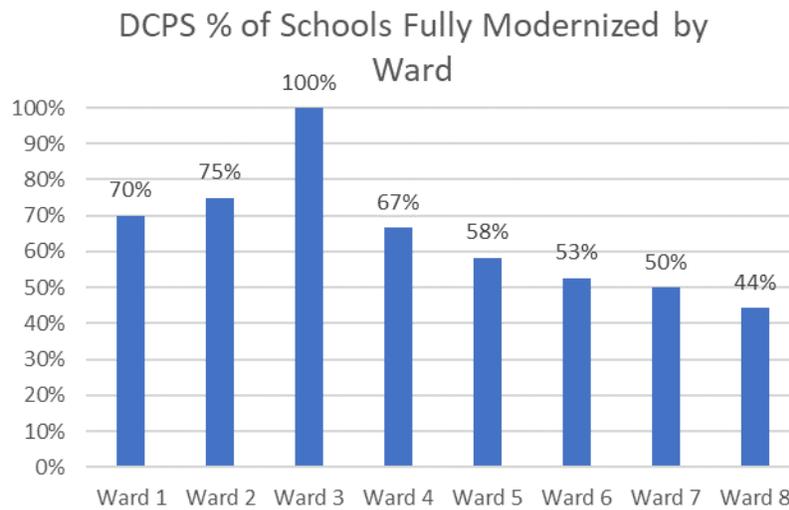


Committee of the Whole  
Bill 23-736, Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020  
Testimony from Betsy Wolf

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020. As an education researcher and a DCPS parent, I call on the DC Council to amend the comprehensive plan to enact progressive policies that disrupt the systemic inequity and structural racism of the DC public education system, as evidenced by the following:

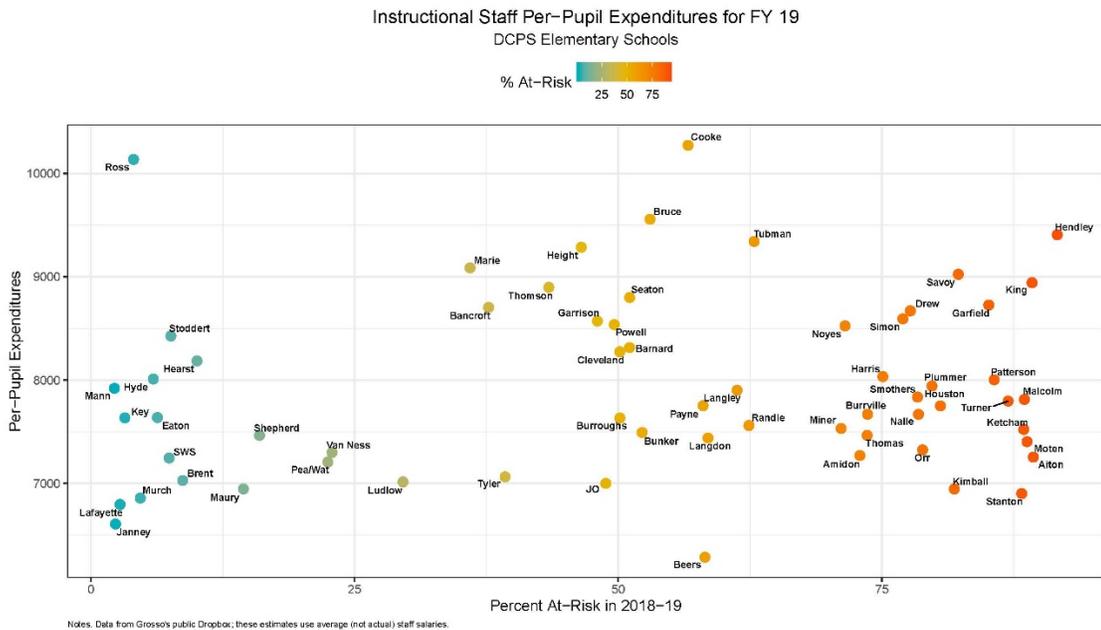
- More than \$300 million has been recently committed to renovating and expanding capacity in Ward 3 schools completely outside of the law that is supposed to govern the apportionment of capital money for DCPS school facilities;
- There has been a real and persistent inequity in modernizations proceeding from east to west in this town, which may increase demand for newly modernized schools and decrease demand for schools with outdated facilities;



