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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR  
FY 2019 DCPS PUBLIC HEARING

STUART-HOBSON MIDDLE SCHOOL  
410 E STREET NE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20002

November 14, 2017

6:00 p.m.

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

2 (6:20 p.m.)

3 MS. GOLDBAND: Good evening. Welcome and  
4 thank you for joining us for the Fiscal '19 DCPS  
5 Budget Development Public Budget Hearing. We're glad  
6 to see you this evening.

7 I want to give you a quick overview of the  
8 evening. We'll do a quick introduction and then want  
9 to get straight to your testimony. So this evening  
10 we will give you a quick preview or a reminder more  
11 likely of the strategic plan. Most of the evening  
12 will be spent with public testimony and then we'll  
13 give you some next steps as well.

14 So tonight you'll hear a little bit about  
15 what we are thinking but mostly we'll hear what  
16 you're thinking. We're interested in your thoughts  
17 about our budget priorities about where we should be  
18 focusing our time and our resources and most  
19 importantly tonight is the beginning, not the end, of  
20 the conversation so we look forward to hearing your  
21 thoughts and to continuing the conversation.

22 I want to give everybody a chance to

1 introduce themselves and then I'll hand it over to  
2 Chancellor Wilson to give us introduction -- oh I'm  
3 sorry and I'm Sara Goldband the Chief Business  
4 Officer for DC Public Schools.

5 MR. WILSON: Hi, good evening and welcome  
6 to Stuart-Hobson. I'm Michael Gaal, the Deputy  
7 Chancellor for innovations and systems improvement.

8 MS. LEGRAND: Good evening, I'm Wanda  
9 Legrand. I'm the Deputy Chancellor for social,  
10 emotional and academic development.

11 MR. WILSON: Good evening, Antwan Wilson  
12 Chancellor. I appreciate everyone being here this  
13 evening to share with us your ideas for budget  
14 development. So I'll share just a bit of  
15 information here and try to get through this synclly  
16 so that we can get to an opportunity to hear from  
17 you.

18 So just to start I want to make sure that  
19 I'm on the -- you're going to run first a few slides?  
20 That would be great. You know what, I'm going to  
21 take it right? Okay just to start here in terms of  
22 -- I want to make sure that I'm looking at the right

1 slide here.

2           Okay, so we in the beginning of the school  
3 year -- you can advance the slide sir, we launched  
4 our capital commitment strategic plan. We updated  
5 the plan. It sunsetted -- the first capital plan  
6 sunsetted last school year in June. We went through  
7 a process for about six months to identify what our  
8 priorities would be going forward and we launched  
9 that plan back on I believe it was September 9th.

10           And a few highlights within the plan that  
11 you will see is our mission statement, vision  
12 statement. Our vision is just that we want every  
13 student to feel loved, challenge prepared to  
14 positively influence society and thrive in life.

15           We have a mission statement. Our mission  
16 statement is focused on what we want to be true in  
17 schools or what our vision is about, what we want to  
18 be true for students in the future. Our mission is  
19 about the work in schools.

20           We believe that it's important that  
21 schools guarantee that students reach their full  
22 potential through rigorous and joyful learning

1 opportunities provided in a nurturing environment  
2 and so we want to be a district that is uplifting the  
3 ability of our schools to make that mission a  
4 reality.

5           You see what we have done is we have  
6 identified five major priorities and although you see  
7 numbers, they're not ranked so I wouldn't think of  
8 the priorities as a ranking. I would think of them  
9 as a cascading.

10           We have had over the last several years  
11 really good progress and we have seen increasing  
12 graduation rates again this year so since 2011  
13 graduation rates have grown about 20 percent. We've  
14 seen increases in student achievement, we've seen  
15 increases in student satisfaction.

16           So a number of indicators we've seen  
17 increases, but we have also seen a widening of the  
18 achieving gaps. If you think about the idea that  
19 sub-groups across the city have grown and the  
20 progress of the sub-groups across the city have  
21 grown. However, we need to make sure that that  
22 growth is accelerated for some groups of students and

1 so the equity work is extremely important.

2 We continue to want to focus on the needs  
3 of the district making sure we have the best  
4 educators possible leading our schools, teaching in  
5 our schools and then supporting those educators to  
6 make decisions on behalf of young people that benefit  
7 the young people and their learning -- so that  
8 continues to be a priority for us.

9 And then the excellent people, those  
10 people who are empowered, they insure excellent  
11 schools. And so this idea of making sure that  
12 regardless of where a child goes to school in the  
13 city that those schools are really strong options  
14 that prepare the student to be successful in their  
15 current grade level and also prepares them for the  
16 following grade level and ultimately prepares them  
17 for post-secondary success.

18 So whether they pursue a college pathway  
19 or whether the student decides to start in the work  
20 force and then head on to some type of education  
21 after that we want to make sure that the students  
22 are ready to go for that.

1           Educating the whole child is extremely  
2 important to us and so you will hear us talk a lot  
3 about social and emotional academic development. So  
4 it's just this idea that in addition to the academic  
5 outcomes we want for our children we want to make  
6 sure that all of our schools are appreciating the  
7 fact that helping students grow into who they are as  
8 individuals and being able to interact well with  
9 others, being able to regulate their behavior  
10 depending upon the emotions that they have  
11 recognizing that emotions are natural, they shape all  
12 of our decision-making.

13           But there are strategies that we can teach  
14 to help young people navigate their environments and  
15 so we want to make sure that that's happening in our  
16 schools and we are only going to have excellent  
17 schools if we engage families, so those are all  
18 priorities for us.

19           And so you see the outcomes that we hope  
20 to reach by 2022 and we have a lot of work to do. We  
21 know we need to accelerate the progress for our  
22 students who are furthest behind while continuing to



1 increase progress for all of our students.

2           So we don't, in any way, want to slow  
3 anyone down. I always say that there are no groups  
4 of students who are accelerating too fast. What we  
5 have to figure out is how to help students -- some  
6 students accelerate faster, grow faster. And that  
7 part of it is not easy but we do believe that the  
8 work that we do within our budgetary decisions -- and  
9 that's why these sessions are so important.

10           And not just these, but as we go forward  
11 are so important to help us do this right and you see  
12 the other pieces here.

13           Accelerate literacy -- we believe that  
14 between grades Kindergarten and second grade it's  
15 really important that students learn to read on grade  
16 level or above, and so we think that's an important  
17 piece so that when students get to third grade where  
18 they're being presented with opportunities that  
19 demonstrate their ability to use their ability to  
20 read to demonstrate learning, that they're well  
21 positioned to do that.

22           Also, we want to continue to increase our

1 high school graduation rate to at least 85% in four  
2 years. We have recognized that we have an increasing  
3 number of English learners and newcomers into our  
4 district, we're currently about 11% English learners  
5 and the newcomer population makeup of that group is  
6 growing.

7           And so, we have some students that when  
8 they enter into high school there's no way they'll be  
9 able to finish in four years, nor do we want them to.  
10 We want them to stay the extra year so that they are  
11 English proficient. In addition to that we are a  
12 district that has several attractive options for our  
13 students who fall off track and we're going to  
14 continue to offer those offerings and strengthen  
15 those offerings and so we want to make sure that we  
16 have goals for those students as well.

17           We believe that the student experience is  
18 important and we will continue to measure student  
19 satisfaction in schools but we want students to be  
20 communicating some very specific things about their  
21 schools and their experiences and so that's where you  
22 see goal number 4 about students really feeling loved

1 and challenge prepared and beginning to measure that.

2           And then also increasing making sure that  
3 all of our schools are either highly rated or have  
4 grown within the rating from one indicator to the  
5 next. We don't want, you know, the new  
6 accountability framework that comes out -- we don't  
7 want schools to be persisting in the one star rating  
8 and if they come out two stars, we need them to move.

9           And so that's going to be a priority for  
10 us and then we want to continue as the population  
11 continues to grow, we want to be considered a top  
12 option for families as they come into the district.

13           Finally, I just want to mention this piece  
14 around the importance of working with the school, the  
15 local school advisory teams. I know they've always  
16 existed here or at least have for some time. I will  
17 say that as we go forward over the next five years  
18 it's become more and more important to us that school  
19 leaders are leveraging these committees -- that these  
20 processes are fully transparent and open processes  
21 where there are robust conversations around school  
22 priorities -- first looking at data in terms of what

1 is happening in the school.

2 We believe that should be happening well  
3 before any budgetary dollars are assigned to the  
4 school so now would be a good time for those  
5 conversations to be happening and into December. We  
6 believe that working with the LSAT, the school  
7 leaders should begin to identify priorities so that  
8 as dollars become available everyone is clear as to  
9 how those dollars would be prioritized, and so we  
10 think that that is extremely important.

11 We believe that the LSAT is acting as a  
12 liaison between the school leader and the larger  
13 community and so we believe that those meetings  
14 should be happening regularly, there should be a  
15 regular schedule, there should be notes and agendas,  
16 conversations, so on and so forth.

17 And so we are giving direction to our  
18 schools around that process and we will continue to  
19 develop our school leaders as well as support the  
20 development of our LSAT's along the way and so I  
21 want to make sure that we say strongly that it is  
22 important that if you are in LSAT that you are

1 participating wholly.

2           If you have examples of leaders who do a  
3 great job of that we'd love to hear about it  
4 directly, reaching out to the Office of Family and  
5 Public Engagement so that we can highlight those  
6 schools.

7           At the same time if you find examples  
8 where you believe that schools could do better and  
9 they're not being fully transparent, we'd like to  
10 hear those as well so that we can support those  
11 schools and help them to make sure that they open up  
12 those conversations so that they are engaging  
13 conversations.

14           With that I'm going to go ahead and turn  
15 it back over to Chief Business Officer Sara Goldband,  
16 she'll take it from there.

17           MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you Chancellor. So  
18 just to build on that three things to think about in  
19 the coming months to get involved in our budget  
20 development process. Your schools -- many of the  
21 schools will be holding school level budget planning  
22 events, we encourage you to participate in those.

1           There is a wealth of information on the  
2 DCPS Interactive Data Center at DCPS datacenter.com  
3 including last year's initial allocations and  
4 submitted budgets as well as previous years. Our  
5 staffing models also have some great information  
6 there and as the Chancellor mentioned working with  
7 your local school advisory teams is a great way to  
8 stay involved.

9           All right so some logistics and reminders.  
10 We are going to call up witnesses to testify in the  
11 order in which they registered online. I'm going to  
12 do my best with the names so bear with me. We  
13 encourage you to try and keep testimony to around 3  
14 minutes.

15           Annie, who's right below me will hold up  
16 some signs with timing reminders to help you see  
17 where you're at and if you get to the end just try  
18 and wrap up quickly, we'll be patient. Everything  
19 is being recorded, both video and in written  
20 transcription and all of that testimony will be  
21 collected for DCPS purposes and also provided to some  
22 of our city stakeholders, including the Mayor's

1 Office.

2 So we ask that you start by saying clearly  
3 your first and last name so the transcription service  
4 can get that clearly and we know who you are. All  
5 right, let's get to it. So first up is Wolfe?

6 MS. WOLFE: Good evening, welcome to DC.  
7 Hi Chancellor, I know you're relatively new. My name  
8 is Rebecca Wolfe. Thank you for the opportunity  
9 tonight to testify on the behalf of Amidon Bowen  
10 Elementary School.

11 In brief Amidon has been one of the lowest  
12 performing elementary schools in DC for the past 10  
13 years. Last year 90% of students scored below grade  
14 level in English and 95% of students scored below  
15 grade level in math.

