

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR FOR EDUCATION**



FY 2023 Budget Oversight Hearing

Testimony of Paul Kihn, Deputy Mayor for Education

Before the
Council of the District of Columbia
Committee of the Whole
The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairman

March 30, 2022
Live via the Zoom Platform

Good morning Chairman Mendelson, members of the Committee of the Whole, staff, and members of the public. My name is Paul Kihn, and I am honored to serve as the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) for the District of Columbia. Thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's Budget Oversight Hearing.

The DME is proud to help shepherd Mayor Bowser's vision for recovery and for a reimagined education and workforce system that more successfully and equitably meets the needs of residents. Our vision is that all students and families have high-quality neighborhood schools alongside strong, citywide options that meet their educational needs, and that learners are safe, supported, joyful, and prepared for life. My team and I oversee and support partner agencies within our cluster; drive meaningful coordination and collaboration across government, non-profit and employer organizations; and engage with community – something we hope to deepen through an investment in Fiscal Year 2023 (FY 23) - to ensure that our budget priorities advance our vision and that funds are spent effectively to the benefit of residents.

Mayor Bowser's FY 23 budget makes a historic investment in public education, bringing total funding for schools to \$2.2 billion – the highest level in the District's history, and well above the funding level in peer cities.

This unprecedented investment in public education includes a record increase of 5.9% in the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF) as well as a recovery fund for DCPS and charter schools of \$18 million in FY 23. This investment allows schools to address recovery priorities and plan for the future in a way that meet the needs of their students, staff, and communities. In short, the Mayor's more than 10% overall increase in public education funding allows us to continue our relentless focus on school quality, greater equity, and improved access to high-demand programs for all learners.

Above and beyond the historic influx of resources to our schools, the Mayor's FY 23 budget responds to the immediate needs of the recovery and doubles down on core investments, to address the additional needs of our learners and our education system that continue as a result of COVID-19. As a reminder, our recovery vision is centered around three priority areas, developed as a result of agency input and feedback from parents, students, teachers, community members, practitioners, and advocates from all eight wards. The three priority areas are 1) strengthening and stabilizing early childhood education; 2) accelerating learning for all our students, K-12; and 3) driving an inclusive jobs recovery.

I will use the remainder of my testimony to share some highlights of the Mayor's budget proposal for both our education and workforce systems, starting with schools.

Equity. The FY 23 budget is an equity budget. We have made a historic \$2.2 billion investment in our public education system, and we are making strategic, citywide investments in students and areas that need the most resources. This includes our citywide investments in school-based mental health, out of school time, youth safety, and core recreation for students with limited access. More than 25% of our public school dollars are going specifically to support English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and at-risk students. Moreover, we are extremely proud that the revised DCPS budget model, included in the FY 23 budget, prioritizes equity,

directing resources towards students who need them most. There has been a lot of discussion of this new budget model, and I want to set the record straight. On average, DCPS schools are receiving a 7% increase to their budgets, and 20% of schools are seeing increases of over 10% compared to FY 22. Schools with increases of over 10% are generally those campuses serving a majority of students designated as at-risk. Our schools in Ward 7 and 8, and our schools with over 70% at-risk students, are receiving over \$20,000 per student, well above the funding level in vast majority of school systems across the nation. We are very excited about this positive step forward in DCPS' budgeting process, and we are confident that the revised budget model, coupled with the historic investment in education, is an approach that will advance equity and student success.

Stability. The \$2.2 billion investment across our public education system allows all our schools to stabilize in and through the recovery period. At DCPS, the revised budget model includes flexible funding that school leaders can target to meet their school communities' needs. Schools are using funds to expand student support teams, partner with community-based organizations and arts institutions, and invest in data. At the same time, thanks to the Mayor's Pandemic Transition Fund, no DCPS school will receive less funding in the city's budget than they did last year, based on their submitted local budgets, available on the DCPS website. For charter schools, the Mayor's pandemic transition fund provides LEAs the flexibility and stability to address pandemic-related costs and additional needs of students and staff.

Teachers. Teachers are the bedrock of our schools, and we know how challenging the pandemic has been for them. This budget seeks to address teacher needs and support retention in two primary ways. First, we seek to improve daily working conditions for teachers by adding resources and staff to schools – from mental health professions to safe passage workers – to ensure that teachers can focus on their core role in their classrooms. Secondly, we know the importance of recognizing teachers' work through compensation; the record influx of funds to LEAs allows them to increase compensation. DCPS, our largest LEA, is in the process of negotiating a revised WTU contract. At the same time, we are working to implement a daily substitute teacher pay increase to \$20/hour and long-term rates to \$25/hour. We believe that strengthening the work environment and increasing compensation, coupled with LEA discretion to support their teacher communities in creative, tailored ways, will allow us to maintain our high teacher retention rates.

