair staff with you to make things right.

With respect to the Modernization Project underway at our home campus on N Street, the LSAT, Home and School Association and School Improvement Team members recently sent a letter to our DCPS Facilities Project Manager and the Design and Construction Team expressing some important concerns about the latest proposed building design. It focused on health and safety concerns. Two weeks later, after some prodding, we received an acknowledgement of receipt and a promise of a future response. Another week later, we are still waiting. The lack of candor and responsiveness from them are a disappointment when the process we are engaged in should be transparent and collaborative. The letter is attached for your consideration. Please review it and press the team for answers. You need them as much as we do. Our school community has been fully engaged and has worked hard to make the Modernization Project a success. Help us avoid design mistakes that will lead to failure.

Thank you for your attention, and, I hope, your help.

**Testimony of Cedric R. Hendricks
Parent Chair of the Local School Advisory Team, and
Member of the School Improvement Team
School Without Walls @ Francis Stevens
at the DC Public Schools FY 2023 Budget Hearing**

November 16, 2022

I am the parent of a six grader now attending the School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens, a public school in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood within Ward 2. We are, however, presenting operating out of the former Banneker High School site due to our ongoing school modernization project. I presently serve as the Chair of the Local School Advisory Team and a member of our School Improvement Team.

My testimony will touch on the operating budget for our school, the state of our swing space at Banneker and the proposed design for the modernization of our home site.

For SY 2023 we received a budget of approximately \$8.9 million. This included one-time Recovery and Hold Harmless funds that enabled us to begin the school year appropriately staffed and with desired programming in place. As we await your delivery of our proposed budget for SY 2024, we respectfully request that our current funding level be sustained.

We also began this school year with the launch of our long-awaited Modernization Project and the hope that our school's future would, as the result, be a brighter one. What we have experienced, thus far, however, has been challenge and disappointment. We find our school today with problems that need your immediate attention and assistance.

This morning, I dropped my son off at the old Banneker school building that lacks heat and is suffering from water leaks. Our Administrative Team has brought these problems to the attention of the DCPS Central Office, but yet they persist. The Central Office has promised that our heating system will be fully operational by Friday, November 18th. We are hopeful, but not confident, based on our past experience securing needed repairs. As you know, night-time temperatures have dropped to the 30s. Colder temperatures lie ahead this week. Wet floors are an extreme safety hazard. It is unacceptable for our students and teachers to have to learn and teach in such conditions. I invite you to meet me at the school first thing tomorrow morning to see for yourselves. Please bring the repair staff with you to make things right.

With respect to the Modernization Project underway at our home campus on N Street, the LSAT, Home and School Association and School Improvement Team members recently sent a letter to our DCPS Facilities Project Manager and the Design and Construction Team expressing some important concerns about the latest proposed building design. It focused on health and safety concerns. Two weeks later, after some prodding, we received an acknowledgement of receipt and a promise of a future response. Another week later, we are still waiting. The lack of candor and responsiveness from them are a disappointment when the process we are

engaged in should be transparent and collaborative. The letter is attached for your consideration. Please review it and press the team for answers. You need them as much as we do. Our school community has been fully engaged and has worked hard to make the Modernization Project a success. Help us avoid design mistakes that will lead to failure.

Thank you for your attention, and, I hope, your help.

Dear Matt,

11/3/2022

The DCPS and Perkins Eastman Design Team have done an exceptional job envisioning a building that will propel our community forward. Attention to detail, skill, and willingness to receive feedback from the SIT and school community have been the foundation of our strong partnership. From impactful designs, to active engagement in long meetings, to donating their time to host School Without Walls at Francis Stevens students for a tour and feedback session, it is clear why DCPS continues to select Perkins Eastman in reimagining the day-to-day experiences of our youth.

The SWW FS community seeks to inform the design process as we advocate for changes to the proposed design. The changes will dramatically increase our ability to achieve the DCPS Becoming vision of “All schools becoming safe, supportive, and loving spaces.” Additionally, each of the six changes we request directly support improved student safety, school culture & climate, and curriculum facilitation and instructional needs.