16 Nearly 30% of our students qualified for  
17 special education services -- student behavior  
18 remains a big challenge at the school. This has been  
19 the status quo at Amidon for a long time. I was  
20 recently encouraged Chancellor when I read your  
21 newsletter that said that you were interested in  
22 disrupting inequitable systems within DCPS.

1                   Unfortunately, however, I think that a  
2                   major disruption would be needed to pursue equity. I  
3                   raise the problematic issue of using the average  
4                   teacher's salary in school budget allocations as  
5                   opposed to actual teacher's salaries before and the  
6                   Office of the District of the Columbia Auditor just  
7                   released a report that affirms my position.

8                   The report notes that there are  
9                   substantial differences in average and actual  
10                  teacher's salaries and this problematic practice  
11                  maintains inequity because DCPS is actually spending  
12                  less for people in schools like Amidon than schools  
13                  serving affluent student populations and also  
14                  prohibits transparency.

15                  The Auditor's Report also highlight's the  
16                  schools receiving at-risk funds were using these  
17                  funds to meet staffing standards for bilingual and  
18                  arts education. In other words, schools serving  
19                  at-risk dollars aren't getting enough resources to  
20                  fund typical staff positions and then supplement  
21                  services for at-risk students which is the intent of  
22                  these funds.



1           It's not surprising that schools use  
2 at-risk funds to fund basic staff positions. The  
3 Auditor's Report also pointed out that schools had  
4 less purchasing power in 2016-17 than in the prior  
5 school year due to inflation.

6           School budget allocations did not keep up  
7 with inflation. This year Amidon received an  
8 additional \$30,000 when the Chancellor allocated  
9 additional monies to schools based on the proportion  
10 of students in the school who scored below grade  
11 level.

12           I was excited to learn of the new funds  
13 until I understood that the funds could not be  
14 allocated to meet school needs. According to the  
15 principal the biggest need in the school is  
16 additional adults help with learning and student  
17 behavior.

18           These additional funds could not be used  
19 to fund additional staff positions. Another  
20 problematic issue is that schools are required to  
21 fund technology out of their school budget  
22 allocations. The problem is that schools never have

1 enough money in their budgets to purchase an adequate  
2 number of computers.

3 In the 2015-16 school year Amidon did not  
4 have enough computers to accommodate a single class.  
5 This was highly problematic with the new park  
6 assessment. The PTA partnered with Mandarin Oriental  
7 and raised \$40,000 for a laptop cart to accommodate a  
8 single class, but why are Title 1 schools left to  
9 their own devices to raise basic supplies?

10 If DCPS wants to improve equity,  
11 substantial changes to the school budget allocation  
12 are needed and  
13 DCPS policies will have to be more flexible and post  
14 fewer restrictions on schools, thank you for your  
15 time.

16 MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you, Miss Thomas,  
17 Katie Thomas?

18 MS. THOMAS: Good evening, I am a parent  
19 of two children -- my name is Katie Thomas, I'm a  
20 parent of two children that attend Minor Elementary  
21 in Northeast and I echo everything that my fellow  
22 Title 1 parent just mentioned to you.

1           I wanted to highlight three areas of  
2 priorities for Minor parents and our PTO. Minor was  
3 one of the schools studied in the DC Auditor's Report  
4 so I found that as a new parent engaged in the  
5 public school system here in the District, that our  
6 school was being asked to provide fundamental  
7 resources to our classrooms and our teachers out of  
8 at-risk funding.

9           66% of our students are considered  
10 at-risk. Our test scores are reflective of  
11 inadequate resources for our students that are facing  
12 fundamental challenges in their communities and at  
13 home.

14           My husband and I have been on Capitol Hill  
15 for almost 20 years and we have often wondered by  
16 Minor can't seem to make that academic turn. And as  
17 I've become more educated myself as a parent in this  
18 process, I'm realizing that the school is not being  
19 equipped with the necessary resources to be able to  
20 make that turn academically for these students.

21           Minor has been blessed with a relatively  
22 new facility that we are very appreciative of. One

1 of the glaring aspects of improvement that we do need  
2 is for an outdoor campus.

3 We have retained multiple  
4 vandalism acts or incidents over the past few years  
5 including arson of our ECE playground, arson on our  
6 upper-grades playground and that has been an  
7 identified priority both for the school and for the  
8 parents in terms of providing a holistic approach to  
9 our student's learning is providing that with indoor  
10 resources and outdoor resources for learning.

11 The third issue that I wanted to raise  
12 which was just raised by my fellow parent from a  
13 Title 1 school is the lack of technology resources.  
14 My daughter -- my oldest daughter who is a  
15 kindergartener has 25 classmates. They have three  
16 very old outdated laptops that I would challenge all  
17 of you to do your jobs on, on a daily basis.

18 Those three laptops for 25 students are  
19 used for small group instruction and I would say that  
20 as a school district we are failing these children,  
21 her classmates and that is indicative of everything  
22 else happening in the building.

1                   When park testing comes around, there  
2 aren't enough functional computers for the testing to  
3 be happening and for additional student learning,  
4 computer based learning to be happening.

5                   And in fact one of the highlights from the  
6 Auditor's Report specifically mentioned a central  
7 office staffer noting that Minor student technology  
8 is in desperate need of an upgrade and looking at  
9 what came out of that Auditor's report in terms of  
10 having to shift dollars from at-risk technology  
11 resources into fundamental equipment and hardware  
12 funding is indicative of the challenge that our  
13 students face.

14                   I think Mr. Chancellor you have had  
15 opportunity to be at Minor and to see what a hidden  
16 gem, what the next potential -- I think that I bring  
17 to you a commitment from the parents and the  
18 leadership of the school that we want to be the next  
19 success story for DCPS and help you achieve all of  
20 those goals that you have set out in the plan, we  
21 just need your help to make sure that that happens in  
22 the budgeting process.

1 MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you, Nancy Hoovendic?

2 MS. HOOVENDIC: Thank you for the  
3 opportunity. My name is Nancy Hoovendic. I'm the DC  
4 Programs Director of the 21st Century School Fund  
5 which is a small non-profit that is aiming to  
6 support the improvement of public school facilities.

7 I want to talk about the Capital Program.  
8 The investments in DCPS facilities must be continued  
9 and maintained. Since the effort to modernize all of  
10 the DCPS facilities started in 2000, DCPS has fully  
11 modernized or replaced almost 70 schools, partially  
12 modernized another 30 to different levels of  
13 completion and it still has 14 untouched schools to  
14 go.

15 Finishing these projects, including fully  
16 modernizing the partial modernizations is an immense  
17 civic investment in DCPS which acknowledges it as the  
18 foundation for public education in DC. And although  
19 investing in DCPS capital funding is costly upfront  
20 it saves in the long run compared to charter first  
21 student facilities allowances that continue year  
22 after year forever.

1           A strong DCPS advances education equity  
2 across the city. During the DME Student Assignment  
3 Initiative, it was clear that parents most of all  
4 wanted a strong system of DCPS neighborhood schools  
5 that were available by-right in their communities but  
6 complemented by schools of choice, both DCPS and  
7 charters.

8           Supporting a strong DCPS charter balance  
9 is a matter of equity because with the dwindling  
10 share of students in the by-right system, which is  
11 publically accountable, not privately controlled, it  
12 has increasingly been the least -- pardon me -- it  
13 has increasingly been the least privileged families  
14 in DC that lack neighborhood by-right school  
15 investments and the least privileged students who  
16 must enter the lottery and travel, and those families  
17 with the least resources who are disenfranchised with  
18 little or no say in their children's education except  
19 to try the lottery yet again.

20           In both Wards 7 and 8 for instance the  
21 number of charters as opposed to DCPS schools is now  
22 nearly equivalent. In Ward 5 there are twice as many

1 charter schools as DCPS schools. In the past DCPS  
2 has failed to invest, thanks to the Anacostia in the  
3 way it has invested in wealthier parts of the city,  
4 leading to a loss of enrollment and high numbers of  
5 closed schools, many of them now leased to charters.

6           Meanwhile, the Wilson figurative pattern  
7 is now completely modernized with the surprise  
8 addition of Eaton in the CIT last spring. The 2018  
9 to '23 CIT is top-heavy with schools west and south  
10 of Ward 5 as modernization slowly creep west to east  
11 across the DC map, while 5 of the 25 schools in the  
12 current CIT are in Ward 7, only 2 are in Ward 8.

13           DCPS must hold to the CIT schedule but it  
14 is a promise in good faith but we can't let this  
15 level of inequity continue. DCPS needs to engage the  
16 public and planning for greater enrollment growth and  
17 increased access to by-right schools.

18           Population forecasts are for increasing  
19 numbers of school age children -- I'll stop in just a  
20 minute, almost done -- partly due to the success of  
21 public education reform in both sectors, but DCPS  
22 needs careful and transparent planning with its



1 constituency to establish a healthy balance between  
2 the sectors if the by-right system is to be  
3 strengthened.

4           The Charter Board's recent 2017 analysis  
5 on charter programs needing growth in DCPS shows --  
6 in DC, pardon me -- show 6,774 new seats already  
7 authorized for charter's through 2022, more than half  
8 of them east of the Anacostia.

9           During the same period DCPS has targeted  
10 growth of about 6,000 students total in the capital  
11 commitment. Thank you.

12           MS. GOLDBAND: Ms. Milstone and Miss Gove,  
13 you'll be next.

14           MS. MILSTONE: Good evening my name is Ava  
15 Milstone and I'm a parent at Amidon-Bowen Elementary  
16 School and also the LSAT Chair there. I want to  
17 start by saying that we have been delighted by my  
18 son's academic and social emotional growth at Amidon.

19           Our enrollment and attendance numbers are  
20 increasing and our community is rallying around our  
21 school. However, test scores have been stagnant for  
22 over a decade and Amidon-Bowen remains one of the

1 lowest performing schools in the District.

2 It's no secret why this is the case.

3 Nearly all students at our school and testing grades  
4 are from low-income backgrounds and need significant  
5 academic support, physical and psychological health  
6 services and social emotional support to cope with  
7 and overcome the effects of poverty.

8 I worry that if things don't change in  
9 four years when it's time for Marshall's classmates  
10 to take the park, the school's scores will rise but  
11 it will be because his cohort is diverse  
12 socio-economically and the students from low-income  
13 families that Amidon-Bowen has been academically  
14 failing for years will still be left behind.

15 This achievement gap has been playing out  
16 throughout DCPS as you know. I appreciate Chancellor  
17 Wilson's focus on equity and I hope that future  
18 budgets recognize the reality that equal does not  
19 mean the same.

20 Amidon-Bowen and other 4040  
21 schools like ours need additional funds to provide  
22 staff positions and programming that will result in a

1 truly equal education.

2           As a member of the LSAT last year, I  
3 participated in discussions during which we made  
4 incredibly tough staffing decisions -- to let go one  
5 of our school custodial positions, to eliminate the  
6 long-standing America Program at our school in favor  
7 of hiring two to three more paraprofessionals to  
8 lower student-teacher ratios.

9           To let go of our Director of Strategy and  
10 Logistics so we could hire an Assistant Principal,  
11 cutting our Spanish teacher position and Language  
12 Program from full to half-time so that we could  
13 finally hire a Librarian to service our school two  
14 days a week.

15           Schools in areas of DC with higher median  
16 incomes don't have to make these decisions. PTA's in  
17 parts of Northwest regularly raise hundreds of  
18 thousands of dollars a year and most of these funds  
19 go towards hiring staff to lower the student/teacher  
20 ratio at the school.

21           You've heard about the example of  
22 computers -- computer literacy is a critical skill

1 for student's success on Park and in the futures.

