



PARENTS AMPLIFYING  
VOICES in EDUCATION



# PARENTS AS LEADERS



We believe in the  
**power of parent voice.**

We believe in the  
promise of an  
education system  
that is created **not  
just for but by and  
with families.**

## ABOUT US

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### Our Mission

PAVE connects, informs, and empowers parent leaders to give families in DC a voice and a choice in the vision for education in our city.

### Our Vision

Parents are partners and leaders in developing a diversity of safe, nurturing, and great schools for every child in every ward and community.

### Our History

PAVE was founded in April 2016 because we believe that for too long, parents have been informed of our education policy decisions after they have already been made, instead of being invited to the table to help make them.

# PAVE IN 2017

## JANUARY



**National School Choice Week:** PAVE hosted a breakfast and luncheon series for parents to share personal school choice stories with DC elected officials

## FEBRUARY

**Ward 8 POST RFP:** The Ward 8 POST released a parent-led request for proposals (RFP) for a public charter school operator that supports military and Ward 8 families



## MARCH

**Joint Committee on Education and Health:** Parents advocated for full-time school nurses at a public hearing



## APRIL

**UPSFF Advocacy:** PAVE led a parent coalition to advocate for increased per-student funding in the FY18 budget



## MAY

**PAVE Parent Policy Summit:** Parents presented on issue areas that reflected their core values and voted on PAVE's priorities for the coming year

## JUNE-JULY

**PAVE in the Community:** PAVE met parents at Columbia Heights Day, the DC Peace Rally, and more



## AUGUST

**Ward 8 Back to School BBQ:** PAVE and Education Reform Now hosted families, community leaders, and elected officials at a barbecue with school supply giveaways



## SEPTEMBER

**PAVE Parent Leaders in Education Boards:** The PAVE team selected 82 Parent Leaders from across the District to advocate for top priorities in DC education

## OCTOBER

**Connecting Communities of Courage:** PAVE parents joined Facebook, InspirED, NSCC, and education leaders from across the US to discuss building safe and inclusive schools



## NOVEMBER

**Cross-Sector Family and Community Engagement PLC:** PAVE hosted staff and leaders from public charter schools, DCPS's OFPE, and state agencies to share community engagement strategies

## BY THE NUMBERS

Grew our network to **1,092** parents

Selected **82** Parent Leaders in Education Board Members

Held **205** one-to-one meetings with parents

Partnered with **17** School Districts and State Agencies





PAVE hosted the first **All-Day Cross-Sector Professional Learning Community** in November of 2017, bringing together over 70 family and community engagement staff from public charter schools, DC Public Schools's Office of Family and Public Engagement, community-based organizations, and school leaders to participate in sessions with expert speakers from across the nation.

# LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER and EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR of PAVE



Dear Friends of PAVE,

When our all-parent Board of Directors and I held our first meeting in April 2016, we could not have imagined the growth PAVE would experience in such a short period of time. **And it is all thanks to YOU, our parent leaders, partners, and supporters.**

As a fifth-generation Washingtonian, part of what inspired me to found PAVE was my love for DC, the city that raised and educated generations of my family. My grandparents attended and graduated from Dunbar High School back when it sent more African-American students to college than any other high school in the country. My great-great grandfather, George Martin, is featured on the cover of *Black Georgetown Remembered*, a book about the once-thriving 100 year old community of black residents in DC. Today, my sister, who teaches in DC in the public schools that she at-



*Founder Maya Martin in 1984 in Ward 4's Brightwood neighborhood with her mother, father, and brother*

tended through Teach For America, and I are the only remaining Martins in DC. I have watched as much of my family left DC precisely because they were looking for the best educational options for their children and the strong educational outcomes that existed in generations past, and have for too long been too hard to access.

In 2009, I returned to DC because I wanted to ensure that the schools that provided my family with the freedom of an educated mind were able to thrive in educating our kids. It was an honor and a privilege to serve the children and families in DC as a part of district leadership at two of our charter school networks, but even amidst the progress, I felt that something was missing. As

I sat in rooms where education policy was being made, too often the voices of the people most impacted by the decisions of our

elected officials and policymakers, FAMILIES, were absent. ***My mother was my fiercest advocate*** and she worked—and fought—hard to find the best schools for both of her children and our individual needs and talents. I could only imagine what our conversations about policies would look like if they included the parents and caregivers like my mother, who are willing to tirelessly give of themselves to make our schools better for their children and all children. It was with that lens that I founded PAVE, and it is ***with the belief in the power of all of our parents' voices that we will continue to work to PAVE the way for parents to be leaders in creating our city's education policy.***

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Maya Martin in black ink.

Maya Martin,  
Founder and Executive Director of PAVE



A Ward 7 **Parent Leader in Education** shares her enthusiasm for her PLE Board at the Kickoff in September 2017.



# THE POWER of PARENT VOICE

## The Need

There is a clear need for a **coordinated effort** to work across all schools to identify, inform, and empower parents and families to be advocates for their children and their schools.

## The Missing Piece

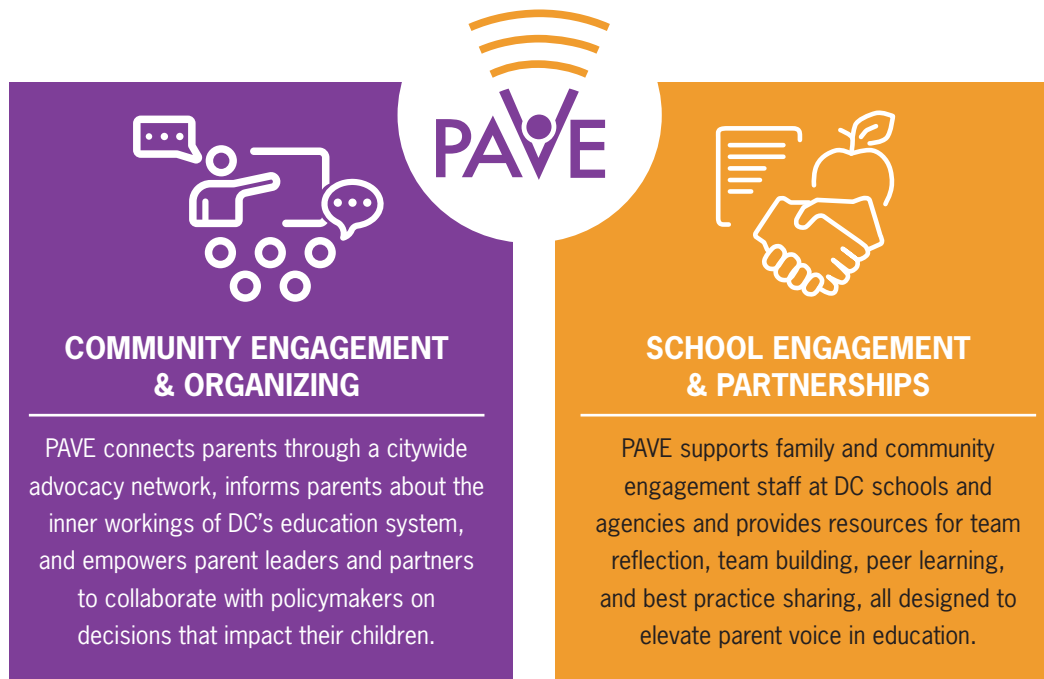
In the current education system, **families have no clear avenue to share their voices.**

Although it is well established that parent engagement maximizes student success, there are limited pathways for families to have a voice and a choice in the vision for education in Washington, DC.

Parents are demanding high quality education that reflects their community's values and needs, but lack avenues to effectively engage policymakers and elected officials. Schools, elected officials, and policymakers are searching for guidance from the constituents they serve, but lack an efficient channel for community engagement in education. Every stakeholder recognizes that an excellent education system must be made by and with the community—not just for the community.