We, the undersigned groups, advocate for the following:

- DCPS and Perkins Eastman develop plans for the following six propositions
- Potential trade-off decisions be significantly influenced by the SIT and school community, while adhering to ED Specs and other relevant guidelines

1. 3rd floor circulation

- a. **Issue with proposed plan:** Congestion leads to safety issues with uncomfortably packed hallways, student conflict, tardiness, and staff exhaustion. Keep teachers focused on instruction by reducing the frequency of hallway redirections and student conflicts
- b. **Solution:** An east/west hallway that connects over the new library space will have a significant impact on school culture and climate

2. Accessible Electrical Outlets in all classroom/ instructional spaces

- a. **Issue with proposed plan:** Students cannot complete assignments and engage in 21st century learning if they cannot charge devices in the classroom
- b. **Solution:** All spaces need outlets to charge devices for the number of students planned to be in the room

3. Faculty Restrooms

- a. **Issue with proposed plan:** Staff have a finite amount of time to use the restroom and often cannot wait for students to use restrooms
- b. **Solution:** Restrooms should be included in each of the Teacher Collaboration areas

4. Classroom Storage

- a. **Issue with proposed plan:** The N street building did not provide adequate storage for a year's worth of: manipulatives, classroom essential supplies, art supplies, etc...
Elementary needs in-classroom storage for student belongings

- b. **Solution:** Keep the learning space for learning by providing built-in storage in each classroom

5. Increase the number of parking spaces

- a. **Issue with proposed plan:** Staff are what make the culture and community SWW FS special. Staff with morning childcare and family responsibilities rely on available parking at school. Many staff members also endure long morning and evening commutes. Including only 45 spots for 100+ staff will negatively impact staff performance and morale. Additionally, increasing enrollment will require more staff.
- b. **Solution:** Increase the number of parking spots
- c. **Issue with proposed plan:**The parking lot is also slated to be a roundabout for families to drop off their students. How will this impact staff arriving and leaving?

6. Greenroom space

- a. **Issue with proposed plan:** There is no nearby space to the Auditorium to prepare for theatrical and music performances. Our students deserve a professional-style space that inspires confidence and a sense of belonging as they prepare for big moments on stage. Many students do theater/ dance outside of school and we can entice them to participate in school events with improved facilities
- b. **Solution:** Furnish the “Specials Lab” to the east of the auditorium (cafeteria side) as a green room. Provide the equipment needed (mirrors, storage, chairs) and locking changing rooms

Endorsed by,

SWWFS LSAT

Cedic Hendricks, LSAT Chair

SWWFS HSA

Matt Webster, HSA President

SWWFS SIT

Zach Carroll, SWWFS Teacher

Hello everyone, my name is Grace Ladd and I teach at Whittier Elementary School. I decided to speak today because of the ongoing modernization efforts led by our Parent teacher organization. Currently, our school is on schedule to be modernized starting in 2026 and finishing in 2028. I am urging the budget committee to move up these plans to as soon as possible. You will hear about the multitude of safety concerns in our building from other Whittier community members, but I would like to specifically focus on the issue of elevators.

For context, our building has two wings. The original building was built in the 1920s, and the newer wing was built in the 1960's. Despite ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) being passed in 1990, we do not have any elevators on either side of our three-story building. This has adversely affected our students, staff, and community. We are unable to properly serve students who cannot use stairs, which affects our enrollment numbers and funding. Additionally, many of our staff dealing with ongoing health concerns have no choice but to walk up and down multiple flights of stairs every day. We have an ECE student with a disability who has to be carried upstairs every time her class has specials. We had an older student with a leg injury who had to be carried upstairs by a staff member every time he went to class. This is not safe or fair for our students.

DCPS' response to these issues was to build an elevator on only one side of the building, leaving the newer wing with our early childhood and self-contained special education classes waiting. Last year, I was sharing a classroom with two other resource teachers due to the limited space in our building. They decided to start construction on the elevator in the middle of our room at the beginning of PARCC testing season. Over one third of our classroom was walled off to make space for the elevator. We endured our frustrations with the promise that the elevator would be available for use by the start of this school year. It's currently November 16 and the elevator is not even close to being completed. Construction workers have been working on it during the school day, meaning that there is noise and equipment in the hallways while we're trying to teach. The district needs to expedite the process of moving us into a swing space and starting modernization. Our community has endured enough, and we're not going to take it anymore.

