

Testimony to Mayor Williams
Education Budget
February 15, 2005

Good Evening. I am Mary Filardo Executive Director of the 21st Century School Fund. I would like to urge you to create a new capital budget line item that is dedicated to funding joint development projects. These would be projects that cross public agencies—Libraries and Public Schools; public charter schools and DCPS schools; Department of Recreation and the Office of Aging; Department of Recreation and schools, just to mention a few of the kinds of joint use development that is possible.

There are tremendous obstacles to developing projects across agencies. This is not unique to DC we have found this to be the case in other communities as well. However, where it has happened or is happening—in Akron, Ohio; Portland, Oregon; and Lincoln, Nebraska; it has taken the leadership of the Mayor and designated structures that bring the dollars together.

As one potential application of this fund, I urge you to explore its use for sale leasebacks of the public projects meeting the joint use criteria. This would involve a non-profit or for-profit entity acting as the third party developer of the joint use project. This enables the project to proceed with a neutral third party whose interest is in the successful development of the project and satisfied customers on all sides.

There are already projects in the wings that need such a vehicle. Rather than fighting obstacles to collaboration and joint development, these projects could be fast tracked and show early success.