

Testimony of

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Good morning Chairman Brown and Members and Staff of the Committee of the Whole, and thank you for the opportunity to appear today before the committee. My name is Ram Uppuluri, and I am the Executive Director of the DC Alliance of Youth Advocates, an alliance of more than 100 youth serving organizations throughout the District that works to promote policies, programs and practices that improve the developmental, social, and educational outcomes of the District's children and youth.

I am here to testify today in support of a program that is not included in the DCPS Budget, but has a profoundly important impact on educational outcomes for thousands of District children and youth and saves the DCPS system money: namely, the DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation, or Trust. The Mayor's FY 12 Budget includes \$3 million in funding for the Trust, a reduction of \$1.6 million from the FY 11 funding level of \$4.6 million. We would like to request that the Council maintain funding for the Trust at the FY 11 level of \$4.6 million in this year's budget.

The Trust is the principal funder of after school and summer programming for DC youth. During the current school year, the Trust awarded 84 grants totaling \$3.6 million on a three-year basis to programs serving roughly 2,400 children and youth ages 5-21 in school-based settings, community based settings, and at DPR sites. Additional grants totaling \$1 million were awarded on a one-year basis, including approximately \$300,000 in "Encouraging Innovation" grants to programs serving traditionally underserved populations of children and youth.

It is important to note that these funds are used by community-based providers to **leverage significant private** funding to directly support their programs. The Trust requires community-based providers to provide a match of between 10 to 20 percent, depending on their size, in private support. In reality, most organizations leverage a private match of well over 50 percent of the amount they receive from the Trust, allowing them to serve far more young people than they are funded by the Trust to serve. Based on our own surveys of our member organization, we estimate the private funds leveraged by our private providers to be in the millions of dollars in cash and in-kind contributions, meaning that a cut of every dollar in Trust funding can have the net effect of reducing services by well more than that dollar.

These programs, if reduced, will place additional pressures on 100% publicly funded programs, such as DCPS after-school programs, resulting in a higher net cost to the District than it costs to provide privately matched programming through the Trust. Moreover, once the capacity of private providers to serve children and youth is lost, it can take years to re-establish, if ever. The ability of our private providers to leverage private dollars with private funds represents a primary vehicle for building stronger public and private partnerships in support of better educational outcomes for children and youth in the District for years to come.

One of the reasons Trust funded programs are attractive to private partners is that they are evaluated for their quality and performance by Trust staff, using quantitative youth development outcome metrics. There are not glorified baby-sitting services; they are, rather, academic enrichment programs that have demonstrably improved educational outcomes for the children and youth they serve

We ask you to restore funding for the DC Children and Youth Investment Trust in the FY 12 Budget to the FY 11 level of \$4.6 million level – every dollar restored will bring in additional private support for high quality programs that improve outcomes for District children and youth, and save the District's school system significant funds. Fully funding the Trust is a good deal for our schools, our kids, and our future.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.