## Our Solution

Our goal is to **connect parents, schools, policymakers, and elected officials** to make collaborative decisions that ensure all students have access to great education in DC. We accomplish this through a two-pronged approach:



**We want to see a DC education system that is made up of great schools supported by policy that advances equity and excellence for all children—and we know that our city can't make this a reality without parents.**



# BUILDING PARENT LEADERS

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## Our Vision for the Future

We want to see a DC education system that is made up of **great schools supported by policy that advances equity and excellence for all children**, and we know that our city cannot make this a reality without parents.

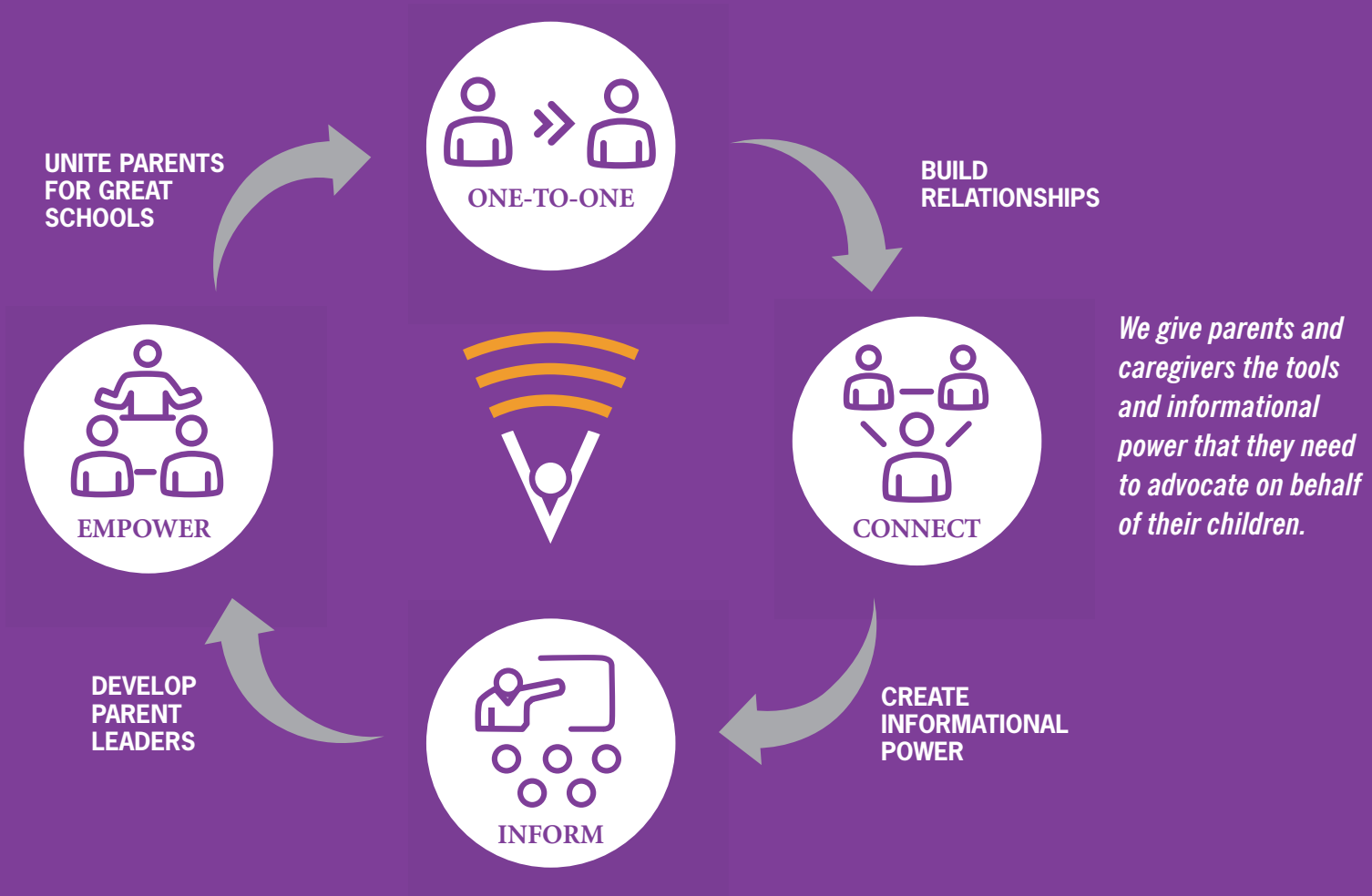
## What We Do

By **unifying parents** who otherwise remain disconnected, and advocating for a **parent-driven policy agenda** to strengthen the DC education sector, we ensure that all parents in the city feel empowered to impact policy and increase access to great public schools. PAVE's work is **driven by the needs of our children** in our schools and **rooted in the concerns of our parents**.

- Our model begins with a **one-to-one meeting**. Parents meet with one of PAVE's Community Organizers, who connects them to resources and to other parents in their ward and community.
- Once parents are connected to each other, PAVE **trains parents on policy and advocacy and engages them with their elected officials and education policy-makers**: parents attend events, go to house meetings hosted by Parent Leaders, and testify at hearings.
- Our parents are then **empowered as leaders**: they participate in Parent Leaders in Education Boards, host or chair house meetings, recruit other parents, and share their voices through blogs or op-ed posts.



# Our Model



# The PAVE Parent Policy Summit



In May 2017, PAVE hosted its first-annual PAVE Parent Policy Summit, which convened parents with school leaders, elected officials, and education advocates to have an informed conversation about the issues our PAVE parent leaders identified throughout the year:

## PAVE Value #1

All families have access to high-quality schools and the information they need to make the best decisions for their children.

### **Corresponding Education Priority Areas:**

*One Citywide School Report Card and Great Schools in Every Ward*

## PAVE Value #2

All schools have adequate and equitable funding to support the needs of children and families.

### **Corresponding Education Priority Area:**

*DC Budget for Public Education—Per Pupil and School Facilities*

## PAVE Value #3

All students have a safe, healthy, and welcoming school environment.