2 And, in today's world, I think we all agree that  
3 computers are a basic school supply, not a luxury.

4 You heard about how we raised funds to  
5 provide these but in less resourced neighborhoods  
6 than ours where PTA's are not yet able to do this,  
7 the students are short-changed.

8 These basic supplies and their ongoing  
9 maintenance should be part of every school budget. I  
10 hope as you think about allocating FY '19 funds  
11 within DCPS, think about what true equity means.

12 Our under-resourced population is going to  
13 continue to be given virtually the same amount of  
14 funds and allocated positions as wealthier schools  
15 with which they have to do so much more. This will  
16 only continue to increase the achievement gap, thank  
17 you for your time.

18 MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you, Miss Gove and  
19 Miss Fuchs you will be next.

20 MS. GOVE: Thank you, thank you Chancellor  
21 Wilson and panel, for the opportunity to testify  
22 tonight. My name is Amber Gove, I'm a 10 year

1 resident of Ward 6, mom to two girls at Maury  
2 Elementary, LSAP member and as of about a month ago,  
3 Commissioner for 6A04.

4 In my day job I support and conduct  
5 research and partnership for public education systems  
6 in low-income countries around the world. I have a  
7 few asks to put in place that have the potential to  
8 increase excellence and equity within DCPS, two of  
9 your strategic priorities.

10 The first ask is that the Mayor work with  
11 the Public Charter School Board to level the playing  
12 field by insuring all middle schools start in 6th  
13 grade. To be clear I believe in the potential of  
14 school choice to inject innovation and creativity in  
15 to how schools and systems are managed.

16 But on my examination of the effects of  
17 school choice from California to Chile, I've learned  
18 that when incentives are not aligned with equity in  
19 mind, and the rules of the game are not enforced,  
20 students lose out.

21 There are only two stand-alone charter  
22 schools in DC that start in 5th grade -- Basis and

1 Washington Latin. Research indicates that the later  
2 the middle school start grade, the better for  
3 students so why 5th grade?

4 Because schools have been able to pick off  
5 students before they have a chance to think about our  
6 neighborhood middle schools, all of which start in  
7 6th grade. This leaves our middle schools feeling  
8 like they can never win, unable to compete because  
9 the other team has gained the system.

10 It's a bit like showing up for your first  
11 Little League game realizing the other team is  
12 stacked because it may be within the rules that the  
13 coach and the multiple assistant coaches can have  
14 their very talented kids on the team but it still  
15 doesn't seem very fair.

16 Second, DCPS and the Charter School Board  
17 need to work together to enforce existing rules  
18 regarding the lottery process. While I don't have  
19 definitive data, because it's not publically  
20 available, I know families who report being called up  
21 for the Charter School Lottery when they know they  
22 had a much less advantageous draft number than their

1 peers.

2           And every year Maury loses several rising  
3 5th grade families who receive calls in August that  
4 new classes have opened up. Enforcement of existing  
5 rules and procedures should reduce the gaming of the  
6 system. This must also include enforcement of the  
7 new rule requiring that money follow the student,  
8 even after audit day -- a welcome change which I  
9 applaud you for, and it should help reduce the number  
10 of charter refugees that DCSP by-right schools  
11 receive after October 5th.

12           Lastly and most importantly, I ask that  
13 you use this FY '19 budget in your new strategic plan  
14 to really invest in our middle schools -- one of  
15 Mayor Bowser's key campaign promises.

16           At times it really feels like DCPS is  
17 giving up on every being able to retract and retain  
18 its feeder school families. To play the game, even  
19 if it is stacked against you, you still need to show  
20 up. Your three year average retention rate from 4th  
21 to 6th grade is 39% among middle schools with a key  
22 outlier being Deal at 74% for Eliot Hine.

1           And it was just 33% and in school year  
2 '16-'17 just 7 of what had been a cohort of 54 Maury  
3 students went to Eliot-Hine. This capture rate is  
4 affecting the planned modernization for Eliot-Hine  
5 with enrollment projects woefully under the potential  
6 the school could achieve if DSPS really tried.

7           Every child deserves to have their  
8 educational needs met, so why did two out of three of  
9 my neighbors feel that their neighborhood local  
10 middle school won't give them that?

11           When the Mayor promised Deal for all, I'm  
12 pretty sure she didn't intend for all of us to enroll  
13 there. Our neighborhood middle schools may well be  
14 the Bad News Bears in the Little League play-offs,  
15 but with the right investments, a level playing field  
16 and some decent umpiring, our neighborhood middle  
17 schools can compete with even the most well-equipped  
18 schools.

19           Please invest in their excellence and work  
20 to eliminate opportunity gaps between our  
21 neighborhood and charter middle schools. Thank you  
22 for your time.



1 MS. GOLDBAND: Ms. Fuchs and then Ms.  
2 Bertelli, you'll be next.

3 MS. FUCHS: Good evening, my name is Laura  
4 Fuchs and for the past 11 years I've taught at H.D.  
5 Woodson High School. For 7 of those years I've  
6 served on the LSAT and for 3 of those I was the LSAT  
7 Chair.

8 Today I would like to make a plea to DCPS  
9 to end the practice of coming up with new, unfunded  
10 mandates year after year and fully fund the  
11 initiatives that are already in place or reduce  
12 them.

13 One of the things I'm going to ask of you  
14 is to please work with our LSAT teams -- and I'm not  
15 even on it this year, to fully plan what it takes for  
16 a school to implement each initiative that DCPS and  
17 schools require before putting them out to the public  
18 when you can't back down.

19 H.D. Woodson, as well as every other  
20 school, has a multitude of initiatives from DCPS  
21 central office that we must find a way to complete  
22 each year. Here are a few -- offering 20 plus

1     electives, including 9 or more AP courses, the NAP  
2     Academy, Leap Program in-house coaching, raising  
3     graduation rates, in seat attendance, park's scores,  
4     daily writing and literacy, focused initiatives added  
5     on this year, lowering suspension rates and using  
6     restorative justice programs and we could go on for  
7     20 more pages.

8             All of these initiatives have vast  
9     potential benefits for our students and what many of  
10    us have been advocating for over the last 10 years.  
11    But in order to do these programs justice, we have  
12    to give them time, attention and the resources that  
13    they deserve.

14            I'm just going to use AP courses as an  
15    example, as a teacher who has been doing it for a  
16    long time. When you add a new AP course -- or 6 of  
17    them at the same time, without additional teachers,  
18    this will displace existing core programming towards  
19    graduation.

20            This will increase class sizes for the  
21    remaining courses. You have to make sure that AP  
22    courses reflect the study body. H.D. Woodson is 79%

1 or more at-risk and over 40% special education.

2 While not a perfect representation, the AP  
3 courses at Woodson closely resemble this group. To  
4 meet the needs of our students, AP courses are  
5 ideally smaller in size so that a teacher can give  
6 students an intensive time and support to get them to  
7 a place where they have a good chance of passing the  
8 exam.

9 Again, this increases the teaching load in  
10 all of the regular core courses, unless we get  
11 additional funding for additional teachers.  
12 Oftentimes schools forego this luxury of small  
13 classes to keep our peer's classes sizes from going  
14 up. We also schedule them on both A and B days so  
15 that students have double the time in order to  
16 prepare for the AP exams.

17 This means the teachers taking half the  
18 student load and that then again increases the load  
19 on other teachers. We have to have the training, we  
20 need the proper materials, we also have additional  
21 time when it comes to homework, quizzes, tests,  
22 grading -- we do a lot more with the AP often times.

1           So the long and the short of it is this --  
2           all of these initiatives are great. They are things  
3           that we want for our kids, they are things that we  
4           want in schools, but if we are doing them without any  
5           additional funding, you are wearing us out. We each  
6           teach two or three preps, we cannot handle it for  
7           this much longer and we can't fully service the  
8           students we're attempting to serve. So any new  
9           programming, please work with LSAT's to figure out  
10          how it can work, how much time it takes, how much  
11          money it will take and then roll it out once we know  
12          how it is going to affect the local school level,  
13          thank you.

14                 MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you, Miss Bertelli  
15                 and Mr. Welles, you'll be next.

16                 MS. BERTELLI: Good evening, my name is  
17                 Vanessa Bertelli and I'm the Executive Director of  
18                 the DC Language Immersion Project. The validity of  
19                 DCPS's strategic goals of expanding multi-lingual  
20                 programs and increasing pipelines to source bilingual  
21                 teachers is reinforced daily by research findings and  
22                 civil action that bring home why these programs are

1 needed.

2 DCPS opened the first dual language  
3 program east of the river and has the highest -- a  
4 higher than average multi-lingual program to student  
5 ratio yet DCPS is falling behind its peers with  
6 similar percentages of Latino and English language  
7 learners and the increase and desirability of  
8 bilingual employees is putting children east of the  
9 river and on this side of the river too, at an even  
10 greater disadvantage faster.

11 So to lead, DCPS must be bold and act  
12 promptly. Here are DC Immersion's budget  
13 recommendations, we have five. The first is to  
14 invest early in a comprehensive plan and sustain the  
15 effort across multiple years.

16 The second is work across the strategic  
17 areas. The third is to be creative and I'm sure that  
18 goes by itself and fourth is make full use of Title 1  
19 and Title 3 funding. The fifth is leverage parental  
20 support.

21 A well-funded, comprehensive long-term and  
22 evidence based detail plan on expanding the

1 multi-lingual education should lead the way and be a  
2 sustained effort. For example, Delaware funds  
3 deciphered yearly was close to 2 million dollars to  
4 evaluate and implement additional foreign language  
5 offerings.

6 Work across strategic program areas as  
7 mentioned in previous testimonies, the expansion of  
8 multi-lingual programs increases the odds of reaching  
9 other strategic priorities set out in the plan.

10 Especially in these initial stages of  
11 budget planning, it is imperative that recommenders  
12 work with each other to find areas where strategic  
13 goals overlap and where concentrating on proven  
14 initiatives can effectively accomplish two or more  
15 goals.

16 Be creative -- for example why not phase  
17 out FLES in elementary school by implementing dual  
18 language -- less cost and extra FD. There are many  
19 other ways that other states use including Wikispaces  
20 and distributing support needed across different  
21 schools.

22 Make full use of Title 1 and Title 3

1 funding. Why are we not saving on less effective ESL  
2 by investing in dual language programs in schools  
3 with high numbers of English language learners?

4 We also must look at Title 1 because there  
5 are many schools where we cannot use Title 3 funding.  
6 And finally parents -- leverage their desire for dual  
7 language to support program implementation. They  
8 have enormous resources and time and skills and  
9 they're budget items, thank you.

10 MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you, Mr. Welles and  
11 Miss Fitzpatrick, you'll be next.

12 MR. WELLES: Good evening, my name is  
13 Martin Welles, I'm a parent of three DC public school  
14 children, 2 at Hardy Middle School, one at  
15 Amidon-Bowen Elementary School.

16 My children went from Amidon-Bowen since  
17 Kindergarten prior to them offering pre-K 3 and pre-K  
18 4 so I'm very familiar with a Title 1 school, a Title  
19 1 environment and the impact the school has on the  
20 children.

21 For 8 to 10 years there have been promises  
22 by two Chancellors prior to you that we're going to

1 move Amidon-Bowen off the bottom 40 -- it never  
2 happens.

3 My children thrived at Amidon-Bowen.  
4 They're some of the top test-takers in the city,  
5 they're some of the top athletes in the city, they've  
6 been exposed to numerous things so the question  
7 becomes why can my children excel in that environment  
8 but the majority of children cannot?

9 And I think it boils down to resources,  
10 human capital resources. I just don't think there's  
11 enough royal jelly coming into that school or other  
12 bottom 40 schools for that matter to challenge the  
13 behavior patterns of some of the children, to  
14 challenge the children who have academic needs.

