

**Testimony for the DC Council 4/19/04 Public Hearing on DCPS FY05 Budget
Submitted by Jordan Spooner, Deputy Director, 21st Century School Fund**

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Cropp and other City Council members. Thank you for the opportunity to testify once again.

I'm here today to speak about the need for more funding for both supplemental services and facilities construction and maintenance in DC Public Schools. Both of these are areas that we have seen have a major impact on the success of students, families, and neighborhoods, particularly in large urban districts such as ours.

In the area of supplemental services, we know from our national work that community schools are becoming more and more common as a way to achieve improved student success, improved neighborhood services, and improved local government cost and facilities efficiency. Providing funding – perhaps targeted directly for joint-use opportunities in schools, as is done in California – for supplemental services such as primary healthcare, mental health, adult education, and other social services can be a great way to help students, their families, and distressed neighborhoods overall. The Transformation Schools Initiative within DCPS addresses this to some extent, but supplemental services need to be offered at schools across the city; not just those 14. Again, we have seen this in more and more cities across the country, such as LA, Portland, Chicago, Lincoln, Oklahoma City, Boston, and others.

In the area of facilities construction and maintenance, 21st Century School Fund has testified many times to the need for more funding and improvements in DCPS. We have done much research on the impacts of facilities on teaching and learning – on standardized test scores, lost teaching time, and even teacher retention – and urge you again to keep this in mind when funding our schools. Not to mention the serious health impacts on students, teachers, and other

school building occupants, such as from poor indoor air quality and lead in the drinking water.

More operating and capital dollars to improve DCPS facilities are critical.

Thank you for your attention.