



PAVE DCPVCW Meeting with Councilmember Vincent Gray

**Agenda:**

- **Welcome - 5 minutes**
  - Kerry Savage, PAVE Director of Policy
  - Sharon Culver, Citywide and Ward 7 PLE Board member - Meeting Chair
- **Introductions - 2 minutes**
  - Name
  - Ward of residence
  - Where your children attend school
- **Councilmember Vincent Gray Remarks - 8 minutes**
- **Parent Q&A - 40 minutes - See full questions below!**
  - *Marcia Huff, Ward 7 PLE Board Member, Two Rivers PCS - Equitable School Funding*
  - *Randee Grant, Ward 7 PLE Board Member - Mental Health*
  - *Camara Francis, Ward 7 parent leader, Mundo Verde - Dual Language Programs*
  - *Stephanie Griffith Richardson, Ward 7 parent leader, Elsie Whitlow Stokes - School Reopening* read by Sharon Culver, Meeting Chair
  - *Elizabeth Reddick, Ward 7 PLE Board Member, Bridges PCS and Dunbar High School - Transportation and School Reopening*
  - *Open chat questions*
- **Closing and Next Steps - 5 minutes**

Parent Name	Question
<p><b>Marcia Huff, Ward 7 PLE Board Member, Two Rivers PCS</b></p>	<p>Greetings CM Gray. My name is Marcia Huff and I am a Ward 7 resident and mom of two children who attend a DC charter school. I also work for a DC nonprofit that works with and advocates for foster youth as well as youth experiencing homelessness. Our kids deserve to attend adequately funded public schools where their needs are being met yet the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF) is failing to keep up with the rising costs of education and is particularly under-serving students who are identified as "at-risk" as the at-risk weight is currently set at \$2,551 per student, which is a <u>gap of over \$1,500 per student from what is needed</u>. Even the increases last year in the UPSFF were inadequate when considering inflation and the COVID-19 crisis. Parent leaders such as myself are prepared to partner with you to ensure that the at-risk weight and base per-pupil funding is increased to meet the needs of our children and families across our city. It is also important to note that we treat students considered "at-risk" the same regardless of where they fall into the definition yet my youth leaders, some whose families are experiencing homelessness and fighting for the basics such as having enough food, clothing, transportation, access to laundry services, adequate technology, and again they do not have stable housing. We have hundreds of families living in hotels or shelters--and these are environments that are not conducive to thriving academically; these students have extremely different needs than a foster youth who has access to significant resources (on paper) through CFSA although these students are also struggling despite the investment. How can we have accountability and transparency to ensure that "at-risk" funding</p>

