

DC OST Coalition

POWERED BY **DC ACTION**

Tuesday, April 6, 2021

Dear Deputy Mayor Kihn,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with the DC Out-of-School Time Coalition on March 24. We appreciate your expressed commitment to collaborating with our sector to ensure that all young people have access to high-quality programs that support their academic success, social and emotional development, and mental health. As we shared during the meeting, the District needs to increase its investment in these valuable programs in order to achieve those goals.

OST programs are a critical element in stemming and reversing learning loss. Just as importantly, OST programs support young people in healing from the loss and trauma they and their communities have experienced during the pandemic so they can thrive inside and outside of the classroom. Strong partnerships between OST programs and schools have been a key component of the District's education landscape since before the pandemic, and will continue to be as we look to the future.

DC Action and the OST Coalition request Mayor Bowser and the DC Council protect current funding and restore funding previously cut for OST. We ask \$18 million be allocated for Learn24. The additional \$4 million for Learn24 would restore funding to FY19 levels, adjusted for inflation and administrative capacity. We also ask for protection of \$175,000 for OST programs through the Commission on the Arts and Humanities - Arts Learning, and \$11 million to OST programs through the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Families have relied on OST programs throughout the pandemic, describing programs as "invaluable," a "lifesaver," "a safe space for students to process stressful situations," helpful for mental health, and a space for "keeping [students] socially connected, hopeful, grounded and purposeful," according to a survey conducted earlier this year by DC Action. Another survey by the Afterschool Alliance found that nearly 90% of District parents are in favor of public funding for afterschool programs. Clearly parents see the value in OST and support public dollars going toward these activities that help their kids continue to learn and grow after the traditional school day ends.

DC Action and the OST Coalition are eager to continue the conversation and look forward to sharing more detailed recommendations about how to allocate the additional funding requested by our coalition. A list of our full budget recommendations is available [here](#).

Sincerely,

Matthew Hanson
Chief of Staff