

SAMPLE
Previous Testimony in Front of DC Council

Expanded Learning- Out of School Time

Ramina Davidson
Director of Housing Stability & Youth Initiatives, The DC Alliance of Youth Advocates
Committee on Education & Committee of the Whole Performance and Oversight Hearing:
Deputy Mayor for Education
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Good morning, Chairperson Mendelson, Chairperson Grosso, Councilmembers, and staff. My name is Ramina Davidson, and I am here in my capacity as the Director of Housing Stability & Youth Initiatives at the DC Alliance of Youth Advocates. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the Mayor's proposed budget for the Deputy Mayor for Education.

Today, I would like to offer recommendations on the budget of the Office of Out of School Time Grants and Youth Outcomes ("OST Office") and also address the continued transportation difficulties students have in getting to and from school and extracurriculars.

We Recommend a Restoration of the \$399,000 the Administration Proposes to Cut

On the OST Office, I would first like to thank you, Chairperson Grosso, the Committee on Education, and the various Committees that not only preserved Mayoral investment but secured a historic funding increase in FY19 to support providing Out of School Time programming for DC youth--especially those youth considered "at-risk."¹ This programming is especially important as we work to close the achievement gap.

With respect to the administration's current proposed budget, we would like to thank the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor for making much of the one-time FY19 investment in the OST Office recurring in FY20, ensuring more stabilization in grant-making. However, we are concerned about the proposed cut of almost \$400,000 to the Office.

We understand that part of the proposed cut is a reduction to the Institute for Youth Development at UDC-CC to make funding "more realistic of actual costs needed to support OST across the District."² However, most of the proposed cut would reduce the slots for OST programming "available by about 86 slots." That's the equivalent of four classrooms of students

¹ Fair Student Funding and School – Based Budgeting Amendment Act of 2013 Section 4 (a) (2A) "At-risk" means a DCPS student or a public charter school student who is identified as one or more of the following: (A) Homeless; (B) In the District's foster care system; (C) Qualifies for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; or (D) A high school student that is one year older, or more, than the expected age for the grade in which the student is enrolled.

² Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, *FY20 Budget Oversight Questions*, Answer to question 4a p 6, April 22, 2019.

losing access to OST programming. Numerous studies show that OST programming is vital for student success.³ Quality OST programs are more than just daycare services. These programs show positive impacts on young people's academic performance, participation in school, social and emotional development, and overall health. Further, these programs keep children safe and prepare them for the workforce. Therefore, we recommend that Council restore the almost \$400,000 that the administration proposes to cut and ensure the entirety of it be used for grant-making, not only saving the 86 slots but adding about 56 more.

As we look ahead to future budget cycles, we would like to note that data-sharing between the OST Office and Office of the State Superintendent of Education ("OSSE") is critical to determine how many "at-risk" students are receiving out of school time programming. Knowing how many "at-risk" students are receiving programming is vital to better target grant-making and to eventually meet the goal of ensuring all "at-risk" students have access to OST programming. We understand that the Office and OSSE are pursuing such an agreement, and we request that the Committee ask the Deputy Mayor when it will be finalized.

Transportation Issues Persist for Students Experiencing Homelessness

On the issue of transportation for students experiencing homelessness, as we have noted in previous testimony, getting to and from school and extracurriculars can sometimes be an insurmountable task. While Kids Ride Free makes transportation affordable, it continues to be unreliable, unsafe, or physically inaccessible for many students. We appreciate the Council's pursuit of solutions, and we mirror your urgency. As we have these budget discussions, we request that the Committee ask the Deputy Mayor what progress has been made on any pilot projects or other plans to ensure that students can get to school. We are happy to work with the Deputy Mayor, other agencies, and the Council to make transportation work for all DC students.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions.

³ Afterschool Alliance, Evaluations Backgrounder: A Summary of Formal Evaluations of Afterschool Programs' Impact on Academics, Behavior, Safety and Family Life (January 2013).