Testimony before the DCPS Office of Engagement and Partnerships

Sonja Walti, Co-Chair, Local School Advisory Team, School Without Walls High School.

November 16, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's DCPS Public Budget Hearing, and thank you to my fellow participants and the public for guiding our school system's use of resources.

I am testifying here on behalf of School Without Walls High School's Local School Advisory Team, to make three requests for DCPS' 2023-24 school budget allocation. While speaking to our experience and needs, my testimony holds validity beyond the upcoming budget cycle and applies beyond our own high school's challenges.

We contend that:

1. Budgets need to fully fund our high school programming.
2. Budget allocations need to account for building-related limits.
3. Budgets need to be allocated in a fair as well as predictable manner.

Let me elaborate:

First, budgets need to fully fund our high school programming.

Post-2020, our high schools need student-centered programs, social-emotional support, and robust academic programs that fill pandemic-induced gaps while preparing our students for tomorrow's complex realities. At School Without Walls, academic support, tutoring, and mental health support via our partnership with George Washington University have been making a difference. Those programs need continuity and funding. We also need to support teachers to continue the important work they do catching up students and mentoring them through difficult times. Our students need global skills, including world languages, and hands-on proficiencies for college and career. Small as it is, School Without Walls needs support and budgetary leeway to capitalize on its partnership with George Washington University.

At School Without Walls, the federal School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) has been supplementing our budget, including paying for two social workers. When ESSER runs out - amidst added inflation - our schools are headed for a fiscal cliff. School Without Walls High School runs a lean program as it is, with faculty and staff wearing multiple hats. Any cuts go right to the bone, meaning teachers, core programs, and student support. The social and economic costs, especially in today's circumstances, would compound for years to come.

We request that our school budgets be fully funded, accounting for any losses of discretionary federal funding.

Second, budget allocations need to account for building-related limits.

DCPS' ill-conceived student-based budgeting system continues to make increasing enrollments the sole secure path to safeguarding a school's budget in a manner that fully funds its teachers, staff, materials, and existing programs, thus fuelling an absurd ratcheting up of estimated and oft outperformed enrollment numbers.

Nowhere is this cutthroat dynamic more obvious than at School Without Walls High School. With now over 600 students in a tiny building, which the [2018 Master Facilities Plan](#) (p. A-52) says is built for no more than 520 students, we're well past our full enrollment number - and outpacing the 5- and 10-year enrollment estimates underpinning [that Plan's 2021 update](#) (p. 9); and this in a building that was last modernized in 2009 and whose systems are failing.

A [2013 report commissioned by the Deputy Mayor of Education](#) says our high schools need at least 192 square feet per student. Per the [2018 Master Facilities Plan](#), Walls offered 115 square feet per student, so not even two thirds of that minimum (*see this testimony's Appendix for details*). In other words, there were 1.6 students for every 1 student our building could sustain at the most per those standards; and we have since added another 15 students. As a point of comparison: even Jackson-Reed (the second most crowded DC public high school) counted 200 square feet per student, so almost twice what a Walls student is granted today.

Picture this: Our over 600 students are now crammed into a good 25 oversubscribed classrooms, which 38 full-time and 9 adjunct teachers share. Theater is taught in the cafeteria while fielding balls flying over from gym class, held on the other end of the cafeteria. (For your information, Walls does not have a gym.) Classroom-less teachers cart their materials through the building (up multiple flights of stairs, by the way, because the one elevator in the building remained out of service for weeks). And teachers are left with no place to meet privately with students, let alone gather and recharge. And the greatest concern of all: Seeing how slowly and tightly packed our students fill hallways and two narrow staircases while evacuating the building - twice in the last weeks due to gas from a failing plumbing system - I don't dare to imagine the disaster we'd face in case of a shooting or a fire.

Building capacity limits are critical when allocating budgets and developing algorithms to do so, so that staffing and programmatic costs can be met without ratcheting up enrollments.

Budgets need to be allocated in a fair as well as predictable manner.

Our DCPS budgeting process foresees that the principal - under advisement from their Local School Advisory Team - allocates an initial budget (a suggestion of sorts) in a way that will finance its staffing, materials, and programmatic needs. In reality, this happens within exceedingly narrow parameters: so many students, so many teachers, so many staff, so many advisors, so many computers etc. If there is anything left to decide, it's usually how much paper to purchase, whether more soap is needed, and how much overtime custodians can work. Key decisions otherwise revolve around which positions to cut: teachers, social workers, librarians, or special educators.