15 Amidon-Bowen has consistently about 35% of  
16 its children in IEP which is more than twice the  
17 average for the District of Columbia yet I don't see  
18 two times as many teachers there or three times as  
19 many teachers. Every classroom should have two or  
20 three adults in there helping the children.

21 And if you look at how some of the  
22 wealthier schools fundraise and what they use their



1 money for, it's for additional human capital  
2 resources. I think that's the way to close this  
3 achievement gap.

4 The greatest advantage DCPS has is the  
5 sports and extracurricular activities. I think we  
6 have the best sports, elementary sports program in  
7 the nation -- not just in the metro area but in the  
8 nation.

9 My siblings live throughout the country  
10 and they're astonished at the sports offering and  
11 that's the whole person and I think we need to  
12 continue that.

13 With respect to resources -- human capital  
14 resources in terms of teachers and administrators,  
15 Amidon-Bowen had budgeted in the budget two years ago  
16 for stage curtains, window treatments in our  
17 cafeteria to keep the noise down. The old ones had  
18 molded and rotten away.

19 We had them measured, we had them  
20 designed, picked out, everything. The person at DGS  
21 quit, resigned, was terminated, whatever happened and  
22 the order never got placed. The new budget cycle

1 comes, that money gets redirected. That's something  
2 that needs to happen from your office.

3           Somebody needs to keep their eye on the  
4 ball, okay? These things shouldn't fall to a parent  
5 to monitor. It should be somebody within your  
6 office. And if I could just say a couple of things  
7 about Hardy Middle School, Mayor Bowser as we've  
8 heard other parents say promised an LS Deal for all.  
9 I think we're falling short of that middle school  
10 goal.

11           You know the athletic field at Hardy needs  
12 to be revamped. Half of the third floor in the  
13 school is being used by elementary school students  
14 for art classes. By making those classrooms  
15 available we could put more children in there, get  
16 more resources.

17           And coincidentally tonight there's a movie  
18 screening at Columbia Heights Education Campus  
19 called, "Backpack Full of Cash", in which coins the  
20 term advanced by a charter school operator that  
21 says, "Each child that comes in the door is a  
22 backpack full of cash."

1           And charter schools look at that child as  
2           a revenue model and then they determine whether the  
3           cost of educating that child is worth that backpack  
4           full of cash. October 6th they kick them out, they  
5           go to the public school and then we're left holding  
6           the bag. Thank you.

7           MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you. Miss  
8           Fitzpatrick and Mr. Rhett, you'll be next.

9           MS. FITZPATRICK: Chancellor Wilson and  
10          DCPS senior leadership good evening and thank you for  
11          providing this opportunity to weigh in on the fiscal  
12          year 2019 budget for our public schools. My name is  
13          Anne Fitzpatrick, I'm a parent at School within  
14          School, a city-side public elementary school in Ward  
15          6.

16          I wanted to share with you some of the  
17          concerns the SWS community has about the budget  
18          process. Our school is a special place that attracts  
19          families from all over the city. We have a  
20          child-centered teacher-directed approach to learning.

21          Families attracted by this approach come  
22          to our school thinking they are doing the right thing

1 for their child but then they may find that we can't  
2 offer them the full range of services they might get  
3 at their neighborhood school.

4           These services include a full-time school  
5 psychologist who has time to do more than test  
6 children, multiple full-time social workers, a  
7 full-time behavior interventionist, reading and math  
8 resource teachers and other special education  
9 supports.

10           Our teachers work on their own time to try  
11 to meet those needs but they can only do so much.  
12 Families have left our school over this. We want to  
13 be a school that welcomes everyone and meets the  
14 needs of all of our children. We need your help to  
15 do that.

16           It is often stated that it takes a village  
17 to raise a child. That's as true now as it ever was.  
18 Our neighborhoods are less like villages today, so we  
19 rely heavily on schools to be our villages.

20           Places of refuge, support and safety --  
21 increasingly we recognize that kids need more than  
22 reading, writing and arithmetic. As laid out in the

1 strategic plan, social emotional learning, special  
2 education and engaging families and community are key  
3 priorities for DCPS. They are key priorities for SWS  
4 as well.

5 But with our current school funding and  
6 the budget allocation process, it is increasingly  
7 difficult for schools like ours to meet the needs of  
8 all students within our school community. We are a  
9 small school stretching our per pupil dollars to  
10 cover our basic staffing needs.

11 We struggle just to fund the basics and  
12 finding additional funding or resources to support  
13 the individual social, emotional needs of our  
14 students is a challenge.

15 As you allocate school budgets and  
16 consider staff needs, please remember that every  
17 school must be ready to serve students who are at  
18 risk and dealing with individual traumas and crises.

19 The school that stands ready to support  
20 the needs of all of our students, we need the funds  
21 and resources to meet the needs of students where  
22 they are and in their time of need and crisis.

1                   Specifically and most crucially, we need  
2 funding for additional staff to coordinate behavior  
3 interventions. Currently this is being done by a  
4 part-time special education aide. Before I conclude,  
5 I do want to touch briefly on the capital improvement  
6 plan as well as the operating budget.

7                   Our kid's physical health and safety must  
8 be secure before the three "R's" and the social  
9 emotional learning and the wrap-around services can  
10 happen. It doesn't get any more basic than that.

11                   There was news of yet another school  
12 shooting today and we at SWS are sending our children  
13 to school and classrooms with doors that do not lock.  
14 Our teachers are terrified that they are responsible  
15 for securing rooms that cannot be secured.

16                   We've been asking for this to be addressed  
17 for years now and it is still not fixed. We also  
18 still do not have a working elevator this year  
19 although we have multiple children in wheelchairs. I  
20 could go on and I'm sure I will at the next Council  
21 Hearing on school modernizations. We must push the  
22 city for a robust investment in our school buildings

1 and we must make sure those dollars go to the schools  
2 that need it most.

3 It's time to modernize this side of the  
4 city. SWS has been waiting many years and heard many  
5 promises for our modernization. It is time there  
6 must be full investment and a clear and transparent  
7 plan to fix all schools, thank you.

8 MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you, Mr. Rhett and  
9 then Mr. Fumkin, you'll be next.

10 MR. RHETT: Good evening. My name is Greg  
11 Rhett. I'm here speaking on behalf of the Ward 7  
12 Education Council but if I may I'm also a parent rep  
13 to Stuart Hobson Middle School with the Capitol Hill  
14 Cluster School PTA and I'd like to say welcome  
15 everyone to Stuart Hobson Middle School.

16 Starting on a positive note Chancellor, we  
17 think that our Principal Comeforo, one of your first  
18 hires as a Principal is doing an outstanding job at  
19 our school along with Assistant Principal White and  
20 Assistant Principal Turner, we are extraordinarily  
21 happy with what he is doing at this school, thank  
22 you.

1           Now, on to Ward 7 -- your focus on equity  
2           and investments and the whole child -- in Ward 7 we  
3           believe that this year's immediately you started  
4           investing more into Ward 7 schools' programming,  
5           particularly with our middle schools. There are over  
6           90 families in Ward 7 that have our children here at  
7           Stuart Hobson because of the absence of quality  
8           middle schools in Ward 7, particularly where there is  
9           a specific need is that we have a fantastic language  
10          immersion program at Houston Elementary.

11           But where do those children go after they  
12          leave Houston? There's no language immersion  
13          anywhere inside Ward 7. We strongly believe that  
14          Ward 7 is deserving because of the inequities of the  
15          past of that type of investment.

16           Houston is on a very large property -- why  
17          not build us an education campus for dual language  
18          learning? Secondly, we have a STEM school at H.D.  
19          Woodson High School but again where are we feeding  
20          children from to go into Woodson? There is no STEM  
21          middle school.

22           We have a STEM elementary school but



1 there's no middle school. The investments in order  
2 for you to compete in the marketplace with the  
3 charter schools have to be in our middle school.  
4 Right now DCPS has 18 schools in Ward 7, charter  
5 schools have 17.

6 Ward 7 is the second highest populated  
7 ward for school aged children. We embrace you, we  
8 want to encourage you and support you but you have to  
9 meet us halfway and make the investment in our  
10 community, in our schools and so on behalf of the  
11 Ward 7 Education Council we look forward to  
12 continuing our positive relationship and work with  
13 you and the DCPS administration, thank you.

14 MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you. Sam Frumkin and  
15 Danica Petroschius, you'll be next.

16 MR. FRUMKIN: Good evening. My name is  
17 Sam Frumkin and I'm here this evening representing  
18 Wilson High School's LSAT and PTSO. I am not only a  
19 parent of two children in DCPS but I am a product of  
20 the DC Public School System, having spent K through  
21 12 in the DC public schools before graduating from  
22 Wilson some years ago.

1           In the interests of time, I'll keep my  
2 comment brief tonight. We will submit written  
3 testimony that includes additional detail and  
4 documentation. We also would welcome a meeting with  
5 you to discuss the specifics of Wilson High School.

6           As you are aware, Wilson's budget  
7 situation has been contentious for the past three  
8 years. In each of the three past years, DCPS has cut  
9 Wilson's initial budget allocation resulting in the  
10 cumulative loss of nearly 30 teaching and  
11 administrative positions.

12           The school community and others on its  
13 behalf have pressed for the additional funding that  
14 the school needs to adequately and appropriately meet  
15 the needs of Wilson's diverse student body. For FY  
16 '16 and FY '18, the City Council agreed that DCPS's  
17 initial budget allocations for Wilson were  
18 insufficient and the Council found additional  
19 resources to add to DCPS's budget.

20           In both cases however, Wilson did not  
21 receive the full amount intended by the Council.  
22 This year Wilson was budgeted for 1,745 students.

1 There are now 1,835 students at the school -- that's  
2 almost 100 higher than our initial allocation.

3 As a result this fall, DCPS added back  
4 funding for five positions to Wilson's budget.  
5 Additionally, DCPS reassigned four teachers to Wilson  
6 from other schools who are not reflected in the  
7 budget.

8 While we are grateful for the teaching and  
9 staff positions that were added back, they do not  
10 come close to compensating for the cuts from previous  
11 years. To lose 30 and have them replaced with 9  
12 results in negative outcomes for students, including  
13 unreasonably large class sizes and an inability to  
14 offer all the classes that meet our student's needs.

15 It is imperative that this budget dynamic  
16 between DCPS and Wilson not continue. Letting staff  
17 go and then trying to hire new people after school  
18 has started is disruptive and detrimental to  
19 students.

20 We lose good people and are forced to try  
21 to hire replacements when none are available on the  
22 job market. We understand DCPS will be moving to a

1 student-based budgeting model in FY '20. This  
2 appears to be a reasonable approach however, it is  
3 crucial to use an accurate estimate of student  
4 enrollment.

5 We therefore suggest using trailing  
6 enrollment and budgeting for a school rather than  
7 enrollment predictions until such predictions can be  
8 based on factors such as current enrollment at Wilson  
9 and its feeder schools.

10 The predictions that DCPS has used for  
11 Wilson have proven to be significantly lower than the  
12 number of students who wind up attending, resulting  
13 in firings at the end of the year followed by a  
14 realization that Wilson needs more teachers.

15 In spite of the strain on our resources,  
16 we're thriving. Our Honors for All Initiative aims  
17 to reduce the school's achievement gap and strengthen  
18 student's self-confidence and emotional well-being.

19 However, Honors for All and our efforts to  
20 increase minority enrollment in AP classes cannot  
21 succeed with class sizes in excess of 30 students --  
22 in some cases as high as 37.

1           There is still much work to do for  
2 students below grade level. 34% of Wilson's students  
3 over 600 are at-risk -- classified as at-risk and  
4 Wilson is still a focus school in the ESEA  
5 classification.