Youth Safety and Well-Being. This budget responds to calls for more support for health and safety, with \$3.9 million for the school-based mental health program, to hire 50 additional behavioral health specialists and strengthen the workforce pipeline; a \$4.5 million investment in the school nursing program; and a \$9.5 million investment in over 100 new crossing guards for schools. These are investments we have heard residents ask for repeatedly, and we are grateful to be in a position to provide these resources to our children, parents, and school communities. The budget also focuses on young people most at risk of disengaging, including through \$3.9 million in core recreation activities for students in neighborhoods with limited access. We are also glad to have over 170 Safe Passage, Safe Blocks workers already on the ground supporting youth safety.

Learning Acceleration. With our already-budgeted funding that our FY 23 budget sustains,

thousands of young people are getting access to high-impact tutoring. In addition, the FY 23 budget includes \$6 million to sustain our SYEP Earn and Learn program, to address learning loss and support learning acceleration and work-based-learning opportunities over the summer, alongside Boost Camps and Acceleration Academies. We are confident that these citywide investments, our relentless focus on keeping schools open, and targeted school-led initiatives will yield results for students in SY 2022-23 and the years to come.

Reimagining Youth Engagement and Development. Beyond recovery, the Mayor’s FY 23 budget lays the foundation for a reimagined system that is more equitable, engaging, and successful in preparing students for life. We know that too many students are currently under-engaged in school and youth development opportunities. That is why Mayor Bowser is making a major investment in youth development and out of school activities. This budget sustains the \$5 million increase in Out of School Time to serve nearly 1,700 additional students, and establishes a signature \$13 million “Recreation for A.L.L” initiative to increase access to recreation, including summer camp, pool access and swim classes, and girls sports for over 14,000 students in total. We are changing students’ experience in school as well, through our reimagine high school work, with the expansion of tuition-free dual enrollment college courses, school-year internships, the Advanced Technical Center, opening next school year, and a \$35 million investment in the Winston Building to create a citywide, cross-sector facility that offers state of the art lab and career and technical education programming.

Facilities. The Mayor’s FY 23 budget includes significant investments in school facilities to strengthen learning environments across the city, recognizing the additional needs that have arisen from the pandemic and those that have been elevated by school communities this year. For charter schools, the budget includes a 2.2% increase to the charter school facilities allotment, bringing the total charter schools facilities payment to \$3,483; this increase is in advance of the planned 3.1% increase starting in FY 24. For DCPS schools, the facility investments for the Department of General Services (DGS) include \$43.6 million for HVAC and boiler replacements and \$15 million in preventative maintenance at DCPS facilities. These investments respond to school community requests and will yield important improvements to District assets. In addition, four DCPS schools (Simon, Hendley, Bunker Hill, and Langley) are slated for full modernization in the coming years. These resources, coupled with process improvements, such as DGS’ new public HVAC dashboard, will address the needs of our school communities so leadership and staff can fully focus on student learning and development. We are also glad to see an ongoing investment in technology, including 1,500 smart boards in the DCPS capital budget.

Careful School Planning. On top of this, the FY 23 budget includes a new high school on MacArthur Boulevard and a standalone middle school in Center City, strengthening feeder patterns and by right neighborhood schools, while also allowing for citywide access.

Early Childhood Education. Finally, we continue to invest in early childhood education, to support our youngest learners, improve early literacy, and provide critical child care for working families. We are glad to add 1,000 infant and toddler seats by the end of FY 23 with \$5 million for Access to Quality grants, and to provide our early childcare educators with retention bonuses and scholarship opportunities to earn their credentials, alongside \$73 million for the Pay Equity Fund for early childhood educators.

Inclusive Jobs Recovery. On the workforce side, we have doubled down in vital areas identified in recovery, around connecting residents and employers, creating opportunities for residents to learn at work, moving towards more employer-led training, and driving a surge in high-impact credentialing,

Illustrating this, our ongoing \$12.7 million investment in DC Futures allows residents to earn tuition-free degrees in high-demand fields after high school graduation. We will have 50 career coaches supporting over 5,000 residents to find employment, and we are increasing participant wages across SYEP, Project Empowerment, the DC Infrastructure Academy, and DC Career Connections.

In summary, Mayor Bowser's FY 23 Fair Shot Budget allows us to respond to immediate needs of recovery, and simultaneously re-imagine our system to be more equitable and effective for students and residents. This is a historic investment in public education that will reap benefits for future generations of Washingtonians.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to your questions.