Graph: Mary Levy, 2020

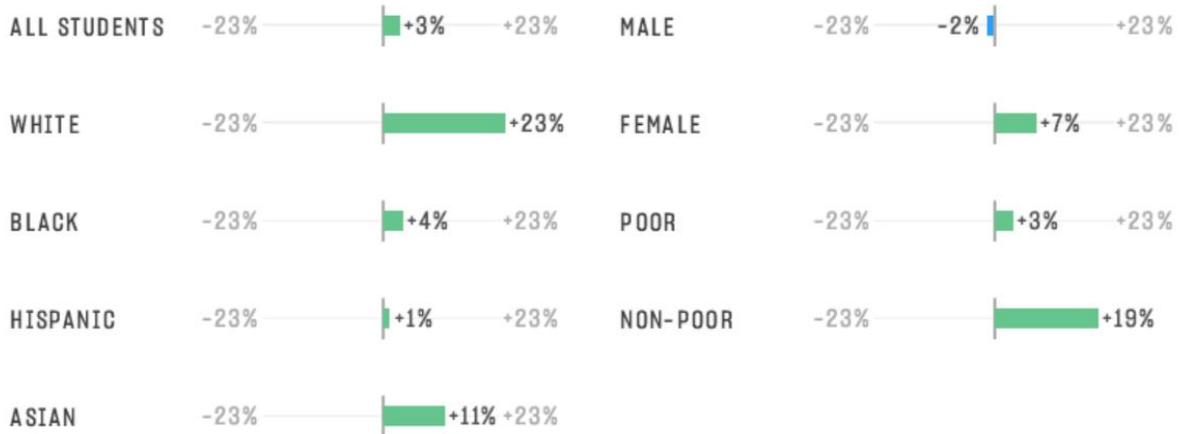
Committee of the Whole  
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- Inequities in school budgets also track with inequities in modernizations of DCPS schools moving from east to west;



Graph: Betsy Wolf, 2019

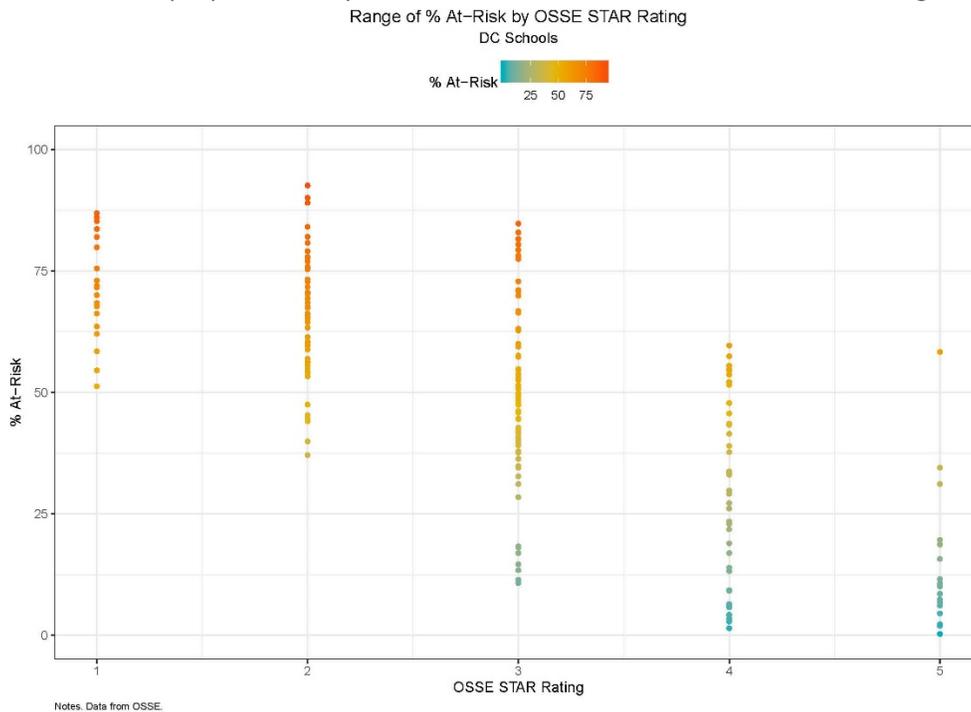
- The political context surrounding the opening of new charter schools is so fraught that the DME cannot produce a Master Facilities Plan nor engage in thoughtful planning of public school facilities across the city;
- The achievement gains in DC over time have been driven by more affluent students as opposed to by low-income students or students attending Title 1 schools;