### **Corresponding Education Priority Area:**

*Safe Passage to School and School Nurses Program*

## PAVE Value #4

All students have access to out of school time and summer school programs that allow them to foster their passions and enrich their learning.

### **Corresponding Education Priority Area:**

*Educational Enrichment Programs*

## PAVE Value #5

All parents have the resources they need to support the success of their children at home—and in school.

### **Corresponding Education Priority Area:**

*Special Education Programs*

*At this unique event, parents LED the conversation. After hearing six testimonies on key issues presented by Parent Leaders, parents voted on where PAVE will focus its efforts leading up to the 2018 PAVE Parent Policy Summit:*

**One Citywide School Report Card and Great Schools in Every Ward**

and

**Educational Enrichment Programs**





# PAVEing the Road to Parent Leadership

Throughout a successful first year of operations, PAVE built a broad network of parent leaders from across DC. Many of those parent leaders expressed a strong desire to work on a team of parents who were just as engaged and eager to take action as they were. In the summer of 2017, PAVE released an open application for its first cohort of Parent Leaders in Education (PLE) Board members. **From 116 applications, PAVE selected 82 parent leaders to serve on ward-based boards in Wards 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.**

PLE Boards meet monthly to develop knowledge about DC's policymaking process and strategize about the two issue areas selected at the PAVE Parent Policy Summit: One Citywide School Report Card and Great Schools in Every Ward, and Educational Enrichment Programs.





Members of PAVE's Inaugural Parent Leaders in Education (PLE) Boards toast at the Districtwide PLE Kickoff Event in September 2017, where **parents from six wards gathered** to meet their fellow PLE Board members and begin learning about advocacy and education policy in the District.



# PAVE PARENT SPOTLIGHT

## DeSean Jones

*Ward 8 Parent and Parent Leader in Education Board Member*

I was born and raised in Southeast DC, which means I attended DC public schools my entire life. When I graduated from Anacostia Senior High School in 1991, my mother made it clear to me that I could not stay in her house without contributing. She presented me with my options: get a job, go to college, or join the military—and not in that order. After working odd jobs and playing around in college, in 2002 I found my focus and applied myself to my studies. Eventually, I graduated from UDC in 2009 with a bachelor's degree in Sociology. Supporting my family, working full-time, and going to school all at the same time was no small challenge.

