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COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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Vince Gray Announces Support for a 4% Increase to the Uniform Per-Student Funding Formula

WASHINGTON, D. C. – During the Committee on Health FY 2018 Budget Oversight Hearing yesterday, Ward 7 Councilmember Vincent C. Gray announced his support for a 4% increase to the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF). The UPSFF is used to determine annual operating funding for the District's traditional and charter public schools.

Following up on the public witness testimony of Michael Musante, Director of Government Relations at the Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS), Vince Gray said:

"I want to make an important commitment to you and all District parents and schoolchildren from the dais right now. I am deeply concerned about the repeated disinvestment by the Executive in our public schools. For the second time in three years, Mayor Bowser underfunded the Per Student Funding Formula by failing to provide a 2% adjustment, even though her own committee on education experts recommended a 3.5% increase for this year. This budget threatened to put school reform in reverse. I am announcing my support today for a 4% increase to the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula."

Irene Holtzman, Executive Director of FOCUS commented: "FOCUS is pleased that Councilmember Gray has once again made public education his priority through a commitment to adequately funding public schools in DC. A 4% increase in uniform per pupil funding is both in line with the UPSFF working group's recommendation and ensures schools have the resources they need to do right by every student. We look forward to working with Chairman Gray, his fellow colleagues on the Council, and the Mayor as we figure out how to do what works best for kids."

Gray said after the hearing he received numerous reactions from parents, educators and school board officials including the following:

"We are at a critical time in the history of our country where the DC government should rise to the occasion and be a leader, creating a budget that reflects our full support of our families, our children, and our schools. As a parent, I want to see DC set the example for public funding of our children's education. A 4% increase could mean a world of difference for our teachers, school administrators, staff, parents, and most importantly, our students. We must all come together and be solution-oriented when making sure to adequately fund our schools. It doesn't matter if the school is DCPS or charter--these are all our children and they all deserve an amazing education. We should put giving our children the best education over political agendas. It is time for everyone to put their differences aside and rise to the occasion for our kids by increasing the per pupil funding by 4%." — LaJoy Johnson-Law, Ward 8 parent, Rocketship RISE Academy

"As a career educator, I am proud to serve our kids in a city where elected officials are willing to make such an incredible investment in the outcomes of our children. DFER fully supports providing the resources necessary for our public schools to continue their progress. This funding will allow schools to attract and retain great teachers, offer a rich curriculum, and ensure we meet the needs of all kids." — Shawn Hardnett, career educator and Democrats for Education Reform (DFER) DC advisory board member

Markus E. Batchelor, DC State Board of Education, Ward 8 Member remarked: "Now, more than ever, we must make the investments necessary to ensure that every student -- on both sides of the river and both sides of the park -- have the resources and support they need to be successful. Many of the school communities I represent in Ward 8 are facing some of the largest cuts in funding in the city while the need grows larger every day. I support Councilmember Gray's push for a 4% increase in uniform per pupil funding so that all of our school communities and their hardworking staff are equipped with the tools necessary to close gaps in academic achievement, student wellness and family support."

From Fiscal Year 2001 to 2015, as the chart below indicates, every Mayor and Council provided at least a 2% Local funds increase to the formula, except for two years during the Great Recession when Mayor Fenty used Federal Stimulus Funds to cover the inflationary growth.

Uniform Per Student Funding Formula Historic Inflation Adjustments

	UPSFF	% Increase
FY 2001	\$ 5,728	Base
FY 2002	\$ 5,907	3.1%
FY 2003	\$ 6,419	8.7%
FY 2004	\$ 6,551	2.1%
FY 2005	\$ 6,904	5.4%
FY 2006	\$ 7,307	5.9%
FY 2007	\$ 8,002	9.5%
FY 2008	\$ 8,322	4.0%
FY 2009	\$ 8,770	5.4%
FY 2010	\$ 8,770	0.0%*
FY 2011	\$ 8,770	0.0%*
FY 2012	\$ 8,945	2.0%
FY 2013	\$ 9,124	2.0%
FY 2014	\$ 9,306	2.0%
FY 2015	\$ 9,492	2.0%
FY 2016	\$ 9,492	0.0%
FY 2017	\$ 9,682	2.0%
FY 2018	\$ 9,827	1.5%

*Although the local portion of the UPSFF remained flat in FY 2010 and FY 2011, Mayor Fenty insured that inflation was covered by utilizing Federal Stimulus funds during the Great Recession.

A 4% increase to the formula would not only cover this year's 2% increase, it would also make up for the disinvestment that occurred in FY16 when Mayor Bowser provided no increase. A 4% increase will also allow salary negotiations with our DCPS teachers union to proceed in a good faith manner, rather than speculating on whether or not additional revenue will come in.

Gray went on to say: "I have already worked out the fiscal impact of this proposal with our Office of the Chief Financial Officer. The 1.5% formula increase will cost \$21.3 million, so if the council can re-allocate another \$35.5 million to public education we can fund the formula at 4% and make up for the momentum we have lost in properly investing in our schoolchildren at DCPS and charter schools."

"I am excited to work with my Council colleagues to get us to 4% this year, because this will require a team effort to reach 7 votes. I plan to continue to rigorously scrub the Mayor's budget to examine the multitude of all of these proposed new programs and initiatives that could be postponed or eliminated to ensure our public schools — traditional and charter — are adequately funded, and to identify offsetting savings to pay for this."

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