

**The School Modernization Financing Act of 2005**  
Hearing, July 7, 2005

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on **The School Modernization Financing Act of 2005**. I am Mary Filardo, Executive Director of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Fund. I am here with Jordan Spooner and Nancy Huvendick, also of the 21<sup>st</sup> CSF.

We believe that DCPS will need an additional \$1 billion to fully improve the public school buildings. However, money alone is entirely insufficient to solve our building condition problems. The Council has already authorized \$1.2 billion for the FY 1997 to 2005 and there is another \$800 million in line for authorization for Fiscal Years 2006-20011.

Sadly, there are a number of reasons that the \$2 billion already authorized is not enough. 1) There have been so many years of disinvestments that the design, utilization and building conditions are such that major projects are required in most of our school buildings; 2) DCPS continues to inadequately maintain the school buildings reducing the life of investments already made; and 3) DCPS has not put in place the program or project management of the capital program to deliver a high quality, cost effective school planning, design and construction program. DCPS has paid too much for too little, and it takes too long to get it done.

Based on research we have done into appropriate management of school construction programs, we have found that without a well managed capital program high quality school buildings will be elusive. The Council must do more than fund school construction. It must ensure that the District's capital funds are well spent. We recommend that as part of any new funding for DCPS capital programs, that the Council put in place the necessary requirements for a well managed public school construction

and school building asset management program. The elements of this are... Jordan and Nancy will speak briefly to each of these areas. To help you with this I suggest you read the report 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Fund and the Brookings Institution did for the City Administrator's Office. This addresses the District's capital program and planning issues, as well as provides information on DCPS and public charter schools capital concerns. In addition, 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Fund and its Building Educational Success Together (BEST) partners in Chicago, New York City, Newark, Los Angeles and Cincinnati researched and developed a set of model policies for states and local entities concerning school facility planning, schools as centers of community, facility management and funding. This should be examined at the Council as part of creating the District's capacity to provide stable and sufficient funding for our needy and deserving public schools.

### **Elements of a well managed capital construction program**