However, my greatest challenge came after I had my children. Growing up, I took the opportunities my city had to offer for granted. After having three children in 2004, 2007, and 2008, I realized

**I knew my involvement in their education was essential to their success as students**

that my struggles did not have to be theirs. When my children became school-aged, I used my own struggles to provide the best lessons for making progress. Studying sociology at UDC opened my eyes to another world of parenting and educational development.

I knew my involvement in their education was essential to their success as students, which is why I wanted to become more engaged—not just in their education, but our city's education system as a whole.

I began to get involved by attending events at my children's schools. These experiences made me more aware of the need

for greater parent engagement in our education system. As I was becoming more involved in my children's education at Eagle Academy PCS, Ms. Josephine Mazyck encouraged me to attend PAVE's breakfast with Ward 8 Councilmember



Trayon White earlier this year. From that point on, I regularly attended PAVE events and stayed informed about new advocacy opportunities and policy updates through the PAVE Post. Now, as a member of the Ward 8 PAVE PLE Board, I am looking to impact our education system in a much greater way by sharing my experience and advocating for change across the city.





In May 2017, PAVE hosted its first-annual PAVE **Parent Policy Summit**, which convened parents with school leaders, elected officials, and education advocates to have an informed conversation about the issues our PAVE parent leaders identified throughout the year.

# Empowered Parents: THE WARD 8 POST

In 2016, the DC Council passed the Military Installation Public Charter School Amendment to allow for one charter school with a military preference in which 50% of the seats are reserved for active military families residing in DC and the additional 50% of the seats are open enrollment for all DC residents. **To lift up parent voice in DC's education landscape, PAVE and Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS) convened a collective of eight Ward 8 and military parents, to form the Ward 8 Parent Operator Selection Team (Ward 8 POST).**

## A Groundbreaking Parent Collective

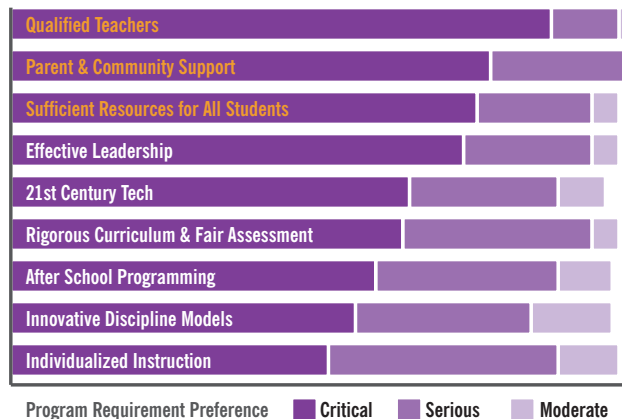
Together, the Ward 8 POST worked to increase the availability of great school options East of the Anacostia River and create a new model for school selection in our city that happens in partnership with parents. On February 15th, 2017, the Ward 8 POST released a first-of-its-kind Request for Proposals (RFP)—**created, designed, and written by parents**. The RFP invited interested charter school operators to respond directly to the parents of the Ward 8 POST to propose how they would create a welcoming school environment where students are challenged to be their best and are prepared for life in our fast-changing global world.

The Ward 8 POST **received five responses to their RFP** from local and out-of-state charter school operators. The members reviewed each of the applications, interviewed top finalists from across the country, and voted on their recommendation for a school to apply to the DC Public Charter School Board in June 2017: LEARN, a high-performing Chicago-area charter school network who currently operates a school on a naval installation in Great Lakes, IL.