	<p>is reaching the students who really need it and that the funds are used to meet their particular needs?</p>
<p><b>Randee Grant, Ward 7 PLE Board Member</b></p>	<p>I have lived and worked in Ward 7 for over 10 years, and as a mother of two daughters, I know first hand the necessity for mental services for youth and young adults. My youngest daughter’s journey began at 11 years when she was attacked by two teens on her way home from school. She had just gotten off of the U8 bus at Hillside RD and Chaplin St SE and was attacked from behind, thrown to the ground and wallet taken. This spun into her inability to go to school, a suicide attempt and CFS being called. She was given a therapist for the upcoming school year 8<sup>th</sup> grade and continued to fall deeper into what I now know as agoraphobia, PTSD, anxiety and depression. I didn’t have medicare, which left me out of the waitlist for services and my learning curve kept me in the dark. This subjected me to a wide range of insults from an incompetent parent to educational neglect. I was also a staff member at the school where a suicide took place.</p> <p>Of the 5 million students affected by mental health issues in the US, 80% of students will not receive counseling, therapy, medication, or treatment, at all. As a parent, these statistics are staggering, and I know our city needs to come together to do better for all our children. How can we partner to address this issue – the availability of services and assistance in diagnosis, trauma informed training for parents, teachers and other adults in our community working with our children and services that keep children in safe spaces with trained professionals?</p>
<p><b>Camara Francis, Ward 7 parent leader, Mundo Verde</b></p>	<p>I am a Ward 7 resident, mother of a kindergartner, bilingual language advocate, and founder of a nonprofit organization East of the River Foreign Languages for Kids. My son attends a dual language school located in Ward 5. Currently, families all across DC are waitlisted trying to gain admittance into dual language schools. There are proven cognitive benefits of mastering a second language, and its direct correlation to standardized test scores. On average, students enrolled in dual language programs outperform their monolingual peers on standardized assessments. The data substantiates that dual language programs can help narrow the achievement gap. The cognitive benefits include, but are not limited to: increased mental flexibility, decision making, and problem solving skills among bilinguals. Oftentimes, mastering a second language, translates to increased opportunities for Higher Education, as well as the ability to obtain higher paying jobs in the marketplace both locally and nationally. As of School Year 2020 there are 23 Public Dual Language Immersion programs in DC, but only three are located EoTR, two are charters and the other is Houston ES. How will you ensure equitable access and full funding for dual language education for students living in Wards 7 and 8?</p>
<p><b>Stephanie Griffith Richardson, Ward 7 parent leader, Elsie Whitlow Stokes -- read by Sharon Culver, Meeting Chair</b></p>	<p>My name is Stephanie Griffith Richardson and I am a Ward 7 resident and mother of a wonderful little boy named Langston. I joined PAVE to advocate for ALL families across the District, but also to speak up for my own family. Before the pandemic, my passion in advocacy was fighting for OST funding, to help families like mine, who find ourselves squeezed in the middle. I’m talking about those families with enough income security, that we may not qualify for assistance, but who still struggle financially to give our kids the non-academic experiences which will push them to be competitive in a fast paced economy. But now the pandemic has ravaged our economy and so many things have changed. Many of my friends who were once financially secure, are out of work entirely. And kids like mine, who once took schooling for granted, have been out of in-building instruction for almost a year.</p> <p>So today, now that I have the opportunity to ask our Ward 7 Councilmember a question, to me the most pressing issue facing my family and others isn’t just one particular type of funding, but rather the question of how can we simply get our kids back to school in a fair and</p>



	<p>equitable way?          I've chosen to send my son to school at Elsie Whitlow Stokes in Ward 5 and my LEA has done a good job incorporating the voices of teachers and parents in our reopening plan and my work with other PAVE families has familiarized me with the DCPS Re-open corps, but many families have children in both DCPS and public charter schools - and parents' experience varies widely. How can we partner to coordinate across sectors to ensure an equitable reopening plan for all kids and families?</p>
<p><b>Elizabeth Reddick,          Ward 7 PLE Board          Member, Bridges PCS          and Dunbar High          School</b></p>	<p>Councilmember Gray, Good Afternoon. My name is Elizabeth Reddick and I am a Ward 7 resident. Although I am not a DC native, I have always considered DC to be my home, and I'm now raising my children here. I began spending summers in DC in the late 90s with my uncle who lived on Florida Ave. I remember being locked inside because he would say "you're safer in here than out there." When I joined the military in 2005 at 19 years old, I made DC my Home of Record because I always intended to come back. Since then I've had two sons here, one in 2012 and one in 2018. You may ask why that matters but you see in 2012 DC hit a record low of just 88 homicides, you were Mayor, Cathy L. Lanier was Police Chief of MPD and Kevin Donahue was the Deputy Mayor of Public Safety. In 2018 I returned after my divorce and I have remained a resident of Ward 7, expecting the same change I saw in 2012. I wasn't aware that there was a real problem in the city until April 11, 2019 when my 13 year old daughter witnessed a shooting near Anacostia Neighborhood Library, on her way home from school. Let's face it, whether COVID-19 or Gun Violence, Wards 7 &amp; 8 continue to be historically and most deeply impacted by Public Health Concerns. I'm here today driven by solutions. I offer a call for partnership as it relates to a safe and equitable plan for school reopening in DC. As part of our plan, we believe that system and LEA leaders should work with WMATA and other necessary partners to create guidance for safe transportation for students, especially those that take the bus or metro. Parents are rightfully concerned about many aspects of how schools will reopen here - including how students will get to and from school safely. As a parent, I know what my child needs to feel safe returning to school, and all parents are experts in what their children need. We are here Councilmember, ready to partner with you, to share that responsibility and expertise in building a safe and equitable plan for school reopening. What is your plan to include Parent Voice, at the table, and how can we partner with you to ensure that school reopening happens with safety and equity in mind?</p>

