

November 25, 2013

Chairman Catania and Deputy Mayor Smith:

Thank you again for your work on the Fair Funding Bill slated for mark up today.

We applaud the spirit of collaboration you brought to the effort and your responsiveness to the issues we raised. Even more so, we applaud the result of your work which we believe can prove to be an important step in strengthening educational opportunities for all of the children in our city, particularly those with the greatest need.

We fully support the proposed bill.

The one recommendation we offer is that you consider building in mechanisms to strengthen the community engagement element of the budgeting process for all dollars, not just dollars for "at-risk" students, in the eventual bill as passed. Community engagement and collaboration between schools in a feeder pattern are keys to a successful system. We would like to see those elements strengthened in the law. We note, however, that it is also possible that this could be addressed through a school accountability bill, if that bill moved to a positive framework of a culture of planning as we have urged in our comments on that bill as originally submitted.

Also, as the budget reporting was restructured, it is not clear that category three funding -- including funds not directly allocated schools but that support programs and services provided at schools or directly to students -- provides a mechanism to report how dollars will be spent or have been spent to support individual schools to assure equitable distribution. At a minimum, there should be an end of year report of how these dollars are spent at the individual school and other program level to provide full assurance of equitable distribution.

A critical next step will be the establishment of the relevant weight for "at risk" students and other recommendations flowing from the Adequacy Study. We expect to offer substantial comments on both (as well as on each of the other bills in the original education package as they are brought forward for consideration.) Also, next year, OSSE will need to establish regulations for the new proposed mechanism for career and technical education funding and we will need to allocate dollars to it. We again will expect to weigh in in those discussions.

Today, however, is a good day. A day on which we are bearing the fruit of a good process in which our legislative and executive branches worked well together and

responded to constructive public input to take an important step forward.

Thank you for your work on these important issues.

Matthew Frumin	Ward 3 ANC Commissioner/Education Activist
Beth Bacon	Watkins Elementary School and SWS Parent
Caryn Ernst	Watkins and Stuart Hobson Parent
Cathy Reilly	Executive Director of S.H.A.P.P.E.
Cherita Whiting	Chairperson, Ward 4 Education Council
Chris Sondreal	Ward 2 Education Network, Francis Stevens Parent
Cinque E. Culver	President, River Terrace Community Organization Inc.
David Dickinson	Hearst Elementary School Parent
David Tansey	Teacher, Dunbar High School -- Ward 5 Citizen
Eboni-Rose Thompson	President, Ward 7 Education Council
Evelyn Boyd Simmons	Co-Chair, ANC 2F Education Committee
Faith Gibson Hubbard	President, Ward Five Council on Education
Joe Weedon	Maury Elementary School Parent
John Settles	Hearst Elementary School Parent
Laura Marks	Watkins Elementary School Parent
Lee Granados	Walls at Francis Stevens Parent/Member LSAT
Mark Simon	Mooney Institute for Teacher and Union Leadership, WTU
Peter MacPherson	School Without Walls Parent
Ron Hampton	Ward 4 Education Advocate
Sandra Moscoso	Capitol Hill Montessori@Logan and BASIS DC Parent
Shanika Wilson	Coolidge High School PTA President
Soumya Bhat	Education Analyst, DC Fiscal Policy Institute
Stephanie Maltz	Ward 2 Education Network, Ward 2 ANC Commissioner
Steve Smith	Takoma Education Campus LSAT
Suzanne Wells	Tyler Elementary School Parent, CHPSPPO
Terry Goings	Ward 4 Community Advocate
Thomas Byrd	Ward 8 Education Council Vice President

cc: CM Yvette Alexander, CM David Grosso, CM Tommy Wells, CM Jack Evans, CM Jim Graham, CM Kenyan McDuffie, CM Mary M. Cheh, CM Phil Mendelson, CM Vincent Orange, CM Anita Bonds, CM Muriel Bowser, Mayor Vincent Gray, Jesus Aguirre, Chancellor Kaya Henderson