

Robert Henderson
Committee of the Whole
FY2026 Budget Oversight Hearing
on
SBOE, DCPCSB, and DME Budgets
on
Friday, May 30, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.

Good morning, Chairman Mendelson. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Robert Henderson. I am here in my individual capacity as Ward 5 member of the State Board of Education, and I am not representing the views of the Board as a whole.

SBOE

I would like to add my full support for the State Board's request for an additional \$75,000 in personnel funds for a 3% cost of living adjustment for State Board staff. As you know, elected State Board members are part-time, and therefore the support of staff is essential for the work that we do to represent our constituents well. This includes not only the staff in the core SBOE office, but also the staff in the ombudsman and student advocate offices who provide direct services to students and families. To recruit and retain our excellent, hardworking staff, we need to offer fair and competitive compensation.

DCPCSB

For the Public Charter School Board, it is my hope that in the near future, the Council will pass Bill 26-62, the Board of Trustees Training Amendment Act of 2025, and that the council will appropriate the funds needed to implement it. I don't know how this compares to past years, but I have noticed that the PCSB has been very busy this spring with charter reviews

and that a number of reviews have resulted in conditional continuances, and I am generally supportive of the PCSB having more resources for monitoring and supporting schools in meeting their charter goals.

DME

For the Deputy Mayor for Education's office, I appreciate increased funding for out-of-school time programs, and support continuing increases to achieve universal access, as proposed by B26-0068, the Universal Out of School Time Amendment Act of 2025. When we talk about tight budgets and hard choices, I believe that out-of-school time programs are the kinds of things that we should choose to invest in, as the long-term benefits will be great.

Finally, I continue to believe that DC education needs greater cross-sector coordination and systems-level strategy. The DME's office is positioned to do this, and indeed does analysis and makes recommendations at this scale, for example through the master facilities plan, school funding study, and boundary and student assignment study. However, the analysis and recommendations do not seem to be reflected in the budget. Development of a plan for citywide access to dual language programs as recommended in the boundary and student assignment study and the increased UPSFF weights recommended in the school funding study are two examples.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions.