

**Ana Rodriguez**  
**Education Agencies**  
**FY24 Budget Oversight Hearing Testimony**  
**Wednesday, April 5, 2023**

**To:** Committee of the Whole, Chairman Phil Mendelson, Committee of the Whole chair, and Committee of the Whole staff.

**From:** Ana Rodriguez

**Date:** April 5, 2023

Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee of the Whole.

My name is Ana Rodriguez, and I am a proud parent of an 8th grader that attends Brookland Middle School in Ward 5 and I also serve with Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE) on the Citywide and Ward 5 Parent Leaderboards.

First, I add like to thank the Mayor for \$17 million in continued investment in grants for OST Programs, including earmarking \$2.5 M for students with disabilities, \$5M to begin planning and implementing “My Afterschool DC,” and \$3M to support inclusive DPR Summer Plus recreation activities and accelerated learning opportunities, and for the 5.05% increase in the UPSFF. Those are important investments!

I'm testifying today about funding and implementation of high impact tutoring. How are these programs being administered or not even equitable? This concerns me as a parent because it's not being implemented consistently for all schools and for all kids. Where does that accountability fall?

For example, I received a call from school telling me to prepare my daughter's PARCC test. However, I know that it was brought to my attention that some students were selected to go to the breeze camp, which is a Saturday school focused on training for the PARCC test. The math teacher by envelope only invited students from a certain cohort that had been tested at the beginning of the year and these were for the smarter students? My daughter came to the school and was not tested and she's in a different cohort. However, she struggles with math, so I went to the school and mentioned this to the principal, and asked - why were only certain kids invited and how did they get selected? What was the criteria or how did they come up with the list of those students? I wanted my daughter added because again she is behind in math. He answered that it was posted on class dojo on the day before with only a short window to sign up. However, you know that certain kids were already selected, limiting access to students and parents who also need it. Because I asked, he added my daughter to the program. Going through this process,

I realized that if I had not asked, my daughter wouldn't have had access to this beneficial program. Other parents may be missing out on important academic support due to lack of awareness and access.

I was able to after talking to the principal. I was able to get my daughter in on the Saturday program. However, you know high impact tutoring money is supposed to be available to assist students with their learning. Because of the known covid-19 issues, some kids are behind and have been behind for over 2 years and we need to ensure that all students and parents are aware of these services for our kids so they are not blindsided and that our kids have access to these programs. How much sense does it mean to only support students who already have potentially achieved grade level or grade level proficiency? You may need additional help such as those with IEPs and 504.

The issue is how they are signing up for some of these classes. There's no communication on whether or not they've been accepted. For example, I'm still waiting for a summer class in Algebra 1. I'm still waiting to see if she is selected. I'm a middle-class parent but even I struggle to get access to something that has been paid for and does not have to come out of our personal pockets. As a city we need to get better with communication but it's unfortunate certain people get the information. This needs to stop. Every family should have access to high-quality programs whether during the day or after school. For me this is crucial because my daughter's 13 years old. In 7th grade and this has really affected her school choice for high school.

How do we close this gap? How do we get back the time that we lost? How can our students make up for all these red lines that don't make sense when we already lost two years of learning?

Best,

Ana Rodriguez

Citywide and Ward 5 PLE Board member