6           I know you are aware of capacity issues at  
7 Wilson and other schools and I understand there's  
8 ongoing work on this issue, but one thing we believe  
9 the Council and DCPS should consider is a separate  
10 program funding outside of individual school budgets  
11 which would allow students from across the city in  
12 the upper grades of high school to attend an early  
13 college program, whether at UDC, Howard, American  
14 University or other institutions.

15           For FY '19, Wilson's LSAT asks that the  
16 school be adequately funded in its initial budget  
17 allocation. We welcome continued engaged with the  
18 DCPS throughout the budget process to ensure that  
19 Wilson's needs are appropriately and fairly met.

20           And just on a personal note I'd like to  
21 add that when I hear parents speaking, presenting a  
22 school versus school dichotomy, it pains me. We're

1 aware of needs in other schools. I was a volunteer  
2 tutor at Amidon Elementary School for a number of  
3 years and by even going in for one hour a week you  
4 could see the difference that one extra adult makes  
5 in the classroom and so we recognize fully that there  
6 are many schools with many different needs and so I  
7 just wanted to close on that note. Thank you very  
8 much.

9 MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you, Ms. Petroschius  
10 and Mr. McPherson, you'll be next.

11 MS. PETEROSHIUS: Hi, thank you. I am a  
12 parent of two children at Capital Montessori at Logan  
13 and Co Vice-President of CHPSP0. We need a  
14 well-funded budget and funding well used.

15 Specific funding priorities need robust  
16 support. We need a full-time nurse in every school.  
17 It's outrageous that we only have a part-time nurse.  
18 On one day with no nurse a child fell and needed  
19 care. Our Principal had to manage it taking away  
20 critical time from leading our school.

21 The impact of no nurse on site puts  
22 pressures on all the other staff and leadership

1 further eroding care and efficiencies. This is not  
2 aligned to your value of putting students first,  
3 promoting equity and educating the whole child.

4 We also need adequate computers in every  
5 classroom all year long. We're asking children to  
6 master keyboarding and mouse manipulation to be  
7 successful in a PARCC test, but we only put adequate  
8 computers in the classroom during testing weeks.

9 How in the world are educators supposed to  
10 prepare all children for the test? This is not  
11 meeting your goal of promoting equity and excellence.  
12 Middle school is a critical time educationally and  
13 socially in DC. It's when DCPS loses many kids to  
14 charters and private schools.

15 We have to not only increase our support  
16 for middle schools but also make sure that all middle  
17 schools get adequate support. We are a so-called  
18 education campus and our middle school is not always  
19 given the same attention as a comprehensive middle  
20 school.

21 If we are going to meet your goals of  
22 equity and excellence we have to give robust funding

1 to all middle school children and those teachers. On  
2 implementation of the budget, DCPS fails to fall  
3 short -- I mean continues to fall short.

4 While the strategic plan has engaged  
5 families -- that was one of the priorities, parents  
6 continue to experience a DCPS that does not take  
7 parent engagement seriously and it starts at the top.

8 Take this meeting for example. The  
9 announcement tweeted by the Chancellor that invited  
10 us all to this meeting started with, "As required by  
11 the District of Columbia Law." There is nothing  
12 that screams we are anti-parent engagement than  
13 something that invites you to engage because we had  
14 to not because we want to.

15 These actions are evidence that the DNA of  
16 the instinct of DCPS is not to engage parents. Some  
17 parents here have not had a chance to see that tweet  
18 and sign up on-time, I hope you give them a chance at  
19 the end. They've worked hard, they've sat there  
20 through probably three hours and they've been turned  
21 away at the desk.

22 I have heard you say that parent



1 engagement is the best at the school level. It is  
2 critical at the school level but only at the school  
3 level. DCPS makes so many decisions that affect  
4 students and parents. In fact it's necessary for us  
5 to be engaging with DCPS also.

6           And too much communication is held back at  
7 the DCPS level making communication confusing and  
8 delayed. DCPS often chooses to be an ill-informed  
9 delayed middle man instead of facilitating  
10 transparency and allowing parents to get the answers  
11 they need quickly, which is our experience with lead  
12 testing for example.

13           Another example is modernization. DCPS  
14 can't make up its mind if it cares about the health,  
15 safety and learning environment of our buildings or  
16 not. We are beginning our SIT process and it's clear  
17 to us that DCPS is relegating parent engagement to a  
18 small segment of the process. The school community,  
19 parents, teachers and leaders know our building and  
20 its education goals best.

21           If you're not asked to be at the right  
22 tables, demand it. DGS is not an expert in learning.

1 It's an expert in buildings. The set process should  
2 be at least equal DGS and DCPS and should give  
3 parents adequate opportunity to share insights, goals  
4 and aspirations for the school.

5 I'd also like to see a budget implemented  
6 with a focus on innovation and building level  
7 autonomy. Too often DCPS is a barrier to helping  
8 schools get the autonomy they desire forcing schools  
9 that want flexibilities to go through hoops and  
10 paperwork, wasting good teaching and planning time on  
11 bureaucracy, rather than focus on implementing what  
12 we know works.

13 DCPS has the accountability to trust the  
14 educators to do the work of educating. Finally, a  
15 budget is a reflection of our priorities. I ask you,  
16 Chancellor, fight every day in the Mayor's Office,  
17 make her put DCPS first in that overall city budget.  
18 Put school modernizations, put DCPS operating budgets  
19 at the top of the list, thank you.

20 MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you, Mr. MacPherson  
21 and Erin Martin, you'll be next.

22 MR. MACPHERSON: Chancellor, Mr. Gaal, Ms.

1 Goldband, Ms. Legrand -- Chancellor you are the sixth  
2 institutional leader that I have I suppose worked  
3 with, engaged with since my daughter started going  
4 through DCPS and three superintendent's, third  
5 Chancellor.

6 And I could tell you that very little has  
7 changed in terms of process. I mean, you know, I  
8 know that a lot of people including myself, would  
9 prefer not to have Mayoral control but I don't delude  
10 myself -- I think that they both ended up being very  
11 similar in terms of we have sort of forced engagement  
12 as Danica point out, the three minutes.

13 When we go before the Council in the  
14 spring we do a thing where you have three minutes.  
15 If you are with an organization you have five minutes  
16 and so, you know, we used all of these opportunities  
17 when they're presented to talk about the issues.

18 Sometimes I think listening takes place.  
19 Sometimes I feel like I'm heard. Most of the time --  
20 and I'm sure that you probably feel like this is your  
21 experience of me is that I will take out my baseball  
22 bat and start whomping on you until you feel like

1 you're hearing me but -- and I don't do that  
2 gratuitously, it probably seems like I do but I  
3 don't, because that is my experience of the system.

4           It has never been terribly responsive. It  
5 wants to do what it wants to do and when it says it  
6 will do something that stakeholders say that they  
7 want, I can tell you and you know, I am sure that  
8 this will probably elicit a few chitters, you know,  
9 the school libraries are probably -- because I talk  
10 about this every year for the past five years.

11           You know it's like the school system says  
12 that it will do something but then does it in the  
13 most half-hearted way possible. I mean you know we  
14 have a deficit of probably 300,000 books in our  
15 school libraries.

16           You know, Chancellor Henderson, your  
17 predecessor talked about different things that she  
18 was going to do. Her investments have been very  
19 thin. We have a billion dollar a year budget. I  
20 mean this city is awash in spending.

21           I mean you know, our fiscal situation  
22 relative to education is an embarrassment of riches

1 and so, you know, I've gotten way past the point  
2 where I feel like we have to you know, say but we're  
3 the ghetto school system, we don't have the money to  
4 do that.

5 We have the money for Cadillac everything  
6 and that's why I don't have any patience for the  
7 thing with the libraries. We can do better. I don't  
8 know why we're not doing better.

9 Two years ago I pointed out that this  
10 situation here with this in the auditorium, you know,  
11 and it's a familiar problem of having to fight the  
12 same fight over and over again. And because you have  
13 to fight the same fight over and over again I think  
14 that what tends to happen is that DCPS leadership  
15 tends to view stakeholders as not partners, but  
16 adversaries.

17 We're not adversaries. I mean we're here  
18 -- we're willing to help carry your water. But it  
19 means, you know, following through on the trains  
20 running on time stuff so I would just leave you with  
21 that, thank you.

22 MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you, Erin Martin and

1 Emily Mechner, you'll be next.

2 MS. MARTIN: Good evening. Thank you for  
3 the opportunity to testify before you this evening.  
4 I am the parent of two students who attend School  
5 Without Walls at Francis Stevens which is located in  
6 Ward 2 in the west end area.

7 I speak to you today as a parent, as a  
8 member of our local school advisory team and as a  
9 fellow educator. My husband and I enrolled our  
10 oldest in what was then the Francis Stevens  
11 Education Campus in pre-school 7 years ago.

12 Armed with our first school experience  
13 through his enthusiasm and a deep belief in public  
14 education, we eagerly joined the parent/teacher  
15 association and looked forward to supporting our  
16 son's first school experience.

17 What we experienced in those first two  
18 years was not the experience that I would wish for  
19 any parent. We had a school enrollment again from  
20 grades pre-school through 8th grade of 225 and  
21 dwindling every week.

22 We had a staff that was not hopeful and

1 had low expectations. We had the lack of leadership  
2 and we had students who did not believe that they  
3 would be able to succeed.

4 We went through the closure process and  
5 thank you to DCPS and city officials. You heard our  
6 pleas and our investment and our passion for keeping  
7 the school open and giving it the opportunity to  
8 focus its efforts and to serve our students in the  
9 way that they needed to be served.

10 As a result, we merged with the School  
11 Without Walls High School and became School Without  
12 Walls at Francis Stevens. What came out of that was  
13 hope for every single student. Instead of serving  
14 225 students we are now up over 450 students and  
15 continuing to work to serve all of our students'  
16 academic and instructional needs as well as their  
17 social and emotional needs.

18 My ask this evening is simple. I am  
19 asking you please to continue to fund our budget to  
20 adequately staff and serve our students. We are also  
21 asking for the expansion of a language program to  
22 increase from just serving our students by providing

1 Latin but also adding a language so that our students  
2 are prepared for high school and beyond.

3 We also are asking for the addition of a  
4 counselor who could serve and specialize in working  
5 with students with disabilities. Again, we are an  
6 educational campus and we have a wide range of needs  
7 that we need to make sure we are addressing  
8 adequately.

9 Thank you very much and I look forward to  
10 the opportunity to continuing this dialogue, thank  
11 you.

12 MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you, Miss Mechner and  
13 Grace Ha, you'll be next.

14 MS. MECHNER: Good evening, my name is  
15 Emily Mechner. I'm a parent of three DCPS students  
16 at Oyster Adams Bilingual and Co-Chair of our school  
17 LSAT. Thank you for this opportunity to speak about  
18 the DCPS budget process.

19 I am very pleased at the breadth of themes  
20 and issues that other people have raised tonight and  
21 it's really in support of pretty much everything  
22 people have said that I would like to say that the



1 most important budget question right now is how the  
2 city is going to fund rising costs?

3 The answer is essential for securing  
4 adequate resources to meet the needs of each school  
5 and to achieve your goals of equity and excellence.  
6 In the interest of transparency, I'd like to know  
7 what you are doing right now to determine the UPSFF  
8 Foundation increase for next year.

9 Last year, per your own budget guide, the  
10 price of school personnel in DCPS increased by about  
11 4% on average but the Foundation increase proposed by  
12 the Mayor was 1.5%, not enough to cover those cost  
13 increases, not even close.

