



PAVE DCPVCW Meeting with Councilmember Charles Allen

**Agenda:**

- **Welcome - 5 minutes**
  - Maya Martin Cadogan, PAVE Executive Director
  - Monique Cole, Ward 6 PLE Board member, Mundo Verde PCS - Meeting Chair
- **Introductions - 2 minutes**
  - Name
  - Ward of residence
  - Where your children attend school
- **Councilmember Charles Allen Remarks - 8 minutes**
- **Parent Q&A - 40 minutes - See full questions below!**
  - *Leigh Sims, Ward 6 PLE Board Member - Equitable School Funding*
  - *Cassandra Gentry, Citywide and Ward 6 PLE Board Member, Inspired Teaching PCS - Mental Health*
  - *Katrice Whitaker, Ward 6 PLE Board member, Statesmen College Preparatory Academy for Boys - Reopening*
  - *Takia Shire, Ward 6 parent leader, DC Prep Benning Middle and Digital Pioneers Academy PCS - Special education supports during virtual learning*
  - *Brittany Weightman, Ward 6 PLE Board Member, Van Ness Elementary - Out of School Time Programs*
  - *Open chat questions*
- **Closing and Next Steps - 5 minutes**

Parent Name	Question
<b>Leigh Sims, Ward 6 PLE Board Member - Equitable School Funding</b>	<p>I am a Ward 6 Parent of a budding preschooler, and a former Ward 7 and 8 DCPS and Charter School Special Education Teacher. I want the best for my children; they deserve a strong and fully funded public education. Growing up, my parents moved to communities based on the ranking of the public education there. In recent times, the District saw families moving out of DC because they appreciated the strength of the public education in these surrounding communities, including how they were funded. Even in the years before the pandemic when DC ended with a budget surplus, we underfunded our students by as much as 1500 dollars - particularly at-risk students. Now facing this pandemic, we cannot afford to leave anyone behind because of a disorganized budget or planning that did not properly consider the needs of the most marginalized communities. Does the city have a long-term goal for ensuring adequate school funding and that money invested in students DC defines as at-risk is actually spent on those students?</p>
<b>Cassandra Gentry, Citywide Board member and Ward 6</b>	<p>My name is Cassandra Gentry and I'm one of over 1,100 grandfamilies raising grandchildren in DC. Many of our children, my granddaughter included, were receiving mental health services in school before March 2020. When the schools closed for in school learning these services were limited. In the past ten months I have seen a drastic change in her behavior. She has shut</p>



<p><b>PLE Board member, Inspired Teaching PCS</b></p>	<p>down socially and has become emotionally distant. I have also seen many of the children in our community at Plaza West Grandfamilies suffer from loss of services causing mental breakdowns and suicide threats. While some children receive medicine, that is not enough without the necessary support services is causing our children to not be able to adjust well.</p> <p>As a result of the health pandemic 1 in every 5 children will be confronted with a traumatic experience such as death, violent crimes and separation from parents and siblings. This includes over 5,000 children in kinship care that attend DC schools. In order for our children to recover and receive a well rounded education it is essential to fund the expansion of mental health services to an additional 80 schools at a cost of \$6.4 million next year. Our children have been and are experiencing an abnormal childhood that will affect them as we try to recover. We will need to increase mental health and behavioral health programs in order to improve the outcomes of our children's educational success.</p> <p>How can I as a caregiver and parent of a child that has lost so much help to make sure that our children receive the services needed to reach their full potential both educationally and socially? How can we partner with you to make sure that families are aware of, have access to, and are engaged in mental health supports and services for our children so they can become their best selves?</p>
<p><b>Katrice Whitaker, Ward 6 PLE Board member, Statesmen College Preparatory Academy for Boys</b></p>	<p>Over the past few months, PAVE parent leaders have revisited what is needed for response, recovery, and now school re-opening in the face of the ongoing Coronavirus crisis. The result was a revised Statement of Beliefs, which calls on city leaders such as yourself to ensure that these plans incorporate engaging all key stakeholders, developing comprehensive guidance for health and safety, building community trust, and communication with families - all centered in safety and equity. As you can see, parents are prepared to partner with policymakers on the issue of school reopening and recovery from this crisis. What is your plan to include parent voices in these plans, and how can we work with you to ensure parent voices are heard on these issues?</p>
<p><b>Takia Shire, Ward 6 parent leader, DC Prep Benning Middle and Digital Pioneers Academy PCS</b></p>	<p>Good afternoon! My name's Takia Shire and I'm the proud mother of two boys in 7th and 4th grade who have IEPs. Managing my younger son's virtual education has been particularly frustrating because I have felt that his school hasn't provided the supports he needs to succeed academically in the new context of virtual learning. My son has ADHD, so there are days where he doesn't want to log on since it's hard for him to sit and focus on the computer for so long.</p> <p>A huge problem for us has been that he started 4th grade during the middle of the pandemic. At my son's school, 4th grade is the start of middle school. He was very familiar and comfortable with the special education staff at the elementary school and they were great at motivating him to log on for virtual learning at the start of the pandemic. However, he never met any of the middle school special education staff in person and doesn't have the same trust in them as he did with his aide from the elementary school. As a result, it is much harder for them to motivate him to log on and this has affected his academic success a lot.</p> <p>I've also asked for a new IEP meeting for my son since instruction went virtual, but haven't heard back from the school's SPED Coordinator. Clearly, the IEP from before virtual learning is not working during virtual learning.</p> <p>Given all that, my questions are: How can we partner to address these types of structural barriers to providing families with the SPED services we deserve, like making sure that every</p>



