

Mayor's Hearing on the D.C. Public Schools FY06 Budget (2/15/05)
Jordan Spooner, Deputy Director, 21st Century School Fund

Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to testify tonight on the DCPS FY06 budget. Similar to Mary Filardo, I'm here to testify on the capital portion of the budget, and to emphasize only one point: to fully fund the school system's request for \$147M for next year, and around \$100M for FY07-11.

We're aware that DCPS is in danger of losing some of the \$147M for next year, if the city decides to borrow less money than initially envisioned. If this is true, then we urge you to continue to give a higher proportion of the city's capital funds to DCPS, as you have done in the past – much to your credit. Do not roll back from the \$147M, even if the city decides to roll back from the amount to be set for the entire District capital budget.

We believe that the schools are the most important public assets in the city, and therefore they should be the main tools for revitalizing neighborhoods and economic development. We also realize that there are significant management problems with the school system's capital improvement program, but we still believe that expending funds to fix the school buildings should be the highest priority for using capital dollars. In the meantime, continue to seed federal funds to help with the school construction program, and find innovative ways to get the most “bang for the buck” with the schools, as covered in the testimony of Mary Filardo.

Thank you.