After initial budget allocations are made follows the annual "game to reclaim": notorious "loser" schools - among which School Without Walls finds itself year after year due to its small size - throw themselves into the fray to plug shortfalls. Then comes the "magic budget" (a backpocket of sorts) - the ESSER Fund this time around - to fill one gap or another. This is how School Without Walls High School lost its librarian in 2020 and 2021, had to excess a French teacher in 2021, and lost social workers and other support staff in that same critical period. Each time, it took months of advocating to fill those budgetary gaps. A distracting and demoralizing process, and by the time the budget was made whole, the relevant staff and teachers had packed up and moved on, taking with them experience, emotional ties with students, and programmatic and community relations. Not only that, they let their colleagues know that DCPS is not a predictable place to work.

This budgetary blame game feeds political motives and pork-barrel dealings while undermining the stability and predictability of our school budgets, not to mention escalating costs. Our students need continuity and familiar faces, and our school system needs stability in the face of a nationwide teacher shortage, which is especially severe when it comes to foreign languages, sciences, and special education ([GAO 2022](#)).

We request that, starting with the initial budget allocations, our school budget ensures continuity of staffing and programming, to support stability and predictability and retain teachers and staff.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and to elaborate on our need for predictable funding that takes into account the programmatic and physical school-level conditions, at high schools in general, and at School Without Walls High School in particular.

Appendix: DC Public High Schools, Square Footage per Student

<i>SY2019-20 School Name</i>	<i>SY2019-20 Audited Enrollment</i>	<i>Square Footage (total)</i>	<i>Square Footage per Student</i>
Anacostia High School	321	207,000.00	644.86
Ballou High School; Ballou STAY	1,064	356,000.00	334.59
Bard High School	167		0.00
Benjamin Banneker High School	523	153,583.00	293.66
Dunbar High School	648	276,536.00	426.75
Eastern High School	792	288,800.00	364.65
Ellington School of the Arts	558	279,524.00	500.94
Luke Moore Alternative High School	280	65,751.00	234.83
Phelps Architecture, Construction, and Engineering High School	257	180,000.00	255.84
Roosevelt High School; Roosevelt STAY	1,529	327,870.00	214.43
School Without Walls High School	591	68,000.00	115.06
Washington Metropolitan High School***	157	75,074.00	478.18
Wilson High School	1,872	376,448.00	201.09
Woodson, H D High School	468	235,000.00	502.14

Sources: The 2019 DC Public Education MASTER FACILITIES PLAN 2018. A Foundational Study (for the square footage data): Full report - <https://dme.dc.gov/MFP2018>
The 2020 Master Facilities Plan Supplement (for 2019-2020 enrollment data).
<https://dme.dc.gov/publication/2020-master-facilities-plan-supplement>

Public Hearing Live Testimony

DCPS Public Budget FY24 Hearing (virtual)

Wednesday, November 15, 2022

By Alicia Bolton for Whittier Elementary (484-612-5455, aliciabolton614@gmail.com)

Good Evening. My name is Alicia Bolton, and I am a parent at Whittier Elementary in Ward 4. I have a 3rd grader and a kindergartner at Whittier who both love school but unfortunately do not have a school building that is safe. So, I'm testifying to request that Whittier start the building modernization process in Fall 2023 for three reasons.

First, the building is not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Since its construction nearly 100 years ago, Whittier has gone without an elevator which is a nightmare for students and teachers with disabilities who often have to miss out on activities beyond the first floor. And, while there is an elevator under construction in one wing of the school, that act alone will not make the building compliant with ADA. Another elevator would have to be added for the other wing of the building along with changes to bathrooms, playgrounds, classrooms and so much more. Until these issues are fixed, students at Whittier will be short-changed because the District is not living up to its **legal obligation** and promise to provide an equitable learning environment for all students.

Second, the building has experienced chronic roof leaks. The resulting water damage is dangerous because it negatively impacts air quality and subjects students and teachers to health complications. A previous study by the Harvard School of Public Health found that school is the place where children spend most of their time outside the home. Yet, common indoor air pollutants in schools have been associated with acute chronic health conditions like asthma and allergies as well as impacts on the central nervous system. As a mom of young children, it is disturbing to me that the very place where I send them to learn could also be the same place that undermines their health, growth and development.