Currently, LEARN is working to open a school in fall of 2019. The energized response to the RFP from the schools and the engagement of the community in the Ward 8 POST's process shows that including parents on a decision-making level is a positive step towards ensuring that schools meet the wants and needs of the families they serve. **Notably, a 2017 study by the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) included the Ward 8 POST's work as an example of DC's efforts to address the localized needs of neighborhoods, and a pioneering example of parents offering their perspectives on what they want to see in their children's schools.**



### Ward 8 POST Community Survey: RFP Response Components (in order of importance)







Ward 8 POST Members



# PAVE Parents and Advocates Lift their Voices

“My passion for advocacy initially started when my oldest son was diagnosed with autism and my role as a parent in my son’s education drastically changed. [...] I became involved in almost every aspect of his school day, including advocating to make sure that the right resources were being delivered to him and students like him.”

**Yolanda Corbett**, Ward 7 PLE Board Member and member of the DC State Board of Education’s ESSA Task Force, in a feature written for the September 2017 issue of the PAVE Post



“From my own experience, I know that many parents have trouble accessing school resources or even communicating effectively with teachers or school staff when non-English language resources do not exist. I want to be a parent advocate because I feel like the voices of Hispanic and Latino parents have not been heard, nor have they played a role in the education of our children throughout the city.”

**Miriam Perlacio**, Ward 1 PLE Board Member, in a feature written for the October 2017 issue of the PAVE Post



“Now, DCI and other schools need the adjustment in per pupil funding so they don’t have to face budgets for teacher salaries that shrink every year...Believe me when I say that parents don’t really care which budget these efforts pull from—they just notice the inequity, and the disconnect with the District’s stated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

**Deanna Troust, Ward 1 Parent, in a testimony at PCSB’s Performance Oversight Hearing in February 2017**

“All children require medical attention at some point in time throughout the school day. There are some children that require constant daily medication. A reduction in nurses could cause a major liability for students, staff, and parents. While I believe your efforts are admirable, as a parent, it is unacceptable that an education system would not include full-time medical licensed professionals in all of its schools.”

**LaJoy Johnson-Law, PAVE Board Member and Ward 8 Rocketship Parent, testifying at the Committee on Education & Health Joint Public Hearing for the Public School Health Services Amendment Act of 2017 in March 2017**



# BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

Through our community organizing work, it became clear to us that in order engage families at the city-wide policy level, families had to first feel like their needs around engagement were met by DC's schools and state agencies.

In Summer 2017, PAVE created a School Engagement and Partnerships department to begin to more authentically engage parents at their schools and with our state agencies. Today, the School Engagement and Partnerships department provides families and school-based staff with multiple ways to increase family engagement and advocacy:



## PLC

Our Professional Learning Community for family and community engagement staff at **DC public charter schools** and **DCPS's Office of Family and Public Engagement** meets monthly in three cohorts to connect staff across schools and wards. PLC members participate in sessions with expert speakers nationwide, and develop yearlong goals to shift the dynamics of engagement in their school cultures.

## Blogging

Through a partnership with the **Wayfinder Foundation**, PAVE provides parents with **blogging training** and the opportunity to post their pieces online. The Wayfinder Foundation's communications efforts help create a collective voice for local communities through blogs and proactive media outreach. Our parent leaders are able to share their posts online on D.C. K12: a blog and a forum for parents, students, and teachers to raise the real issues facing our public schools and be a part of the conversation.



## Board Training

Every DC charter school is required to have two parent board members on the Board of Directors. In partnership, PAVE and **Charter Board Partners** are creating spaces for school leaders, Board Chairs, and parents to engage in conversation about how parents can play an active and high impact role on our charter school boards through semi-annual trainings. During these trainings, parents connect to one another for support, networking, and sharing strategies and ideas.







Attendees from DCPS's Office of Family and Public Engagement at the November All-Day PLC gathered to exchange insights on four key pillars of family and community engagement: **Inform, Engage, Organize, and Advocate.**



## PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

# DC's First Cross-Sector Family and Community Engagement PLC

At the November All-Day PLC, members of DCPS's Office of Family and Public Engagement came together with DC public charter school staff to exchange insights on **four key pillars of family and community engagement**: Inform, Engage, Organize, and Advocate. (Pictured) Participants discuss their identity maps, identifying commonalities at each table.