14 I don't want to spend time here rehashing  
15 the staffing model and how you justify the budget  
16 cuts at particular schools. The bottom line is the  
17 simple fact that the purchasing power of Formula  
18 Funds in DCPS schools contracted and therefore, so  
19 did our staff.

20 This was not due to enrollment losses.  
21 DCPS enrollment grew slightly. At my school  
22 enrollment was just flat and like most DCPS schools,

1 my school was given a budget cut in real terms and we  
2 were forced to make staffing cuts -- fewer teachers,  
3 fewer aides, lower level non-instructional staff, or  
4 some combination of those things to serve the same  
5 students.

6 This seemed like a terrible mistake to me.  
7 Why was the Mayor only asking for 1 % when DCPS's  
8 own documents showed substantially greater inflation?  
9 I traced the number in the Mayor's budget back to the  
10 first step of the budget process -- the current  
11 services funding level or CSFL.

12 Normally, each agency in the city reports  
13 to the Mayor CSFL in the fall, this time of year with  
14 information about how much money it would take to  
15 maintain services at the current level under  
16 anticipated changes in costs.

17 This is essentially a measure of  
18 agency-specific inflation. But DCPS does not seem to  
19 go through this exercise or at least it didn't last  
20 year. I hope -- I've heard you're already thinking  
21 about doing that better this year.

22 As far as I can learn the CFO was simply

1 told that the CSFL for public schools was going to be  
2 2%. Apparently this number did not come from DCPS.  
3 The Mayor's Office made it up and told DCPS that's  
4 what you are going to get.

5 Some later slight-of-hand took off half a  
6 percentage point for enrollment increase, redefining  
7 current services as including the expansion of  
8 services required by population growth, that's how  
9 they got to 1.5%.

10 When the public, including school  
11 Principals and LSAT's learned in the spring that the  
12 Mayor's request of school budget was not going to  
13 come even close to covering school's cost inflation,  
14 there was an outcry.

15 Council heard, scraped together more  
16 money, with the intention that the school could avoid  
17 some staffing cuts but it was too late then, too late  
18 for substantial changes and too late to keep pace  
19 with costs, let alone restore previous year's cuts.

20 I would like to see DCPS be transparent  
21 right now about how its costs are going to increase  
22 from this year to next. The Teacher's Union contract

1 has been finalized, benefits probably can be  
2 estimated with very good accuracy.

3 If DCPS follows the same process as other  
4 agencies the starting point for the Fiscal '19 budget  
5 would be to answer this.

6 If every school kept the same exact staff it has now,  
7 how much would that cost? That should be an easy  
8 question to answer -- a mere mechanical calculation  
9 based on known quantities.

10 The CFO and the public should be told the  
11 answer to that question. Why does DCPS, along with  
12 city agencies not share that information at this  
13 stage of the city's budget development? Why isn't  
14 DCPS allowed to provide a CSFL that's consistent with  
15 its' actual expected costs?

16 Without such a baseline, how can we  
17 address the apparent inadequacy of the resources we  
18 have for meeting the educational needs of the  
19 students? If we spend all of our time worrying about  
20 where the axe must fall when the costs outstrip our  
21 budgets, we will never make progress.

22 If DCPS doesn't stand up and advocate for

1 getting the resources to at least preserve the level  
2 of services it's providing now, how can it ever hope  
3 to do more? I am trying to encourage you and I thank  
4 you very much.

5 MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you, Ms. Ha and Ms.  
6 Smalley, you'll be next.

7 MS. HA: Good evening. Thank you  
8 Chancellor Wilson and members of the leadership team  
9 for involving the community early in the budget  
10 allocation process for fiscal year 2018.

11 My name is Grace Ha and I speak on behalf  
12 of Huddle for the Future, an advocacy group that was  
13 formed by a group of women in Ward 5 neighborhoods of  
14 Brook Land and Wood Ridge. Our members harbor close  
15 connections with the DCPS as educators, families and  
16 former families of students in DC public schools.

17 We speak today on three priorities for the  
18 Fiscal Year 2019 budget. Once reflected in the DCPS  
19 budget these priorities would promote equity across  
20 the District insuring that every single child  
21 enrolled in DCPS has a clear path forward to success  
22 and fulfillment.

1           Our first priority speaks directly to  
2 DCPS's goal to fully educate every child enrolled in  
3 the system. As parents and teachers ourselves we  
4 know that teachers are DCPS's greatest assets as it  
5 strives to achieve this goal.

6           The fiscal year 2019 budget to reflect  
7 this critical point regarding the education of our  
8 most vulnerable students without a teacher's close  
9 attention and caring hand, these students will lag  
10 behind their peers.

11           Smaller class sizes capped at 20 students  
12 per class allow for individualized instruction. Such  
13 a setting allows teachers to build trusting  
14 relationships with every student, no one is left  
15 behind.

16           Given the range of student's unique needs  
17 is more important than ever for individualized  
18 instruction to occur on a regular basis in the  
19 classroom. Teachers today face unique behavioral  
20 challenges in their student population. Recognizing  
21 that some students bring with them the burden of  
22 their personal lives, an increase in support services

1 and behavioral management staff ensures that teachers  
2 can focus on educating their students.

3 Our second priority relates to DCPS's  
4 mission of educating the whole child by attending to  
5 each student's physical and emotional health. The  
6 ability to visit a full-time nurse on site should be  
7 a right and not a privilege.

8 Just as many students across the District  
9 depend on school for providing their primary source  
10 of food for the day, they may depend on school nurses  
11 for basic healthcare. Currently school nurses are  
12 provided to DC public schools by the DC Department of  
13 Health at a minimum of 20 hours per week.

14 As a result school nurses can rotate among  
15 two or more different schools. The rotation of  
16 nurses across two or more schools spreads this highly  
17 valued resource far too thin. Moreover, this  
18 arrangement hinders a nurse's ability to form  
19 critical clinician/patient relationships with the 500  
20 plus students they must serve in a given week.

21 Relationships that are important for  
22 building patient's trust and effectively monitoring

1 student's health and well-being over time.

2           Finally, we want to call your attention to  
3 the role of the budget in working toward a critical  
4 DCPS strategic priority. Equity in DC public schools  
5 should be achieved across all levels of education  
6 from early childhood through secondary school.

7           DCPS's current budget is inadequate in its  
8 attention to middle school education. Students in  
9 this age range are experiencing rapid growth in their  
10 enthusiasm and engagement for offering good learning  
11 in classrooms and in extracurricular activities.

12           Many families leave DCPS at this critical  
13 juncture because they want children to be exposed to  
14 a wide range of educational, social, cultural,  
15 athletic and recreational activities. Once families  
16 leave DCPS they do not return for high school.

17           My family left DCPS for the sole reason of  
18 obtaining a Montessori education for our children but  
19 as graduates of racially and socio-economically  
20 diverse schools, my husband and I would like to be  
21 able to give our children the benefit of a similar  
22 experience with DCPS.



1           Other families remain committed to their  
2 DC public school and are later disappointed by the  
3 options they face at the middle and secondary school  
4 levels. After years of building a strong pipeline of  
5 students who are prepared to enter a middle school,  
6 it is a shame that many families feel the need to  
7 leave DCPS to find high-quality education elsewhere.

8           Chancellor Wilson, we recognize the  
9 challenge that lies ahead of you and your team as you  
10 and your team think creatively to address critical  
11 priorities on a limited budget. In conclusion I  
12 hope you will consider these priorities as you  
13 formulate the budget for fiscal year 2019. Thank you  
14 for your time.

15           MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you. Ms. Smalley and  
16 Ms. DeSario and crew you'll be next.

17           MS. SMALLEY: Good evening, thank you for  
18 the opportunity to offer testimony regarding the  
19 school year 2019 DCPS budget on behalf of Janney  
20 Elementary. We appreciate your early engagement  
21 with community members on budget issues.

22           Janney is an outstanding community of

1 learners built on a foundation of achievement,  
2 equity, collaboration and experimentation. As such,  
3 we would like to offer one general recommendation and  
4 several specific ones.

5 First, we ask that the fiscal year 2019  
6 DCPS budget accommodate the recent raise in teacher's  
7 salaries and any additional cost of living increases.  
8 According to the October 30th, 2017 budget from the  
9 Office of the District of Columbia Auditor, DCPS  
10 elementary school budgets have not been keeping pace  
11 with inflation for the past several years.

12 Indeed, Janney has found itself in fiscal  
13 year 2018 with less spending power than in previous  
14 years. Janney is fortunate to receive significant  
15 PTA contributions which we've used to make up for  
16 spending gaps, but we believe we have reached the  
17 ceiling of our PTA fundraising.

18 DCPS should take the recommendations of  
19 the OCDA and assure that school budgets keep pace  
20 with inflation and recent teacher raises.

21 Second, we ask that the fiscal year 2019  
22 DCPS budget fully support both the inclusion model of

1 teaching and the LEAP program currently required by  
2 DCPS.

3 As you know, Janney is successful in part  
4 because we are fully committed to our inclusion  
5 model. This model, which is a DCPS vision for all of  
6 its schools means that we need to have a permanent  
7 staff in place to serve 738 students with varying  
8 educational needs across 33 classrooms.

9 In fiscal year 2018, we were required to  
10 cut two educational aides which are critical  
11 positions to an inclusion model. The constraints of  
12 the FY 2018 budget also eliminate the flexibility to  
13 use non-personnel services funds to support our  
14 highly successful inclusion model.

15 Beyond this year, if current budgeting  
16 trends continue, our inclusion model will no longer  
17 be sustainable. Regarding LEAP, we value  
18 job-embedded professional learning and DCPS has  
19 prioritized this type of professional development  
20 through the development of the LEAP model.

21 However, we are only allocated one  
22 instructional coach to serve close to 50 general and

1 special education teachers. Further cuts to our  
2 budget mean that we cannot implement the LEAP model  
3 with fidelity.

4 Third, we understand that DCPS plans to  
5 build a new student-based funding model over the next  
6 year. We hope this process will include school  
7 LSAT's. In the meantime, we ask that DCPS allow  
8 flexibility within the comprehensive staffing model  
9 to accommodate large schools for which the CSM's  
10 arbitrary adjustments and allocations are  
11 detrimental.

12 For example, one Assistant Principal is  
13 provided for every 400 students. Therefore, a school  
14 of 400 and a school of 799, almost double in size,  
15 will be allocated only one AP. In this way the CSM  
16 undermines the ability of large schools to adequately  
17 meet the needs of all students.

18 Finally we ask that DCPS provide budget  
19 projections to LSAT's earlier in the budgeting  
20 process so we have time for meaningful engagement  
21 with these numbers before returning them to DCPS.

22 At last week's community forum, Chief

1 Business Officer Sara Goldband, mentioned the  
2 possibility of providing budget projections a week  
3 earlier which would be welcome. The more time we  
4 have the better. Thank you so much for your time  
5 this evening.

6 MS. GOLDBAND: Miss DeSario and I  
7 understand just the two students it looks like,  
8 Dreshawn Jennings and Shanae Wilkins, welcome.

9 MR. JENNINGS: Good afternoon, my name is  
10 Dreshawn Jennings and I'm an 11th grader at Eastern  
11 Senior High School.

12 MS. WILKINS: Good evening, my name is  
13 Shanae Wilkins, I'm an 11th grader at Eastern Senior  
14 High School.

15 MR. JENNINGS: The issue that I am  
16 addressing today is the lack of opportunities for  
17 students to tour multiple college tours and we are  
18 requesting that the District continues to provide  
19 more funds for students to attend college tours and  
20 have access to a College and Career Coordinator.

