

**Testimony of Marlana Wallace, Policy Analyst
At the Budget Oversight Hearing on the Deputy Mayor for Education
DC Council Committee on Education
April 11, 2018**

Chairperson Grosso and members of the Committee, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Marlana Wallace and I am a Policy Analyst at the DC Fiscal Policy Institute. DCFPI promotes budget choices to reduce economic and racial inequality and build widespread prosperity in the District of Columbia, through independent research and policy recommendations.

I would like to focus my testimony today on the importance of both increasing funding so more children and youth benefit from Out-of-School Time (OST) opportunities, and commissioning an update to the 2013 Adequacy Study of the cost of a quality education in the District.

Fund Enriching Out-of-School Time Opportunities for Low-Income Students

I am here today to encourage the DC Council to do right by children and youth by investing at least another \$5.8 million in Out-of-School-Time (OST) programs for the children and youth who need them most.

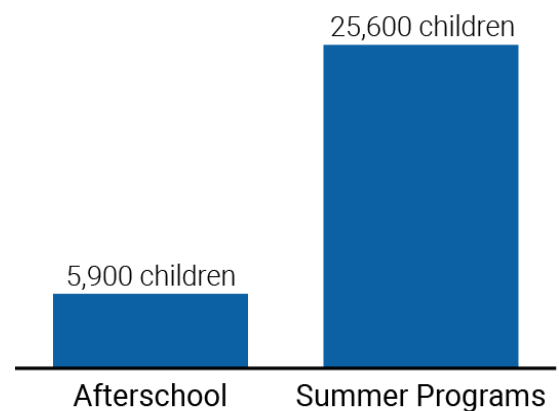
Every parent wants the best for their child, but not all parents have the means to pay for enriching before-school, after-school or summer activities. Out-of-School-Time (OST) programs that occur outside of a traditional school day allow experiential learners to thrive, exposing students to arts, athletics, technology and applied science, with demonstrated payoffs in classroom performance. Afterschool programs reduce how often parents miss work, and summer programs limit summer learning loss.

The proposed fiscal year (FY) 2019 budget includes \$9.6 million in new dollars, an \$8.1 million increase for the Office of OST Grants and Youth Outcomes, and a \$1.5 million increase for the Department of Parks and Recreation. The proposed budget allocates a total of \$19.2 million for Out-of-School-Time learning in these two agencies.

This investment reverses years of underfunding afterschool and summer school programming that have left more children waiting to get into afterschool programs than are currently enrolled. There are about 5,900 students without afterschool options, and 25,600 students without summer opportunities, who qualify for ‘at-risk’ funding (*Figure 1*).

FIGURE 1.

**Needed Out-of-School-Time
Opportunities for Students Who
Qualify for “At-Risk” Funding**



Source: DC Policy Center, “Needs Assessment of Out of School Time Programs.”

DC Council should protect and build on the proposed investment by increasing new dollars in the Office of OST Grants and Youth Outcomes by another \$5.8 million. Another \$5.8 million will move the District closer to providing the students who need it most with the same kind of enriching, out-of-school-time opportunities as their higher-income peers. Future investments will be guided by the Commission on OST Grants and Youth Outcomes that is working to advance better access to quality OST programming across the city.

Chairperson Grosso, we thank you for including Out-of-School Time opportunities on your FY 2019 budget priority list. We hope your fellow Councilmembers will make quality OST programming for young people a priority as well.

It is Time to Reassess the Cost of an Excellent and Equitable Education for Every Student

Fixing educational funding shortages is about what happens both outside and inside of the classroom.

A rigorous reassessment of our educational policies will fall short without a corresponding reassessment of the adequacy of our educational investments. Five years have passed, and yet we still have not reached the level of resources recommended in the 2013 Adequacy Study, once adjusted for inflation – let alone the level needed to keep up with all of our system’s changing needs (*Figure 2*). Budget increases for DC public schools and public charter schools in recent years have been arbitrary, and not connected to what’s really needed to provide quality education. We need a better blueprint for the resources required to staff every school and the resources needed to support low-income students in particular.

DC Council should allocate enough money in the FY 2019 budget to revise the 2013 Adequacy Study every five years, as recommended, with input from both the public and the biennial Technical Working Group.

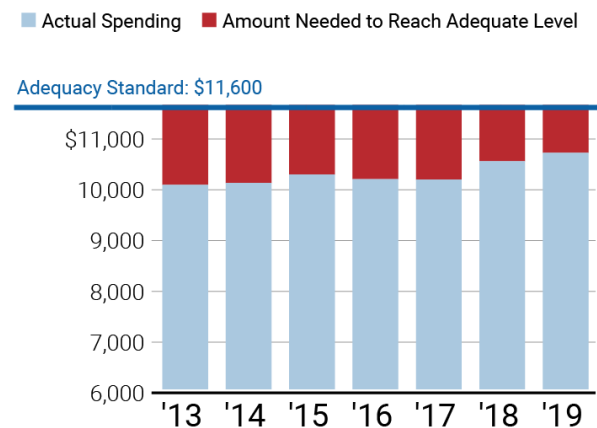
Every two years, OSSE is legally required to convene a Technical Working Group (TWG) that includes representatives from DCPS, public charters and the public to offer recommendations on revisions to the school funding formula. Last year, the TWG recommended an increase in base per-student funding of 3.5 percent, a threshold the approved FY 2018 budget did not meet. Importantly, the 3.5 percent was a one-year recommendation. It is not the standard we need to meet each year, rather it was a means to move us closer to adequate funding levels. But a singular focus on the percentage increase to the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula does not fully capture whether staffing models include everything they should, or if targeted resources are well-spent on effective programs for the students who need them most.

Revising the Adequacy Study is particularly important at this time. DCPS is considering abandoning the Comprehensive Staffing Model in favor of a more strictly

FIGURE 2.

The Amount of Per-Student Funding Closer to Adequacy Standed, But Consistently Lower Than Recommended

Adjusted for inflation to equal FY 2019 dollars.



Source: Fiscal Year 20013-19 Budget & Financial Plans.

Student Based Budgeting Model. This model can particularly hurt small schools and schools with declining enrollment for next year's budget, FY 2020.

Thank you Chairperson Grosso for stating your interest in funding an updated Adequacy Study during the DCPS budget hearing a couple weeks ago. We hope your fellow Councilmembers share your commitment to making sure we have an informed understanding of the investments required to ensure every District student gets a quality education.

You will find DCFPI's other educational budget recommendations on page 14 of the attached report, [*"What's in the Proposed FY 2019 PreK-12 Education Budget?"*](#) which include funding two critical pieces of pending legislation: "The Student Fair Access to School Act" and "Birth to Three in DC".

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.