



**Testimony for the Public Charter School Board (PCSB) and DME
Performance Oversight Hearing
Wednesday, February 12th, 2020**

Good morning Councilmembers, and the Committee on Education. My name is Russchelle Moore and I am a proud Ward 6 Parent, and mother of a Freshmen at Mckinley Tech High School. I also serve with (PAVE) Parents Amplifying Voices in Education, on the Ward 6 and Citywide Parent Leaders in Education Board. Our PAVE parent leaders came together to write the vision that we have for mental health supports and trauma-informed training in all schools and increased access to specialized school programs. I am here today to share my story about the importance of mental health in hopes that you will join us in this work.

As a single mom of a child with Autism, the most fearful experience I've ever encountered was my son, Nicholas, being bullied throughout middle school to the point that he wanted to kill himself. Which no parent should have to endure. According to the National Center for Education Statistics in 2018, nearly 1 in 5 students (or 21%) report being bullied during the school year impacting over 5 million youth annually. OSSE's Youth Risk Behavior Survey report showed that nearly 1 in 4 high school students in DC who are bullied reports having attempted suicide.

In our Statement of Beliefs, we are urging the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor of Education to invest in our kids and our schools by ensuring access to mental health professionals, develop a standard of best practices around partnering with families and communities, and develop a pipeline of mental health professionals to serve our schools. Unfortunately, these support systems were not in place for my son Nicholas, but by doing so we will make sure that other students do not have to go through this.

Thank you,

Russchelle Moore
Parent Leader
PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education)