

Testimony by the Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals and Educators
2008 Budget Support Act
Council of the District of Columbia
April 25, 2007

The provision in the Budget Support Act allocating funding on a history of student loss will not allow DCPS to adequately staff a system of schools where students cannot be turned away. This will accelerate the loss. You have rushed this legislation forward stating that urgency was required to minimize further decline. We would urge greater concern for stability and a constant budget for the first year until the Mayor's administration can present you with an informed budget.

At the high school level; there are all ready significant challenges. While DCPS may not further cut; schools were promised 200 more dollars a student prior to the Mayor's Budget presentation. As schools require students to take double English and Math classes requiring more teachers for the core subjects there is less funding available for career tech teachers, art electives, social workers, smaller classes to start something like Calculus.

We have become accustomed to stripping things down to the absolute minimum; you can see this has not worked.

- 1- Take under advisement the Mayor's suggestion to change the funding basis for DCPS and maintain the current practice for at least one more year of funding based on this year's enrollment. In this period look closely at how the audit is done. DCPS currently has on its attendance roles over 1200 students that were not in the audit. The funds will do little to no good to the schools short teachers after September. Do not risk this.
- 2- Accept the State Education Office's recommendations for the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula. \$8,322. per student is inadequate for the challenges facing the schools at this time. If Mayor Fenty is able to be more efficient and do more for less, that will be reflected in his proposal for 2009. If this is a miscalculation prior to his gaining control, do not let it be such a costly error.

On a separate subject, look to MPD with an increased funding base to work with DCPS on expanding the hours security guards are available to work in the schools. As it stands now there is no support for community groups using our building at night or on the weekends or even for student groups. There is also a need for coordinated equipment. - - i.e., walkie-talkies that can speak to each other, availability of equipment after 4 p.m., etc.

Cathy Reilly
Director of S.H.A.P.P.E.