	<p>family that needs it has access to an IEP portal? And how can we partner to include parent voice in the implementation of The Special Education Data System (SEDS), which is supposed to support high quality service delivery for children with disabilities?</p>
<p><b>Brittany Weightman, Ward 6 PLE Board member, Van Ness Elementary</b></p>	<p>I am a Ward 6 parent of a PreK-3 and 1st grader. Throughout my life and my own children's experiences, I have seen firsthand the value and importance of out of school time and enrichment programs.</p> <p>We know that after school and summer programs are linked to increased engagement in class, social emotional skills, and self-esteem--all factors that drive improved academic performance and in turn improves the mental health of the student overall. As the district slowly transitions students back into the classroom, schools should receive guidance on how to balance students' mental health needs and academic instruction during distance and in-person learning, including ways to incorporate Out of School Time (OST) programs in planning for both social and emotional development and academic growth. Out of school time programs are also critical to building a family-centered education system. Can we count on you to protect funding for Out of School Time Programs so students can continue to access these essential enrichment activities?</p>

Parent Name	Chat Questions	Asked? Y or N
<p><b>Melinda Montgomery-Jones Ward 6 parent leader, Marie Reed ES</b></p>	<p>I agree a return to "normal" is not the approach to take; however, I have two questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.) What approaches to a full return to school have been discussed so far (ie., class size, hybrid schedule, summer school options) and</li> <li>2.) What kind of emergency funding is available to schools with needy parents? Who and how can schools apply?</li> </ol> <p>I ask this question because at my children's school (Marie Reed), a great deal of the PTO's budget has been almost entirely depleted over the last and this school year to help needy families with food, rental assistance, clothes, and computers (last year). How does at-risk funding play a role in public schools, which are deemed Title I?</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p><b>Mary McCane, Citywide Board member and Ward 8 PLE Board member, AppleTree at THEARC</b></p>	<p>Good afternoon, I am Mary McCane, citywide PLE board member, and am also a part of the Ward 8 PLE board. I want to ask how you plan to encourage other Councilmembers to use the same transparency you are using so that the funding is spent the same citywide?</p>	
<p><b>Mable Boler Ward 6 PLE Board member, Barnard Elementary</b></p>	<p>Soon after my grandson returned to in-person learning at Barnard Elementary, they closed due to an incident of COVID. The school did reopen but this incident has raised my suspicion about the school taking all safety precautions including the assuredness that all teachers and staff are vaccinated. What are you doing to ensure that DCPS is adhering to and enforcing all protocols to keep schools safely reopened?</p>	

	<p>My grandson has a 504 plan and remote learning during this time of COVID has really impacted his learning and other services. What will you do to make sure that SPED families are getting the services they need and that funding is not cut for services?</p>	
<p><b>Jennifer Thorpe-Lewis Ward 6, Washington Latin PCS and Inspired Teaching School</b></p>	<p>What is the role of the Ombudsman in resolving some of these issues of information/data needs? Can this office be helpful in supporting families who have needs and are not sure exactly how to get the support from the school?</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p><b>Renee Davis, Ward 1 PLE Board member, Capital City PCS and Children's Guild DC PCS</b></p>	<p>I am a 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. 1/3 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 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.</p> <p>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>	