Graph: Center for Education Policy Analysis at Stanford, 2020

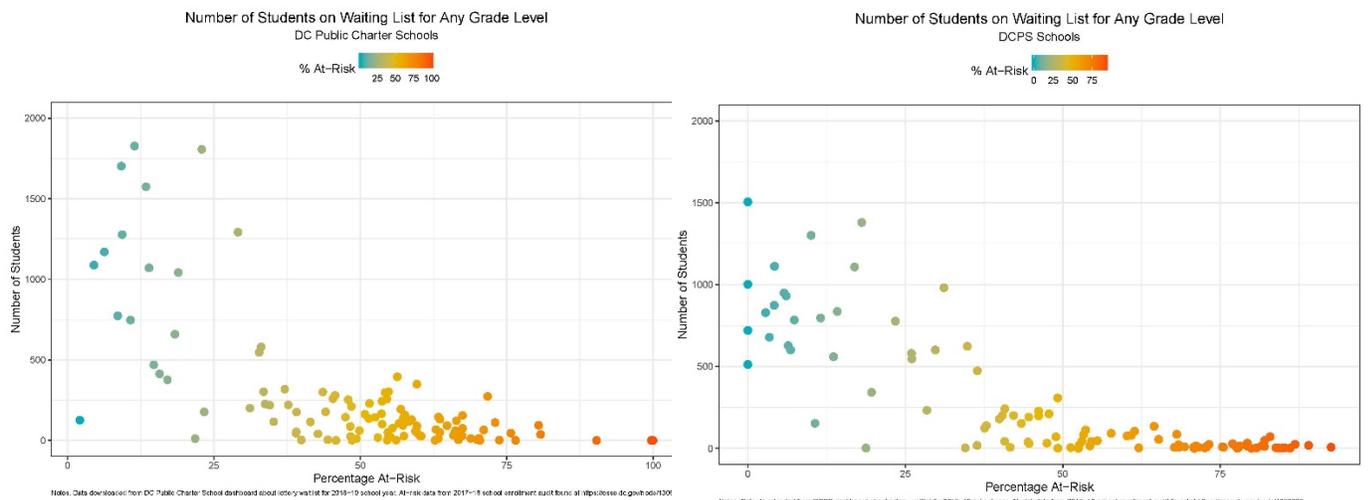
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- OSSE produces school ratings largely based on student demographics, where 4- and 5-star schools serve disproportionately fewer “at-risk” students than the district average;



Graph: Betsy Wolf, 2018

- Demand for schools is largely defined by what more affluent (including White) parents want, while school preferences from other parent groups are largely ignored in local decisionmaking;



Graph: Betsy Wolf, 2018

- The above will undoubtedly lead to additional DCPS closures and charter co-locations due to under-enrollment, which will happen in areas of the city already devastated by prior closures and lack of investment, and which will further erode students’ by-right public education options and disrupt the stability of supports for students who need them the most.

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I thereby call on the DC Council to enumerate and enact progressive policies in the comprehensive plan that disrupt the systemic inequity and structural racism of the DC public education system, such as but not limited to:

- Ensure equitable modernization of DCPS school facilities, starting with the most dilapidated buildings first and not allowing school communities to jump the line;
- In cases of over-crowding in DCPS schools in affluent neighborhoods, redraw school boundaries to improve racial and socio-economic integration of these schools;
- Mandate a set-aside for “at-risk”, special education, or English learner students at all schools of choice (including charter schools and DCPS schools of choice and magnet schools) to make student populations at these schools more representative of students in the District;
- Increase public and affordable housing in areas of the city where home prices or rents are inaccessible to most people living in DC;
- Increase affordable housing options for teachers, fireman, police, and other members of the local workforce;
- Give the DME authority to create and oversee a school facilities plan for all schools in both sectors;
- Provide adequate and equitable funding to DCPS schools in all areas of the city to prevent further erosion of community benefits;
- Immediately halt the giving away of public parks or school recreational grounds to private entities;
- Disallow charter schools to co-locate in DCPS schools until local DCPS school communities (not central office) have full control over whether a charter school is allocated to co-locate in their school building and the full terms of such arrangement; and
- Make OSSE independent from the mayor so that it can serve with appropriate oversight, as in every other state in the U.S., and so that we can have honest conversations about the effectiveness of our past investments as well as who has benefitted from them.