Third, the building does not have the state-of-the-art space and technology necessary to be a premier STEM school poised to live up to its designation as a Green Ribbon and Project Lead the Way school. The thought of my girls not being able to do robust experiments that develop critical 21st century skills is disheartening. To attract and retain families in Ward 4 and get them excited about sending their kids to Ida and Coolidge, then DC must make a proper first impression by giving them an amazing experience at Whittier...otherwise they will leave Ward 4 and the District.

I'll close by saying that the PACE Act, despite its good intentions, allows schools like Whittier to fall through the cracks.

So, my request to the Council is two-fold. First, move Whittier up on the modernization schedule to begin design work this Fall 2023. Second, please address the underlying flaws and limitations of the PACE Act.

2023 is the time for the District to show through its pocket book what it values **and** who it values.

Thank you for your attention.

Hi,

My name is Madison Bolton and I'm in the third grade. I'm here to talk about why Whittier Elementary needs to be fixed. There are two main reasons why.

The first reason is that Whittier has pipes that are breaking. When the pipes broke inside Whittier on October 18th it forced all of the children and teachers to come out of the building and go to the school across from Whittier, which is Ida B. Wells. When we got there, we had to sit at tables in the cafeteria until the firetrucks were gone. While we were there, we got to talk. We drew pictures and we ate snacks. But, it was hard to learn anything since we were not in our normal classroom and building.

The second reason is that people with physical disabilities cannot get up the stairs or use the elevator because the people who are working on the elevator could not finish it at the start of the school year. One of my classmates broke his ankle. He had a cast with crutches and he could not get up the stairs. He missed a few classes and one of the teachers had to pick him up and carry him upstairs. I don't think it's fair that students with disabilities who have crutches or a wheelchair don't have an elevator to use when they need it. I also don't think it's fair that Whittier does not have a new building like Ida B. Wells.

Please fix Whittier starting in Fall 2023 so that my classmates and I can play and learn safely.

Thank you for your time. It was such an honor to be here.

Good Evening, and thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening. I am a parent of a DCPS elementary school student and we have been active participants and partners with DCPS for over two years. I am speaking tonight because our children need our assistance and time is of the essence. Since the beginning of the pandemic in early 2020, I have attended several virtual meetings where DCPS discussed and sought input from parents and the community about developing strategies for overcoming students' learning loss. Indeed, the math and reading assessment numbers are stark and addressing learning loss must be a priority. However, our children have a greater need during these challenging times. I am requesting funding to develop and implement social-emotional interactive curriculum in our classrooms. Our children need immediate help in maneuvering the obstacle course of social-emotional development and practicing appropriate and effective communication skills. Development of these skills are imperative for our children to effectively access classroom learning. Children without these skills are left alone to identify and navigate their emotions and engage with peers without the necessary strategies and supports to appropriately communicate their needs, and safely and joyfully engage with their peers. Funding to support social-emotional development and communication, such as We Thinkers! Social Problem Solvers Curriculum, will help our children develop these skills, which will provide the foundation for sound emotional and social health.

Likewise, funding for proactive social-emotional programs will give teachers the tools and support needed to address student disruptions, student emotional concerns, and peer conflicts in the classroom. Implementation of these proposed programs have multiple goals, including improving children's emotional health, and reducing peer conflicts, suspension and expulsion rates. Other goals would include improving school safety and reducing instances that are, unfortunately, increasing in frequency in our schools. Instances where students or former students devoid of self-esteem and healthy peer relationships and social emotional strategies, make the inappropriate choice to cause harm to students, teachers, and staff inside of schools. DCPS has the opportunity to be a leader and the school system of change, committed to including increased commitment, funding, resources, training, oversight, accountability to supporting our children and providing the tools needed in the area of social-emotion development and communication to improve the safety and learning experience in the classroom – life-long skills that our children will use to become healthy, civil contributors in their families, to their community and society.

