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Our Thoughts for Today's Budget Hearing on DC Public Schools

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Today, many residents and organizations, including DCFPI, will share their thoughts on the proposed FY 2014 budget for DC Public Schools, at a budget hearing held by the DC Council's Education Committee. Here is a summary of what we are saying:

- DCPS is cutting resources to some schools by defining more schools as “small schools.” For the second year in a row, the enrollment level used by DCPS to define a “small school” will increase, this year from 300 to 400 students. As a result, most of the DCPS school system will be considered small schools next year and will get fewer resources than larger schools. In particular, 30 schools that are projecting 300-400 students will face reduced staffing by being re-defined as small schools. In a school system where many schools face declining enrollment, a policy of widening the definition of small schools – and limiting resources to those schools – does not make sense.
- Need for proven investments in struggling schools. There are still questions about how DCPS plans to invest in our lowest performing schools to meet the ambitious goals set out in their Capital Commitment [plan](#). For example, “Proving What’s Possible” (PWP) funding, which provided \$10 million in grants to 59 schools to implement innovative programming this school year, will face reductions in FY 2014. It is also not yet clear how program evaluation is driving DCPS investments. We think DCPS should use evaluation data to replicate successful programs and communicate to residents how these investments are part of a long-term strategy across the school system.
- DCPS budget takes some steps toward transparency but still leaves a lot to be desired. For the first time, DCPS posted an Excel file with data on the submitted budgets of individual schools, a very helpful step for budget analysts and advocates. Yet the official DCPS budget, published by DC’s Chief Financial Officer, continues to be largely unreadable to District residents.

Our full testimony is [HERE](#). And don't forget to check our DCFPI's analysis of all education agencies in our [education toolkit!](#)