21 Eastern has 596 students that are in  
22 grades 10 to 12. Currently we are given a total

1 budget of \$10,000 for students to go on college  
2 tours. The average cost of a bus to travel two to  
3 three hours outside DMV will cost between \$1,200 to  
4 \$1,500 meaning that Eastern students would be able to  
5 go only on one trip, leaving the DOV.

6 It would cost between \$14,400 to \$18,000  
7 which means our current budget -- our current budget,  
8 we wouldn't be able to attend that trip because our  
9 budget -- it was over our budget.

10 We would like to see DSPS provide more  
11 funding for college tours and continuing to support  
12 College and Career Coordinators for the following  
13 reasons:

14 One -- exposure to college experiences  
15 will inspire students to want to go to attend  
16 college.

17 Two -- Coordinators will help students to  
18 determine if they want to go to college or military  
19 or directly into the work force. For example, this  
20 year we were blessed with a College and Career  
21 Coordinator, his name is Mr. West.

22 He has provided opportunities with great

1 guest speakers to talk about different careers and to  
2 help to coordinate college to us. He acts as if he  
3 was a mentor site facility and guides students in  
4 making the right decisions for life after high  
5 school.

6 He also provides additional support of a  
7 grade level counselor as students go through a  
8 college application. I went to  
9 Southern University on a band trip. It was the best  
10 trip. I toured the whole school. We were able to  
11 look in the classrooms and see what it feels like.

12 We saw that their classrooms are larger  
13 than ours are, way more technology. I want to go to  
14 Southern University because you could have any amount  
15 of freedom that will help you succeed. Southern  
16 University is a school that I would like to go to  
17 because it is farther away from home.

18 I've grown up in this area and I want to  
19 experience something new.

20 MS. WILKINS: My experience is that I have  
21 not gone on any college tours in high school because  
22 we have not had any funds. As an 11th grader we

1 should not have to wait until the last minute to go  
2 on a college tour because most of the college tours  
3 should happen in middle school or high school to get  
4 a better understanding of college.

5           When I was in middle school I went to the  
6 University of Pennsylvania. It was interesting, we  
7 got to tour the classrooms which had more computers  
8 than we do at Eastern. I would like more  
9 opportunities to visit college so I can make a  
10 decision because waiting until the last minute is not  
11 a great choice.

12           I believe we should start college tours as  
13 soon as possible such as freshman year so that  
14 students have opportunities to make informed  
15 decisions about college. Taking tours our senior  
16 year is too late.

17           College trips over our learning  
18 experience. I believe many colleges have different  
19 types of requirements. Visiting them was for  
20 students to set goals so we know the requirements of  
21 getting opportunities to know the requirements of  
22 college so that we can pick the right college.



1           MR. JENNINGS: If this issue is not  
2 addressed, a lot of kids will not look forward to  
3 going to college because they will say this is not a  
4 great fit for me. Students who do not have a  
5 college/career coordinator to guide them through  
6 their life in high school were not experienced to  
7 opportunities to learn alternative career choices for  
8 life out of high school, thank you.

9           MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you. Melinda Fuller  
10 and Abigail Paulsen, you'll be next.

11           MS. FULLER: Good evening. My name is  
12 Melinda Fuller and I'm a proud autism teacher for  
13 DCPS. I'm speaking before you today to request that  
14 you allocate more money for special education in  
15 order to open more early childhood communication  
16 education support which was formerly known as autism  
17 classrooms.

18           In September I learned that the Office of  
19 Specialized Instruction or OSI had increased the  
20 classroom cap for my class from 6 to 8 students, for  
21 my class and for other early childhood CES classrooms  
22 without increasing classroom staffing.

1           After several email exchanges and  
2 eventually meeting with representatives of OSI,  
3 teachers were told that this increase is intended to  
4 be temporary. I'm urging DCPS to insure that enough  
5 funding is allocated so that more CES classrooms  
6 could be opened next school year and return to the 6  
7 student maximum.

8           This classroom maximum result in a 2 to 1  
9 student teacher ratio allowing more time and  
10 opportunities for one to one instruction required for  
11 CES program requirements including ABA therapy and  
12 star curriculum lessons.

13           Additionally I'm urging DCPS to hire  
14 full-time specialist teachers, i.e. music and art  
15 teachers for each DCPS school. Part-time positions  
16 are difficult to staff and result in large teacher  
17 turnover, thank you.

18           MS. GOLDBAND: Miss Fuller, sorry we had a  
19 follow-up question. The last piece, full-time  
20 specialist teachers?

21           MS. FULLER: Music and art.

22           MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you. Miss Paulsen

1 and then Mr. Holmes, you'll be next.

2 MS. PAULSEN: I'm a little scared by the  
3 microphone. Good evening because I've been sitting  
4 up there for a long time I'll be quick, I promise.  
5 My name is Abigail Paulsen, I'm a military spouse.  
6 My family lives on Joint Base in Anacostia, Bolling.

7 I have three sons, two elementary age and  
8 one 8th grader who have been students in DCPS for  
9 four years. Presently I am the PTO President for  
10 Rose Hardy Middle School, drawing students from  
11 every ward in the city, military bases and a  
12 substantial international population.

13 I am also a PTA member and active parent  
14 at Horace Mann Elementary School. The 2018-2019  
15 school year holds much promise. With the recently  
16 released DCPS roadmap for student success there is  
17 much opportunity to implement great things for all  
18 DCPS students.

19 The big question is how will this be done?  
20 I hold great optimism for the success of this vision.  
21 It is critical that we as a community hold ourselves  
22 and each other accountable for educating and

1 supporting the needs of all of our children in a  
2 committed and on-going manner.

3 This vision embarks on doing so. I have a  
4 few questions for consideration based upon my  
5 experience as the PTO President and LSAT participant  
6 at Hardy Middle School. Will the budget give the  
7 increased funding support necessary at all levels to  
8 see the road map turned into a reality that is  
9 tangible at all schools across DC?

10 Is the current funding level provided by  
11 the city adequate to meet these needs and if not, how  
12 will the shortfall be addressed? Will the funding be  
13 planned out in a clear and upfront manner where  
14 schools can plan ahead for the year to be a success?

15 Will well-intentioned and research-backed  
16 programming such as athletics and after school  
17 activities for middle school students be supported  
18 equally, effectively and transparently city-wide so  
19 student athletes are able to embrace the pride that  
20 should come from being part of a hard working team  
21 instead of feeling the letdown of cancellation of  
22 their sport due to lack of programming support.

1           To fully support and implement  
2 high-quality programming district-wide and increase  
3 financial commitment and influx of resources will be  
4 needed, understandably at different levels but not  
5 for some schools at the expense of others.

6           Our goal must be the increase of excellent  
7 schools across the District, while maintaining the  
8 progress that has already been made. The success of  
9 the mission cannot be contingent on a zero-some game.  
10 There is a potential to fall into old patterns of  
11 process that A -- restrict transparency; B -- limits  
12 communication with stakeholders; and C -- obfuscates  
13 clarify of purpose for administrative actions.

14           It is critical that all budgeting  
15 decisions are made with respect to the six goals  
16 stated in the District vision which can act as the  
17 lens by which future policy determinations and  
18 implementations are to be judged.

19           Does every decision made do its best to  
20 meet the needs of the individuals behind the  
21 statistics? Based on our PARCC and NAPE scores  
22 District-wide there are children at every school in

1 every ward who need the support of this budget  
2 funding.

3 The commitment of our community to do  
4 right by every child in our care is the key to the  
5 success and continued growth of DCPS, thank you.

6 MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you. Mr. Holmes and  
7 then Miss Rucker, you'll be next.

8 MR. HOLMES: Good evening. My name is  
9 Antwan Holmes, I'm the ANC Commissioner for 7c07,  
10 Deanwood, home of Houston Elementary School as you  
11 have all heard today about the -- sorry, all right  
12 thank you.

13 Antwan Holmes, ANC Commissioner for ANC  
14 7c, Deanwood which is home to Houston Elementary  
15 School, the first dual language program east of the  
16 river as well as Ron Brown High School, the all-male  
17 academy.

18 So real quick I wanted to go over some of  
19 the things that we would like to see happen at  
20 Houston Elementary School. As you have heard before  
21 from Mr. Rhett, we would like to see an education  
22 campus extended for grades 6 through 8.

1           We want to make sure that the kids when  
2 they come in there through pre-K - 3 that they make  
3 sure they have a home on the east side of town to be  
4 able to finish their program in the 8th grade before  
5 they move on to the next level.

6           Fortunately we are in the process right  
7 now of doing our modernization so we would like to  
8 make sure that all of that is added to you know, the  
9 final plan, that is ultimately approved. After that  
10 we would like to start talking about the -- in  
11 addition to the dual language program, we also want  
12 to make sure there's a STEM program as well.

13           We've done a lot of work for -- Principal  
14 Seward has as well, with Dean Sabino here from D.C.  
15 causes to be able to start to have the discussion of  
16 what it takes to be able to integrate schools, what  
17 we like to call from pre-K 3 to PhD.

18           So what we need to do is we need to go  
19 ahead and start funding those steps necessary and  
20 work our way backwards so that those kids at a very  
21 early age can understand putting their hands in dirt  
22 and doing other things that we can be able to get

1       them into a STEM, have them have a STEM education.

2                   In addition to that one of the things that  
3 I'm constantly seeing at the school, especially since  
4 we've moved on to the park not having a -- I see kind  
5 of a mismatch of technology so I would like to see a  
6 unified IT technology strategy here for DCPS.

7                   I would like to see something where it  
8 incorporates so that the kids at all times have the  
9 ability to do ST math and all the other things that  
10 teachers have to teach these kids to do, so having a  
11 lack of tablets and laptops in the school space is a  
12 missed opportunity.

13                   Things also that we've also talked about  
14 in the past is -- although it's probably bigger than  
15 the scope here but I'll still say it, maybe should we  
16 move forward with working on our feeder pattern. And  
17 the very first feeder pattern is the early education  
18 that could occur over at Deanwood Recreation Center.

19                   I know it's already -- Deputy Mayor has it  
20 in the budget but we haven't had any follow-up since  
21 so we'd like to make sure that we'll hear about when  
22 is that going to be activated this year so that we



1 can start feeding kids into Houston Elementary  
2 School.

3 All right I'll go ahead and close up with  
4 -- in terms of some of the other improvements that we  
5 would like to see at the school. You know, we do  
6 have -- with us having the Spanish language program  
7 we don't have all of the books and stuff that's  
8 necessary to go along with the program and we'd like  
9 to see funding and the acquisition of these books  
10 into the school to build up our library, thank you.

11 MS. RUCKER: Good evening everybody. Last  
12 but not least. Thank you for taking the time to hear  
13 me out. What I'd like to do -- my name is Alicia  
14 Rucker, I'm just a parent. Everybody else has a  
15 title, mine is parent. I just came from Kelly Miller  
16 Middle School where we had ESA Math night, it was  
17 wonderful.

18 What I'd like to see us do is disrupt the  
19 public education model in Washington, DC. Dr.  
20 Wilson, you're already doing that. I'm holding here  
21 your priorities which I fully appreciate. I want to  
22 see 100% of K through 2 students reading on grade

1 level in all schools.

2 With youth who are not reading on grade  
3 level getting the most benefits. I want to see us --  
4 high school students should be in internships by 11th  
5 and 12th grade, I'd like to see that done in the next  
6 one to two years.

7 H.D. Woodson, under the leadership of Dr.  
8 Darren Slade and Phelps under the leadership of Dr.  
9 Willie Jackson, should be flagship schools for the  
10 education that's going on inside those walls is  
11 serious.

