



To the Members of the Committee of the Whole:

At CityBridge Education, our mission as a non-profit is to incubate the people, ideas, and conversations necessary for equity-centered innovation in DC's public schools. We work with DCPS schools, public charter schools, and community-serving organizations that wish to center the needs of their most marginalized students and design solutions that will meaningfully address those needs. Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective on how best to respond to the crisis of instructional loss—one of many tolls that COVID-19 has taken on our city.

Since the beginning of the pandemic last year, DC leaders and educators have made heroic efforts to ensure that all students have had the opportunity to learn at home what they would have learned in school in a typical academic year. Remote instruction is nevertheless not working for many of our students, particularly those who have historically been marginalized by race and income. Without concerted and significant action by the city, the tragedy of COVID-19 has the ability to completely derail the academic trajectories of this generation of learners.

In December 2020, the DC-based nonprofit EmpowerK12 issued a report on learning loss based on its analysis of the interim assessments of over 30,000 students K-8 in DCPS and in public charter schools. The findings are sobering. Overall, by the end of last year, students lost a month's worth of learning in reading, and *four* months worth of learning in math. Students deemed at-risk of school failure, meanwhile, have lost the equivalent of *four* months of reading and *six* months in math. For the District's youngest students, we are seeing significant drops in early literacy proficiency, particularly in Wards 7 and 8. We know that most students who are not able to read confidently by third grade are unlikely to graduate from high school. That schools are beginning to reopen is welcome news, but simply returning to business as usual will not be enough to ensure students get back on track.

Rigorous research has identified a response: high-impact tutoring. Tutors chosen for their capacity to forge relationships with young people, when equipped with high-quality curriculum and rigorous training and support, can work with small groups of students over the course of a year and make tremendous gains. When combined with in-person school, consistent high-impact tutoring sessions of half an hour or more several times a week can significantly narrow the opportunity gaps that we're seeing widen in this crisis.

This month, CityBridge Education launched CityTutor DC, an initiative to expand high-impact tutoring to stem the tide of learning loss. Reviewing the data on where need is greatest, we are focusing our attention on early elementary students who are falling significantly behind in reading and middle school students who are two grade levels or more behind in math—roughly 12,000 students in total. The District of Columbia has a number of strong organizations that have long been providing support in these areas. Our role is to work with schools and community-serving organizations to identify these 12,000 students, build the capacity of existing tutoring providers to



meet the demand, and increase the city's tutoring capacity by recruiting more tutors from institutions of higher education and other employment pathways when necessary.

CityBridge is raising the funds required for some of this 18-month effort, but an initiative of this scale cannot rely solely on philanthropic support. Tutors are generally paid for their work, as well they should be given the value that they generate. While precise amounts vary by model, high-impact tutoring takes somewhere on the order of \$1,500 to \$2,500 per student per year to do right. There are signs that the federal government is going to put funds aside for tutoring in pending legislation, but the District of Columbia's government should not wait to invest in high-impact tutoring. If we do what we can to address these learning losses now, we will avoid paying much greater costs in terms of educational and economic failure down the road.

Thank you for the opportunity to add to the discussion of the roundtable on this topic, and I'd be pleased to schedule follow-up conversations as requested.

Sincerely,

Rachel Evans
Executive Director