

**Budget Oversight Hearing Testimony
Committee of the Whole
Friday April 8, 2022**

To: Committee of the Whole, Chairman Mendelson, Committee of the Whole members, and Committee of the Whole staff

From: Takiyah Worthy, Ward 7 PAVE PLE Board Member

Date: April 8th , 2022

Good morning Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee of the Whole. My name is Takiyah Worthy and my children attend AppleTree Early Learning PCS - Oklahoma Ave and Elsie Whitlow Stokes PCS. I also serve with Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE) on the Ward 7 PLE Board.

Thank you to the Mayor for investing \$15.3 million Out-of-School Time programs, including:

- **\$5M** in one-time, local funds to extend out-of-school time grant opportunities
- **\$3.9M** to expand out-of-school-time recreation programs provided by DPR and community-based organizations
- **\$6.4M** to extend the Marion S. Barry Summer Youth Employment Program with an increase of 4,200 additional slots

These are important investments, but we need the city to have a plan of how to use that money well to serve families who need it. We can make sure that funding will be equitably distributed by creating a strategic plan with families, educators, OST providers and community partners to ensure access to in-demand programs for all kids. This plan should include an up-to-date needs assessment and community engagement around OST programs.

I have a son in 2nd grade and when I pick him up from school at the end of the day he is bursting at the seams to release energy, so much so that he literally runs the entire two blocks home. I have found opportunities to channel his energy in OST programs, but almost all of them require me to travel outside my Ward. Options for DPR are very limited, and other options I see on my drive across the city to take him to programs are often limited to children who attend those schools or have a high cost for private programs. That hour-long commute is burning both me and my son out - I'd rather him spend that time on academics.

This needs assessment is important because it will give the city the hard data to back up what parents already know. When it comes to OST after-school options East of the River, our kids are missing out! We deserve a diversity of high-quality programs and the way we get to this is by being honest about what we have and what we don't have. By developing a strategic plan where we include parents, OST providers, and students themselves in the process of deciding what types of programs should be offered. We must include these voices in the decision making process because the people using and providing these programs are the real experts who know what is needed.

I want all kids to have access to great programs, regardless of ward or background. Thank you for allowing me to testify and share what I want to see for our kids and our District.

Takiyah Worthy

Ward 7 PLE Board Member