


COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Nyasha Smith, Secretary to the Council

FROM: Phil Mendelson, Chairman 

DATE: December 1, 2022

RE: **Request to Place Emergency Measures on the Agenda for the December 6, 2022
Legislative Meeting**

I request that the following measures be placed on the agenda for the December 6, 2022 legislative meeting:

- **Schools First in Budgeting Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2022**
- **Schools First in Budgeting Emergency Amendment Act of 2022**

Fiscal year 2020 left thirty-one schools with less funding than the previous year, even though for many, their enrollment shifted little or not at all. Again, in Fiscal year 2023, almost four dozen schools were confronted with budget cuts that impacted their ability to maintain staff and programs critical to student learning. This budget cut trauma happens every year. While the Council tries to restore some funding to schools, the turmoil that schools and their communities experienced is damaging.

As a result of backlash regarding its handling of school budgets, DCPS' new budget model implemented in the 2022-2023 school year purported to promote equity, stability and transparency in school budgeting. Yet, we still saw many schools lose critical staff positions due to budget cuts with little transparency about the process or reasoning.

Given the urgent need to stabilize schools and provide greater transparency around the school budgeting process for parents and stakeholders, it is necessary to revise the budget model such that it prioritizes schools first and brings them stability. Because the permanent Bill 24-570, Schools First in Budgeting Amendment Act of 2022 is not projected to become law until April at the earliest and the Mayors' proposed budget for schools is to be submitted to the Council in March, it is necessary to revise the method for school budgeting for DCPS on an emergency basis. By doing so, the Council ensures that the calculation therein is in place for the formulation of the 2023-2024 individual school budgets. Schools should not face another school year with budget instability.

Draft copies of the measures are attached. Please call me or LeKisha Jordan on the Committee of the Whole staff, at (202) 724-8137 if you have any questions.

cc: All Councilmembers
Council Officers