Parent Name	Chat Questions	Asked? Y or N
<p><b>Renee Davis, Ward 1          PLE Board member,          Capital City PCS and          Children's Guild DC          PCS</b></p>	<p>Renee Davis - Ward 1 PAVE PLE Neurodiverse mom of two Autistic Youth - Alexa age 16 has a private placement at The Children's Guild PG in Maryland with IEP support from Capital City Public Charter School (CCPCS) along with my 12 yo Michael who is in an inclusion 6th grade setting with IEP Support from CCPCS. But due to their dual diagnosis - Autism spectrum and mental illness COVID has required more home based services as provided through Medicaid</p> <p>If this would have been a normal day, Alexa would have interacted with more than 7 people by now to support her, including but not limited to a medical nurse at home, a dedicated aid on the bus, a 1:1 aid in the school classroom, her teachers, and her job coach, the school psychologists, and</p>	<p>Yes</p>

	<p>the school nurse. Due to COVID, my children's medical needs are being met through HSCSN (health services for children with needs. This is a Medicaid benefit but it has provided home health nursing and Behavioral based therapy in my home. How can we work together with you as you create plans to support students with disabilities while they are at home - including increasing access to medical professionals and services, as well as your plans for returning to school especially transportation and health and safety?</p>	
<p><b>Yolanda Corbett, Ward 7 PLE Board member, Inspired Teaching School, Rocketship Legacy Prep PCS and Washington Leadership Academy PCS</b></p>	<p>I would like to know what was the process for the new vaccination bill was introduced? How many 16-year-olds were surveyed?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Lakeshia Lloyd, Ward 7 parent leader, Woodrow Wilson HS and JC Nalle Elementary</b></p>	<p>How many of the staff in CARE classrooms are certified teachers or other employees from under the teachers' contract?</p>	
<p><b>Lakeshia Lloyd, Ward 7 parent leader, Woodrow Wilson HS and JC Nalle Elementary</b></p>	<p>Do all schools have the proper PPE that's needed?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Lakeshia Lloyd, Ward 7 parent leader, Woodrow Wilson HS and JC Nalle Elementary</b></p>	<p>Are there enough teachers for virtual and in person learning?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Lakeshia Lloyd, Ward 7 parent leader, Woodrow Wilson HS and JC Nalle Elementary</b></p>	<p>Is this a political move that will affect the schools budget if they do not open school in February?</p>	
<p><b>Jaimee Hall, Citywide Board member and</b></p>	<p>My 7 yo prefers virtual learning and would like to continue due to increased separation anxiety because of the pandemic. Do you all plan to support those students and parents that do not feel safe returning to school at this</p>	<p>Yes</p>

<p><b>Ward 7 PLE Board member, Rocketship Legacy Prep and Cesar Chavez Parkside HS</b></p>	<p>time?</p>	
<p><b>Yizel Romero, Citywide Board member and Ward 7 PLE Board member, DCI, Mundo Verde and Briya</b></p>	<p>Since you are part of the DBH committee, do you have a plan that includes people who don't have health insurance? How will the committee help them get access to the vaccine?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Lakeshia Lloyd, Ward 7 parent leader, Woodrow Wilson HS and JC Nalle Elementary</b></p>	<p>I also would like to ask what are we doing about the crime in ward 7?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Yizel Romero, Citywide Board member and Ward 7 PLE Board member, DCI, Mundo Verde and Briya</b></p>	<p>How can you support us to change the Alliance renewal one time a year instead every six months?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Simone Scott, Ward 7 PLE Board member, Digital Pioneers and Lee Montessori</b></p>	<p>How will you combat the increased violence especially youth violence in our Ward? We have seen and witnessed unprecedented negative effects in my community. This is important due to my son already suffering mental health issues including suicide ideation. Already cautious of this virus re-entering school, what is your plan to give our kids safe passage to school for this may be the first time having to use public transit for him due to not working (at home parent) for almost a year now? I am terrified to have my son use any form of public transit how will you ensure our children have safety and support in school with social emotional needs? Safety is another factor outside of the virus getting them back in school especially Ward 7.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Renee Davis, Ward 1 PLE Board member, Capital City PCS and Children's Guild DC PCS</b></p>	<p>And how can we work with Medicaid providers like Children's Hospital and Health Services With Children with Special Needs</p>	
<p><b>Elizabeth Reddick, Ward 7 PLE Board</b></p>	<p>Can you give us more specifics about what our advocacy should look like to partner with you on these issues?</p>	