In November 2017, PAVE held its first all-day Family and Community Engagement Professional Learning Community (PLC) event. True to PAVE's mission of amplifying the voices of families in our education system, the PLC brought local and national education leaders together to **drive better outcomes for children through effective and authentic collaboration with the communities they serve.**

**Over 70 leaders** from DCPS, DC public charter schools, state agencies, and nonprofits gathered to exchange insights on four key pillars of family and community engagement: Inform, Engage, Organize, and Advocate.

These sessions were led by national experts who honed their skills at organizations such as Learning Heroes, 50CAN, Denver Public Schools, 270 Strategies, and Obama for America. A luncheon plenary featured research by UNCF and The Leadership Conference Education Fund regarding Black and Latino families' perceptions of education.

## INFORM

"I learned the importance of decoding and using parent-friendly language. Language should be accessible, so parents and children can join the conversation. Handouts alone don't work."

**Rashida Holman-Jones, Director of Family and Community Engagement, SEED**



## ENGAGE

"I got insight into how to reach parents. The process for where to begin and how to create parent leaders was helpful. We need viewpoints from parents so we can make good decisions."

**Lanette Woodruff, Ward 4 Representative, SBOE**



## ORGANIZE

"In the session, I was reminded why we define power as organized money or organized people. And nothing is more powerful than organized parents."

**Lamont Harell, Sr Education Organizer, Rocketship**



## ADVOCATE

"I liked the advice to tell a story in a meaningful way when advocating. The story should explain why an issue is important and why the policymaker needs to act now."

**Raymond Weeden, Sr Director of Policy and Community Engagement, DC Prep**



## REFLECTIONS

"The best thing about the PLC was the ability to build strong connections across family and public engagement professionals in both the DCPS and charter sectors, especially since we serve many of the same families and challenges. PAVE provided the space for us to learn about how we ensure public school parents are informed, engaged, organized and advocates for what they care most about... a strong education for their children that prepares them for success in life."

**Shanita Burney, Chief, Office of Family and Public Engagement, DCPS**







THE CAMPAIGN FOR  
PARENTS AMPLIFYING VOICES in EDUCATION



Parent Power allows parents to transform the lives of not just their own child, but all of the children in their community. Together, our parent leaders will reimagine an education system in DC to be created with parents, for all our children.

### **What the research shows**

When a parent advocates for their child, they see positive change for their child.

### **What we know from our work**

When our parent leaders bring their voices together to advocate for all our children, we see positive changes in our education system and realize the promise and the power of education.

## PARENT POWER CAMPAIGN: OUR GOALS



### GOAL #1

Build a network of **5,000** trained PAVE Parent Leaders by 2020.



### GOAL #2

Create—for the first time in our city's history—the **infrastructure** to facilitate and sustain the continued cultivation of connected, informed, and empowered parent leaders over time.



### GOAL #3

Create **best practices** and a **model** for a family-centered education system that transforms parent advocates into policy decision-makers.

**Join us in building PARENT POWER!**

To make a donation, visit [dcpave.org/parentpower](https://dcpave.org/parentpower)



# THANK YOU!

## You help us PAVE the way for Parent Voice!

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, PAVE relies on the support of committed collaborators and partners to help us carry out our mission to connect, inform, and empower parent leaders. When you support PAVE or collaborate with our team, you create opportunities for engagement that amplify the voices of parents across the District.

**We would like to extend a special thank you to our generous funders who supported PAVE in 2017 and at the launch of our organization:**



Ampersand Education  
AppleTree PCS  
Brian Nwachukwu  
Building Hope  
Carlyn Reichel  
Cathaleen Skinner  
*in memory of David Bryant*  
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Family Foundation  
Sujata Bhat  
Suzanne  
and Marc Parsons  
Tearsa Coates  
Terry Eakin  
Thurgood Marshall  
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## **TO MAKE A GIFT BY MAIL:**

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