



**Yvette Selby**  
**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:** Yvette Selby

**Date:** April 5, 2023

Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee of the Whole. My name is Yvette Selby, and I am a proud parent of 12<sup>th</sup> 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.

I am testifying today because dedicated funding for schools for before/after school, summer, and winter/spring programs should be a priority for all district children not in this year but also in the years to come. 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, remote control car building 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. Just recently, his electrical vehicle (EV) team participated in an International EV Grand Prix race in Abu Dhabi. As part of his programs, he learned not just to build robots/EV cars but also about coding, measurement, project management, leadership, 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 benefited from community-based summer camps at the YWCA and Virginia State University Ag Discovery Program. 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 after school 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 was able to supplement their enrichment by having them participate in programs sponsored by National Society of Black Engineers on the weekends.

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. 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.

I'm concerned that in the future if we discontinue our investment in schools and do not aggressively and consistently 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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