

Education Agencies
Budget Oversight Hearing Testimony Committee of the Whole
Monday, March 28, 2022

To: Committee of the Whole, Chairman Mendelson, Committee of the Whole Members, and Committee of the Whole Staff

From: Yvette Selby, Ward 5 PAVE Citywide PLE Board Member

Date: March 28, 2022

Good afternoon Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee of the Whole. My name is Yvette Selby and I am a proud parent of 11th grade twins that attend Capital City PCS in Ward 4 and McKinley Tech High School in Ward 5 and I also serve with Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE) on the Citywide and Ward 5 Parent Leader Boards.

Thank you to the Mayor for proposing \$15.3 M in increases for OST grants and programs, DPR and SYEP. Those are important investments! I am testifying today because dedicated funding for schools for before/after school, summer, and winter programs should become a priority for all district children. OST programs play a critical role in providing a safe, structured environment for children. Educational enrichment programs also promote positive benefits such as improved academic, social/emotional, and health and wellness outcomes. My son is a perfect example of the benefits of OST enrichment programs. I have testified in the past about my son's exposure to robotics in a community-based STEM OST. His robotics team participated in several competitions and they were able to compete at the Worlds competition against teams from Romania, Liberia, and other teams across the US. As part of the program, he learned not just to build robots but also about coding, measurement, project management, teamwork, problem-solving and strategic thinking, and academically he went from being a B student to a straight A student who wants to become a mechanical engineer and entrepreneur.

Educational equity is essentially giving every single student the tools they need to succeed and thrive. OST enrichment programs can level the playing field and help to close the achievement gap between lower and higher income students. That is why it is so important that the dedicated funding be differentiated based on the number of students, student need, grade level, etc. It should also include a redesign of the cost structure and requirements for vouchers and financial aid for students in need, and provide financial incentives for school teachers who are leading OST programs so they have the resources and are compensated for their time. OST programs have to be quality and accessible, therefore a strategic plan with families, educators, OST providers and community partners to ensure access to in-demand programs for all kids should be priority. This plan should define what a high-quality OST program looks like and metrics for evaluation, and include an updated needs assessment to identify existing program gaps/needs, and looking at both location and program type, as well as other factors described in our parent statement of beliefs. Ultimately, the strategic plan should be used to inform allocation of funding and resources and other policies needed to expand access to OST.

I'm concerned that if we continue to underfund schools and do not aggressively support academic development and enrichment for our students, they will not be in a position to succeed in our global society. Every year we have to push our leaders to make educating our Black and Brown students a priority. Every child in DC deserves to have equitable educational enrichment programs to help them learn and grow. Let's work together to make that a reality. Thank you for allowing me to testify and share what I want to see for our kids and our District.

Yvette Selby

Ward 5 Citywide PLE Board Member