<b>member, Bridges PCS and Dunbar HS</b>		
<b>Randee Grant, Ward 7 PLE Board Member</b>	How will we add money to the budget that keeps our children competitive in an increasingly global environment?	
<b>Simone Scott, Ward 7 PLE Board member, Digital Pioneers and Lee Montessori</b>	You hit my question on the head, Elizabeth. Safety. Let him say PAVE one more time. We are asking him how he will combat the issue(s)? How will he be effective in solving this?? I'm confused. I haven't heard a solid plan of action.	
<b>Tracy Barnes, Ward 5 PLE Board member, Washington Leadership Academy PCS, Inspired Teaching School</b>	Are there any specific plans around reopening for public transportation for school kids concerning Covid safety? ex. separate city buses for school kids & adults	
<b>Elizabeth Reddick, Ward 7 PLE Board Member, Bridges PCS and Dunbar High School</b>	Can the CM commit to including parents in those conversations with WMATA, OSSE, Children's National, etc?	
<b>Brittany Wade, Ward 7 PLE Board member, Homeschool</b>	A lot of the schools in Ward 7 have not been updated and were causing children health problems before the Pandemic. So how do we expect them to be ready to receive families?	Yes
<b>Sharon Culver, Ward 7 PLE Board member, Beers Elementary</b>	It would be great to return to in-person, but that is not the preference for all families or teachers. What can be done to urge DCPS and the council to pour more into making virtual learning as effective as it can be? So much time has been spent on getting schools reopened that teachers have never been effectively trained or provided the resources to teach children virtually.	Yes
<b>Lakeshia Lloyd, Ward 7 parent leader, Woodrow Wilson HS and JC Nalle Elementary</b>	Is this a political move to reopen because we are losing funding? DCPS has a contract with the mental health department in schools. Why is it that the schools in ward 3 have social workers and we don't have them full time in ward 7 schools?	
<b>Tamera Adams, Ward 7 parent leader</b>	I get confused when people say there has to be a good argument for not returning kids to school. Why isn't 4K deaths per day enough of a reason combined with the fact that we have several new variants?	



<p><b>Caroline Pahaham, Ward 4 PLE Board member, Mundo Verde PCS and DC International PCS</b></p>	<p>CM Gray, you keep saying "if there is a good argument to be made for keeping kids home" Who decides what the good argument is? If we feel it is not safe for our children to go to school, then that should be enough. You just supported a bill that removes a parent's right to make a decision about a vaccine, I hope you are not wanting to do the same in regards to our decision about sending our children back to school.</p>	
<p><b>Letisha Vinson, Ward 7 PLE Board member, Will Academy PCS and LEAD Academy PCS</b></p>	<p>We need to be working towards a school environment where students are able to recognize when they're dealing with mental health issues and feel they can ask for help.</p> <p>Mental health education is not yet mandatory in schools. Until it is, teachers and administrators need to help shine the light on the concept of self-care. And, they need to emphasize the fact that mental health is an integral part of health.</p> <p>Especially with everything that students and families have faced over the past year, we need to urgently ensure that schools have access to mental health professionals. How can we partner with you to ensure that, this year, our city funds the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) school-based mental health expansion AND reverses the \$4 million cuts to community-based providers?</p>	