Testimony for DCPS budget hearing

November 16, 2022

Elizabeth Stuart (elizabeth.stuart@gmail.com)

Member and parent co-chair, Alice Deal Middle School LSAT; parent, Jackson-Reed High School

Good evening. Thank you for hosting this hearing; my name is Elizabeth Stuart; I am an elected parent member and co-chair of the Alice Deal Middle School LSAT. I am testifying today to highlight challenges with the existing DCPS budget model, especially for large schools. In particular, I'm advocating on behalf of all DCPS schools so that all – regardless of their size – can be provided with budgets that allow them to operate effectively, serving all of their students with year to year consistency.

According to the most recent enrollment audit, Alice Deal serves 1,396 6th-8th grade students; 16% of all DCPS students in those grades. The next largest school serving those students has approximately 500 students in those grades. Thus, Deal is nearly three times the size of the next largest middle school and about five times the size of the average 6th-8th grade middle school. Additionally, Deal serves approximately 140 English language learners and 140 at-risk students – more than the total number of 6th-8th graders at several other DCPS schools. And, Deal serves many students, from all over the District; who travel from across town to attend the school.

Deal is also a 100% International Baccalaureate-inclusive school. Each and every student at Deal receives an IB education, regardless of whether that student is enrolled in Special Education, English Language Learners, or other programs. Deal takes on this enormous challenge despite receiving the lowest general education per-pupil funding of any DCPS school.

There are three key points I want to make today.

First, the new DCPS budget model imposes dramatic cuts on Deal's funding, jeopardizing the school's mission. These cuts were masked in FY23 by nearly \$2 million in one-time stability funding; losing those funds will be the equivalent of cutting 16 full-time teaching positions. Under the new DCPS budget model, without the one-time funds, Alice Deal's total budget in FY23 would have fallen by over \$1 million when accounting for inflation. We are gravely concerned about potential dramatic shortfalls in next year's budget without these stability funds.

Second, Deal and schools across the District are being forced to make do with less. When we compare submitted budgets for FY20 to FY23, Alice Deal's General Education funding has fallen by over \$600 **per student** when accounting for inflation. This is equivalent to a reduction of General Education funding of \$800k even after accounting for the reduction in the number of students. This is at a time when – as we all know – students are challenged with recouping learning loss and grappling with social emotional issues. These challenges are much higher today than they were pre-pandemic.

Third, the budget model does not take into account the challenges of large schools. As my colleague is testifying today from Jackson-Reed High School (and which my daughter attends so I have experienced firsthand) the “economies of scale” justification is a false narrative that disadvantages students from across the District at the city’s large schools. DCPS frequently allocates resources on a per school basis – e.g., a set funding amount for social-emotional programming or a certain number of substitutes – not accounting for the fact that some schools have 300 students and others have nearly 1500. There are simply not economies of scale that make up for the fact that large schools are complicated organizations that require substantial resources to operate efficiently and well.

Schools across the District need consistent and sufficient budgets that allow them to operate. Without attention to these issues – specifically without an improved budget model that provides core general education funding or more funding to schools – schools, such as Deal, are at grave risk of not being able to provide core services for their students. Ensuring adequate funding also needs to take into account specialized academic curricula such as the International Baccalaureate program, for which DCPS and the District are so proud. It will also help schools retain excellent teachers, by reducing extra workload and burnout.

Thank you for your attention to these issues. We look forward to working with the Council and DCPS to ensure students at Deal and across the city receive the resources and attention that they all need and deserve.

REMARKS OF PARENT AND COMMUNITY ACTIVIST, PETER A.F. BOYCE

BEFORE DCPS FY24 PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING, WASHINGTON, DC; 11.16.2022

DCPS, Superintendent, Co-Chairs, Members, Parents, Guests and Fellow Citizens, I extend my gratitude for this opportunity to provide comment on the DCPS FY24 Budgetary process.

I am Peter Boyce, first and foremost – proud parent of two Ivy League grads, both benefitting from the education provided by DCPS; two present High Schoolers – a Senior at Jackson-Reed and a Sophomore at School Without Walls. I'm a Ward 3 resident, President of Community Affairs Consultants and a current member of the LSAT at School Without Walls and I concur with much of the testimony of the prior presenters and I especially endorse the comments made by members of the LSAT from School Without Walls High School.

