

TO SUBMIT- FY 25 OP Testimony.
Marina Azizi on Linkages to Learning at Burnt Mills Elementary School
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Burnt Mills + Linkages to Learning: Dr. Marina Azizi

My name is Marina Azizi and I live at the [REDACTED] in Silver Spring. Thank you Councilmember Alborno and Councilmember Mink for coming to visit our school on Market Day and listen to families directly. Today, I will be speaking about the need for a Linkages to Learning program at Burnt Mills Elementary School.

In my country, I was trained as a medical doctor so I understand that in order for a child to be able to learn in school, she will need some basic support around food, shelter, a sense of safety and security.

Burnt Mills is a very diverse community and has become even more diverse over the past few years with more families arriving from Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and West Africa. Many of the families are refugees. What we have understood is that resettlement agencies have not been able to adequately support refugee families.

Attention should be given to newly arrived immigrants as they have left their homeland in difficult conditions.

They continue to face past and present and future challenges that lead to stress and can be psychologically damaged.

Therefore, necessary support should be provided to reduce stress and enhance their mental well-being. The main thing is to make them busy through conducting vocational training such as cooking classes, sewing classes, etc.

Additionally, support is very important for people who have work skills but are not fluent in English and do not know American laws.

Families who have children under 4 years old and want to work, they need childcare centers.

Now, I mentioned earlier that I live at the Enclave. I'm sure that by now you all know about the difference between what is written at the street sign "LUXURY" and the reality of the conditions in the apartment buildings.

For example, sometimes no water, no gas, not working elevator, high rent and it has more mice.

It is part of why we hope for something better when our students attend school.

There are many wonderful things about Burnt Mills Elementary School.

Such as supporting refugee families through food packages and English classes for women.

While the teachers of Burnt Mills have welcomed us as best they can, they need County support.

We believe that a Linkages to Learning program with a therapist and caseworker could really help our students and the community.

Councilmembers, in this year's budget, will you please include funding for a Linkages to Learning program at Burnt Mills?

Thank you.