

Yvette Selby
All Education Agencies
Performance Oversight Hearing Testimony
Committee of the Whole
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Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee of the Whole. My name is Yvette Selby, and I am a proud parent of 12th grade twins that attend Capital City High School 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.

First, thank you for \$13M in additional funding for OST Programs, a needs assessment to inform OST Office's Strategic Plan, \$3.8M in additional funding for the SBMH program, \$2.4M to increase grant sizes for CBO providers, \$150K for a comprehensive cost study to determine the true cost of the SBMH program now and in the future. Those are important investments! I am testifying today because dedicated funding for schools for before/after school, summer, and winter/spring 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 a 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/C student in middle school to a straight A student in high school who wants to become a mechanical engineer and entrepreneur. My daughter has also

benefitted from community-based OST programs at the YWCA and access to these programs sparked her interest in animal science and she is now going to choose a career as a veterinarian. My kids attended these programs at a crucial time in their development – when they were in middle school. At that time there were some but not many OST programs afterschool and or summer camps for 6 -8 graders. We were fortunate in that I was able to find quality programs that I could afford, and I supplemented their enrichment by having them attend CBO programs such as National Society of Black Engineers pre-college programs.

Data shows that proficiency scores in math and reading have gone down since the pandemic, and while that is not a surprise, scores for certain populations were low before the pandemic. Research indicates that struggling readers are more likely than proficient readers to have long-term negative outcomes. Hernandez (2011) found that children who scored low on literacy tests in third grade were four times less likely to finish high school by age 19 than higher-scoring peers. Out-of-school time (OST) programs can play an important role in fostering the development of literacy skills among children and youth (Rasco et al., 2013). According to the Afterschool Alliance research suggests that OST programs can help build reading skills and that summer learning programs can strengthen reading skills in ways that carry over to school days (McCombs et al., 2020). In addition to increased positive social behaviors, bonding to school and higher levels of academic achievement, participants of OST programs show increased positive self-perception as well as a reduction in risky behavior, depression and delinquency - leading to better personal outcomes in school and life.

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 improve and expand access to scholarships, vouchers, and financial aid, and

provide financial incentives for school teachers who are leading OST programs, so they have the resources and are compensated for their time.

We need to increase access to OST programs by making sure families have get into quality programs in convenient locations that meet their needs by providing targeted resources; adding OST seats close to where families already are (e.g., schools, recreation centers, libraries) that can support their needs (SPED support, staff training), and include these programs in Safe Passage expansion plans.

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, and not a **trade-off**. 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

References:

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