



February 22, 2021

The Hon. Trayon White, Chairperson  
Committee on Recreation, Libraries and Youth Affairs  
Council of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Councilmember White and Members of the Committee:

I write in advance of the February 23, 2021 performance oversight hearing on the Department of Parks and Recreation to share, again, the report, [D.C. Serves Grab & Go Meals Quickly, Efficiently During COVID-19](#) issued January 11, 2021 by the Office of the D.C. Auditor.

The report on the provision of meals to public school students during the pandemic was generally positive, finding that, “Some 96% of at-risk students had access to at least one open meal site during the first four and a half months of the pandemic, March through July 2020.” The report also noted that the Department of Parks and Recreation opened summer meal sites in mid-June “when the sites normally open for summertime operations.”

I bring this to your attention in the context of the performance hearings because one of our recommendations was that the Administration consider greater coordination going forward between the Office of the State Superintendent of Education and DPR. We said, in the report’s conclusion, that “A decision by the Bowser Administration to open those [DPR] sites earlier could have provided neighborhoods that relied on the DPR sites, like Kenilworth in Ward 7, easier access to meals earlier in the pandemic.”

With this report as background, you may want to ask DPR if they intend to follow the normal summertime schedule again this year or if they are working with other Executive Branch agencies to amend the schedule and extend or expand the summertime operations. A specific question might be: *Is the Department taking steps to provide more meal sites earlier and extending them later in recognition of the continued prevalence of COVID-19?*

Please let me know if ODCA can provide any additional information on the food program report or other issues during the performance oversight hearings. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathleen Patterson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathleen Patterson  
District of Columbia Auditor

cc: Members, Committee on Recreation, Libraries and Youth Affairs