



Testimony for the Committee of the Whole Budget Oversight Hearing Thursday June 3, 2021

To: DC Council Committee of the Whole, Chairman Phil Mendelson, Committee of the Whole Members, and Committee of the Whole Staff

From: Ricardo Villalba, Ward 5 Citywide Board member and Ward 5 PAVE Parent Leader

Date: June 3rd, 2021

Good morning, Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee of the Whole. My name is Ricardo Villalba and I am a proud representative of the mighty purple wave that is PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education); but most importantly, I'm a proud dad of a 10 year old girl that attends Marie Reed Elementary School in Ward 1 but my family and I live in ward 5.

First of all, thank you for your time and I appreciate your service.

I live and work in Washington DC. I love my city and I'm very proud of how we have managed to get through this pandemic. We did what we could to address the public health emergency, but now comes the real challenge. How do we turn this tragedy into a better DC? This pandemic has shown us where we need to put our efforts and I believe we can all agree that education is vital to our livelihood. We need to invest in education across the board, starting with PreK3 all the way to adult education, especially when it comes to our most vulnerable students.

My daughter did well academically this year, but I can tell that she needs more support. My wife and I were able to help her with her math, but we couldn't help her with her writing and reading. I was able to hire a tutor to help her, but I'm sure she will need extra help next year to catch up in reading and writing at her grade level. That is why I believe we need to invest more in our education by fully funding the at-risk weight by investing \$78.5 million. This investment can be used to support teachers, develop better schools, and provide individualized academic support that all our students need after coming out of such a challenging academic year.



In addition to fully funding the at-risk weight by investing \$78.5 million, I want to see a DC education system that provides a variety of after school programs for kids to get academic support. We can do this by expanding funding for OST programs so kids can have access to enrichment opportunities that are fun and allow them to explore their passions in safe creative ways. Not all DC families do not have the ability to hire tutors but that does not mean that students should not have access to strong support in and outside of schools but they need DC leaders to make these bold investments for them to thrive in their education. Extending the summer youth employment program to provide adolescents with job opportunities tutoring younger kids is another way we can continue to empower our young people.

Let's work together for a better future for our children and us. Invest in schools, teachers, students and after school programs.

Thank you and have a fabulous day!

Sincerely,

Ricardo Villalba
Ward 5 PAVE Parent Leader