



**Testimony of Abe Clayman**  
Director of Education Initiatives  
Federal City Council

**Committee of the Whole**  
Chairman Phil Mendelson

**Public Hearing on the “Schools First in Budgeting Amendment Act of 2021”**  
September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022

The Federal City Council (FC2) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization dedicated to the advancement of civic life in the nation’s capital. For more than 20 years, FC2 trustees have served as trusted partners for education improvement, working closely with local and federal stakeholders to ensure all students, regardless of where they live, are graduating from high school prepared for college, career, and life. In 2021, the FC2 created an Education Facilities Center to ensure that all students have access to high-quality school facilities and that high-performing public charter schools can meet their facilities needs for the benefit of DC students. We applaud Mayor Bowser, Chairman Mendelson, and the Council for passing a budget with historic investments in education for Fiscal Year 2023.

We support a robust public educational ecosystem that provides both neighborhood schools of right and options for students such as selective high schools and charter schools. For the system to be successful, parents must have enough information to make informed choices about their student’s education. Parents expect that year-to-year changes to a school’s offerings are generally reasonable in scope and not excessive. It is important that the District uphold stability as one important value among many when crafting an educational budget.

The bill as drafted may have unintended consequences that could make it harder for students to succeed.

- The bill may cause DCPS to cut its central office staff, potentially making it harder for the system to support teachers and schools with human resources, health, and other needs.
- The bill may create a steeper fiscal cliff for schools by including one-time federal funds in schools’ baseline budgets. These funds will be unavailable after Fiscal Year 2024 and they will need to be replaced by local funds, a potentially large fiscal impact that would take away from other potential future school system needs.
- The bill may require DCPS to expend substantial new resources toward schools that experience enrollment declines instead of directing resources at schools that see enrollment increases. Between SY 2020-2021 and SY 2021-2022, 85 DCPS schools saw enrollment declines. Overall, those schools lost 2,233 students. The system gained 99 students overall and 31 schools saw enrollment increases. So, under this bill, in addition to funding schools that saw enrollment increases, DCPS would also need to direct funding to schools for the 2,233 students that left in that year. This funding would decrease the resources available for schools that experienced enrollment increases or for Central Office. There are multiple methods of calculating enrollment changes each year and we welcome further conversation about how this legislation would require DCPS to make this critical calculation.

Thank you for working to bring improvements to the District’s educational ecosystem and for holding multiple hearings on the proposed legislation.