12 The zip code of 20019 needs to be  
13 supported by leveling the playing field. What goes  
14 on west of the park should go on in the east end.  
15 I'd like to disrupt the current model of mental  
16 health in the city, in the schools. EMOfree.com is  
17 where I'd like people to take a look at. EMO - E-m-o  
18 free.com -- I have no money, no ties or anything to  
19 that, it's just something that I'm studying now.

20 I'd like to level the playing field again  
21 by incorporating your published strategic priorities  
22 within the school system and in addition to that, not

1 only every student, every school, every day, but  
2 every child who is benefitting from education in this  
3 city -- that means children who are being educated in  
4 schools outside of DCPS or the publicly funded  
5 charter schools.

6 We have children who DC is paying for --  
7 I'd like to see that model through the case manager's  
8 transferred your philosophy to those schools where  
9 our children attend. The STEM feeder school, Kimball  
10 of course and then the middle school -- we don't  
11 have one. I think Kelly Miller would be great.

12 Miss Stafford is doing a fantastic job of  
13 leading her flock and our children and we're getting  
14 a farm there. So I'm going to tie everyone up now.  
15 I'd like to see all of your goals and your priorities  
16 funded fully by the City Council, I'm going to ask  
17 for that and I think we need to take it to the next  
18 level now, thank you.

19 MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you. We're going to  
20 take a quick five minute break and if there's others  
21 who would like to testify, if you can come up I'll  
22 take down your names and we'll resume in a few

1 minutes with those names, okay, thanks.

2 (Whereupon a brief recess was taken to reconvene this  
3 same day.)

4 MS. KEN: Hi, thank you so much for taking  
5 a little extra time. My name is Ivy Ken. I'm the  
6 parent of Idris and another child here at Stuart  
7 Hobson. I was going to testify to ask you to fire  
8 Sodexo but instead because Idris is here tonight I  
9 want to encourage you to sink a whole bunch of money  
10 into the program FoodPrints.

11 Idris is a third grader at Tyler  
12 Elementary -- oh sorry, Idris is a third grader at  
13 Tyler Elementary where they have had the FoodPrints  
14 Program for a number of years and he wants to tell  
15 you a little bit about what he likes about the  
16 program and why he thinks it's important.

17 MR. IDRIS KEN: Um, I want to testify for  
18 FoodPrints because it's good and I don't like Sodexo  
19 lunch. I think it's not good. Some of my favorite  
20 recipes are the ABC salad and the beet salad and  
21 today we made chick pea curry and food.

22 MS. KEN: He tells me every time he comes

1 home from FoodPrints that he loves their recipes  
2 which include beet salads and chick pea curry as you  
3 heard and I know that if we can fund them at a higher  
4 level they may be able to scale up and include more  
5 recipes in the lunches for schools.

6 And there's a great deal of research that  
7 shows that if students get to participate in the  
8 growing of food, get better nutrition education and  
9 then actually participate in the making of food like  
10 they do at FoodPrints, they're much more likely to  
11 eat healthy food.

12 So based on the success we have seen about  
13 the program at Tyler, we would love you to fund it at  
14 higher levels. Thank you.

15 MS. GOODBAND: Thank you, Ms. Bondgeld?

16 MS. BONDGELD: Good evening and thank you  
17 for allowing me to slip in even though I wasn't  
18 signed up, I do appreciate that.

19 My name is Iris Bondgeld and I'm a parent  
20 at J.O. Wilson Elementary School. My daughters are  
21 in third and fourth grade, they're excellent  
22 students. They're creative, smart, well-rounded and

1 up until this year they loved school.

2 Elementary schools used to be places where  
3 students could discover what they were good at,  
4 explore the subjects that appealed to them or maybe  
5 just be content with enjoying school.

6 As I think about our effectiveness in  
7 implementing the FY '18 budget and planning for the  
8 FY '19 budget, we need to make sure that every school  
9 is getting the support they need in implementing the  
10 Chancellor's strategic plan and insuring that all  
11 schools have a well-rounded education.

12 In what I assume in an effort to raise  
13 test scores at our school, the school has narrowed  
14 the curriculum and has all but replaced social  
15 studies and science with the daily reading  
16 intervention period.

17 So in a day our children go to ELA, math  
18 in a 90 minute period, 60 of which is focused on  
19 reading intervention strategies including phonics  
20 instruction -- this is for fourth and fifth grade  
21 with the remaining 30 minutes somehow maybe split  
22 between science and social studies.

1           This is unacceptable for so many reasons  
2           so let me just say a few. For students who are not  
3           struggling readers, our focus on basic reading  
4           interventions is meaningless. And for students who  
5           are at this age they likely need more time and  
6           intensive interventions that they will not get in  
7           this whole classroom approach.

8           Research shows that learning content helps  
9           students become better readers. It builds their  
10          vocabulary and background knowledge, two things  
11          absolutely critical to raising their comprehension  
12          skills.

13          And taking away time from social studies  
14          and science in some schools is an equity issue. High  
15          poverty schools across the nation have narrowed the  
16          curriculum much more drastically than wealthier  
17          schools with the worst consequences for low income  
18          students.

19          Eliminating these core subjects prevents  
20          my kids from having time to build connections, dig in  
21          deeper to areas that interest them and practice  
22          important 21st Century skills like problem solving

1 and critical thinking and self-discovery.

2           This practice and the results of narrowly  
3 focusing on math and reading to the exclusion of  
4 social studies and science is not in line with your  
5 core values of equity and excellence and teaching the  
6 whole child with the well-rounded education. This  
7 practice is stripping the very kids who need it most  
8 from gaining the kinds of thinking and learning  
9 skills that will equip them for middle school and  
10 beyond and it also strips them from the joy of  
11 learning.

12           When my kids come home and won't read  
13 because that's all they do at school or they ask me  
14 why they can't do science or other cool projects like  
15 their friends in other schools -- that is actually  
16 inequity.

17           My kids and all kids deserve to be exposed  
18 to the full breath of DCPS's core curriculum. Having  
19 looked at the social studies curriculum for fourth  
20 grade it's amazing and it's exciting. It's not only  
21 -- it's not okay that schools are choosing not to  
22 teach it and to narrowly focus on baseline reading



1 interventions.

2 Our school administrator essentially told  
3 us that our kids just won't get social studies and  
4 science this year and again that's just not okay,  
5 it's not good enough. This is not meeting the  
6 strategic priorities that you guys have set out. We  
7 need a team from DCPS to help us refocus our  
8 instruction on educating the whole child while  
9 promoting equity across all DCPS schools with  
10 programing that supports the success for all  
11 students.

12 We need DCPS to support our schools in  
13 creating a well-rounded curriculum and we need DCPS  
14 leadership to insist that this is a priority in the  
15 FY '19 budget and in implementation in all schools,  
16 thank you.

17 MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you, did we miss  
18 anyone? I heard a yes. If you could just give us  
19 your name when you begin that'd be great.

20 MS. SANDERS: No problem, good evening  
21 everyone. My name is Jemel Sanders. I'm a Ward 7,  
22 Deanwood neighborhood specifically resident. Our

1 daughter goes to Houston Elementary.

2 I first want to thank the Chancellor for  
3 the initiatives that you're supporting throughout the  
4 city. We're really excited about the new direction.  
5 We're also thrilled that Houston has the first dual  
6 language program in Ward 7. It's becoming a daily  
7 occurrence to really hear not just the pre-K 3 and 4  
8 classes embrace the program but also to hear the  
9 Kindergarteners also picking up Spanish as well.

10 The Houston Elementary community believes  
11 strongly in the new program and wants to insure that  
12 our children are able to continue attending a middle  
13 school that is also committed to having a  
14 high-quality bilingual education curriculum.  
15 McFarland Middle School is just too far for our  
16 children to commute day to day.

17 Houston students would be better served if  
18 the school was converted to an education campus. I  
19 think we can all agree that much of Oyster-Adam's  
20 success is due to the fact that it's education kids  
21 from pre-K all the way through 8th grade.

22 We want the same opportunities for our

1 children. We are right now in the planning phase in  
2 our modernization and really now is the time to make  
3 the decision to make that commitment to our kids.

4 With the adoption of the next generation  
5 science standards, we also have an opportunity to be  
6 very deliberate and innovative in implementing a  
7 smart STEAM program from pre-K through high school.

8 We would like funding and support for  
9 Houston Elementary and UDC causes to partner on a  
10 STEAM curriculum program with the focus on  
11 agriculture, hydroponics, aquaponics. Our Principal,  
12 Principal Seward, has been working closely with Dr.  
13 Sabine O'Hara, the Dean of UDC causes about the  
14 possibility of this partnership and how it would look  
15 like.

16 We are requesting along with the support,  
17 also a premium education greenhouse and  
18 infrastructure to provide power and water to the  
19 facility. We're also asking for funding for an  
20 indoor hydroponics, aquaponics system.

21 We are also asking for an upgrade in  
22 technology. Currently our teachers are having to

1 make daily decisions in terms of which students can  
2 utilize tablets and laptops and it's just  
3 ineffective in terms of -- also inefficient on the  
4 day-to-day.

5           And my final request is funding for  
6 sensory motor tools to assist with self-regulation.  
7 Many of our kids have sensory needs and seek to  
8 alleviate through scratching, biting, et cetera.

9           Our autism teachers and special education  
10 teachers and other therapists really work hard to  
11 insure that our kids learn how to manage their  
12 feelings and feel secure within their bodies and  
13 we're looking for additional funding to pay for these  
14 items. Thank you very much.

15           MS. GOLDBAND: Thank you. Thank you all  
16 for coming out this evening. Once again I just want  
17 to remind you of some upcoming opportunities to get  
18 involved at your schools. We also have an additional  
19 -- we have a parent forum coming up on December  
20 12th. You can find more information about that on  
21 our website.

22           Again the data center is available to you

1 with lots of data and resources and we encourage you  
2 to work with your LSAT if you're not already a member  
3 of that group. If you can make sure you drop off  
4 your written testimony with the table at the back if  
5 you haven't already done so, we'll make sure we get  
6 it on the record.

7 And thank you all again very much for  
8 coming out tonight, we really appreciate it.  
9 (Whereupon the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.)

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A</b></p> <p><b>ABA</b> 81:11 <b>ABC</b> 91:20 <b>Abigail</b> 80:10 82:5 <b>ability</b> 5:3 8:19,19 70:6,18 75:16 87:9 <b>able</b> 7:8,9 9:9 18:19 27:6 29:4 30:17 62:3 71:21 77:4,8 78:10 83:19 86:4 86:15,16,22 92:4 97:12 <b>absence</b> 47:7 <b>absolutely</b> 94:11 <b>academic</b> 3:10 7:3,4 18:16 24:18 25:5 39:14 62:16 <b>academically</b> 18:20 25:13 <b>academy</b> 33:2 85:17 <b>accelerate</b> 7:21 8:6 8:13 <b>accelerated</b> 5:22 <b>accelerating</b> 8:4 <b>access</b> 23:17 76:20 <b>accommodate</b> 17:4 17:7 73:6 75:9 <b>accomplish</b> 37:14 <b>accountability</b> 10:6 57:13 <b>accountable</b> 22:11 82:22 <b>accuracy</b> 67:2 <b>accurate</b> 51:3 <b>achieve</b> 20:19 31:6 64:5 69:5 <b>achieved</b> 71:5 <b>achievement</b> 5:14 25:15 27:16 40:3 51:17 73:1 <b>achieving</b> 5:18 <b>acknowledges</b> 21:17 <b>acquisition</b> 88:9 <b>act</b> 36:11 84:16 <b>acting</b> 11:11 <b>action</b> 35:22 <b>actions</b> 55:15 84:13 <b>activated</b> 87:22 <b>active</b> 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**B**

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