Three-years-ago, as a member of the LSAT at Alice Deal Middle School, I testified before a similar DCPS Public Budget Hearing at Maury Elementary School, and along with another parent presenter, Gwendolyn Washington, we urged Budget decision makers to allocate more funds toward Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Today I thank DCPS for moving in this direction to address the many social and mental health issues throughout our schools, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, I again urge decision makers to continue to increase funding for SEL given the real stresses and pressures that impact humanity, our students and our school system.

Co-Chairs, while I leave the issues of school size, class size, new schools, renovations etc to the technocrats, I strongly encourage full steam ahead to better performance at DCPS. In an attempt to rate and grade schools from elementary to the tertiary level, Forbes Magazine, July 31, 2018, published an article written by Renee Morad, titled: *States With the Best Public School Systems*, and although that survey did not rank our DCPS very well, I believe it did our System valuable service if only we would heed the a prerequisite to better school performance from one of the researchers cited in the article. Laura Hsu, Assistant Professor at Merrimack College found that "...more than any factor, teacher quality seems to be the strongest predictor of student achievement...recruiting and retaining strong teachers would ideally be the priority for every school" she informed, yet she acknowledged that such performance is linked to budgets. But unfortunately, and realistically, Barbara Jeanne Erwin, Clinical Professor at Indiana University, has acknowledged: "educators are asked to do more...with less funding."

Therefore, whatever our funding, teacher training, recruitment, retention and pay should be priorities of DCPS FY24 Budget along with greater SEL funding, procurement of up to date text books and the continued introduction and fast delivery of classroom technology for both students and teachers.

Thanks for taking prompt action.

Peter Boyce

pconlaw@yahoo.com

202.253.9503.

Budget Hearing, Department of Education Oral Testimony

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Maddlyn Sivilli, Division Manager of Programs at CASA for Children of DC. I was a Title I high school teacher for a number of years and in the classroom, felt that I couldn't effectively support my most vulnerable students. At CASA DC, we support some of the most marginalized youth in the District.

CASA DC recognizes the vast importance of education for DC's youth, particularly at-risk youth, like foster youth. We applaud the 2024 Budget for allocating additional funds for DC's at-risk youth and urge individualized support to ensure the success of our most vulnerable youth.

Recognizing the impact of childhood trauma on youth's learning is critical. Childhood trauma impacts brain development and youth who have experienced childhood trauma are paramountly impacted - particularly in learning. Children involved with child protective services consistently perform lower in math and reading achievement. Foster youth are at increased risk of dropping out of school & are less likely to graduate from high school or college.

This achievement gap is readily apparent in DC's foster youth. In 2019, less than 27% of youth served by CFSA were approaching, meeting, or exceeding expectations in English, and less than 23% in Math. CFSA-involved youth from 2020-2021 had an average GPA of 1.90.

Individualized support can help. For 20 years, CASA DC's CASA volunteers have provided one-on-one mentorship and best interest advocacy to foster and justice-involved youth. One of our primary areas of youth support is in education - engaging youth in learning activities, providing academic assistance, engaging with academic providers, and navigating academic barriers.

With the support of a CASA Volunteer:

- 88% of our youth in 2021 were approaching expectations in school or greater, compared to CFSA's 23%.
- Our youth with reported GPA, achieved an average 2.6, compared to CFSA's 1.9
- 85% of our youth have positive and hopeful feelings about their academic present and future.

CASA DC seeks to better support DCPS in its efforts to improve education for at-risk students. There are strong opportunities for partnership, utilizing our dedicated community-based volunteers. At the end of 2021, I was hired as CASA DC's Educational Specialist to develop expanded educational services, such as providing tutoring support to our youth, and providing volunteers strengthened educational advocacy training. In the past year, we have provided numerous trainings for our staff and volunteers on topics including providing academic support, student voice, creating accountability plans, special education, and age-appropriate cognitive development.

With increased funding for DC's at-risk youth, DCPS can take a decisive approach to ensure greater individualized support for DC's foster youth. While CASA DC is eager to provide partnership to facilitate greater support to youth, we additionally urge the following:

- Increased mental health support at each DCPS school with a high at-risk population
- Decreased the adult to student ratio with additional classroom aides; AND
- Expanded tutoring services to address academic gaps.

CASA DC is so grateful for the opportunity to support DC's at-risk youth. Thank you all for your time and for your support.