



FEDERAL CITY
COUNCIL

Testimony of Abe Clayman

Director of Education Initiatives
Federal City Council

Committee of the Whole

Chairman Phil Mendelson

Budget Oversight Hearing on the District's Education Agencies

March 28th, 2022

Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee of the Whole,

My name is Abe Clayman, I'm a Ward 4 resident, and I work at the Federal City Council on education initiatives. The Federal City Council is a business-led, non-profit, civic organization dedicated to the improvement of the District of Columbia. The Federal City Council was founded in 1954 to harness the resources and creativity of the public, philanthropic, and private sectors to address the District's biggest problems. Vibrant and growing cities need successful education systems. With that goal in mind, we support the historic investments that Mayor Bowser included in this budget for our city's students.

And let me clear, these investments are historic. In this proposed budget, next year, the District will fund **\$400 million of new investments** in student learning, career and technical education, school-based mental health programming, HVAC upgrades, and school modernizations. This increase in funding is necessary to help our students and communities recover from the pandemic.

This budget also will drive resources to students with the most need. Under DCPS's new budget model, dollars from the supplemental at-risk weight are apportioned more directly to schools with the most students designated at-risk. Additionally, this budget allocates new funding to public charter schools for facilities. As small nonprofits, public charter schools use these critical dollars to fund facilities projects, expand classroom space, and replace HVAC systems. We urge the Council to preserve these investments and ensure that our students and schools receive the resources they deserve.

These are challenging times for school districts across the country. Unlike many other districts, Washington, DC is investing in schools, stabilizing funding for schools experiencing enrollment declines, and investing in our students' success. Some members of this Council have said that the education budget is a meaningless number. This is false. Looking at school districts around the country, we can see that the District is leading the way by doubling down on education investments and avoiding painful enrollment and funding cuts. I have a few examples to share.

- Albuquerque, New Mexico is a school district with a similar number of students, overwhelmingly made up of schools that receive Title I funding, and with similar high school graduation rates.¹ Since 2015, their enrollment has declined about 15% and in FY 23 they are expecting an overall budget cut of 2%.²
- New York City is the largest public school district in the country. For next school year, Mayor Adams is proposing a 3% cut to education spending.³
- In Chicago, enrollment declined 3% last year and the school system expects 40% of its schools to face budget cuts.⁴

Throughout the country, districts are facing painful decisions about what to cut and where. In the District, this budget proposes a historic and welcome increase in education funding. This Council should support this investment in the District's children and pass this budget. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I'm happy to answer any questions.

¹<https://www.aps.edu/about-us/aps-at-a-glance>

²<https://www.aps.edu/about-us/administration/superintendent/superintendents-news/budget-overview>

³<https://gothamist.com/news/in-his-first-budget-adams-unveils-radically-practical-985b-spending-plan>

⁴<https://www.wbez.org/stories/forty-percent-of-cps-schools-to-see-budget-cuts-amid-enrollment-declines/1818ba34-661f-43cf-9201-ba17e9d52143>