



Parents' Bill of Rights for the Education System

WHO WE ARE

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

Parents are partners and leaders with schools and policymakers to develop 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. Since 2016, PAVE has grown into a network of 3,000 DC parents and caregivers united behind a vision for an education system that is created not just for, but by and with families and guided by the following core values:

- *Value #1: All families have access to high-quality schools and the information they need to make the best decisions for their children.*
- *Value #2: All schools have adequate and equitable funding to support the needs of children and families.*
- *Value #3: All students have a safe, healthy, and welcoming school environment.*
- *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.*
- *Value #5: All parents have the resources they need to support the success of their children at home and in school.*

You can find more about PAVE parent leaders and their incredible work and accomplishments [here](#).

BACKGROUND

As parents, we know our children best and will do whatever it takes to ensure they are cared for and succeed in life. We are a group of parents that reflect the diversity and demographics of our city who have brought together our shared experiences and expertise to outline **what we want to be true from the school system to ensure all our kids have the education they deserve and the opportunity to meet their full potential.**

Unfortunately, this is NOT what our education system in DC now looks like. **Too often, a diversity of parents from different Wards, backgrounds, incomes, races, cultures, and languages are not at the tables where decisions about our children's education and the system that supports it are made.** This is because of the many barriers that are in place that don't allow each parent in our city true access to participate and leads to an overly narrow definition of parent participation. It is not just about showing up at meetings, since if you come into our houses, **we show up for our children every single day** which distance learning during this pandemic has made all the more visible, as the school day is now ours to manage. **Our goal is to create a bill of rights for parents that creates an opportunity where we can ask things of the system - just like the system asks things of us.**

In education, the opportunity to build a vision for what our system looks like is also often held in the hands of those who hold formal power but we all - parents, grandparents, caregivers, teachers, school leaders, school staff, and students - have so much power within and much more power together. So, while our Parents' Bill of Rights for the DC education system (which we define as inclusive of but not limited to LEAs, DME, Committee on Education, OSSE, SBOE, PCSB) is not what is true now, it is what SHOULD and CAN be true, if we are going to build a stronger and more equitable city where families are true partners and leaders in this work. And it is even more important during these times for us as parents to create the vision for what we want to see in our system, as we are shouldering so much of the work to educate our children this year. **These are our rights and what we expect from our DC education system.**

Parents' Bill of Rights



COMMUNICATION AND PARTNERSHIP

- I have the right to accessible, timely, and consistent communication from every school district and agency that makes decisions around education.
- I have the right to be a valued partner in my child's education.



TRANSPARENCY

- I have the right to accessible, reliable, and comprehensive data about our schools so that I can make informed decisions and be able to impact and advocate for outcomes in our city's education system.
- I have the right to transparency about staffing in our schools and in system leadership - and our system ensures that parent voice is represented in hiring and evaluation processes.
- I have the right to understand how schools are funded and how that funding is spent.



EQUITABLE RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- I have the right to a fully funded education system so that all of our children have an excellent and well-rounded education in support of the whole child.
- The system provides equitable access to educational, social emotional, and enrichment resources, support, and/or opportunities both in and outside of school that will help children learn, grow, and succeed in life.



ADDRESSING BIAS

- I have the right to an education system that addresses bias and historical injustice while also challenging assumptions that we have about our city's communities, schools, and people in order to ensure equity for our kids.

PARENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS FOR THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

COMMUNICATION AND PARTNERSHIP

- *I have the right to **accessible, timely, and consistent communication** from every school district and agency that makes decisions around education.*
 - The system supports schools to clearly and consistently communicate what our children are learning, the goals they need to meet, how they are progressing, and what support they are already getting or still need to achieve those goals.
 - When new issues or information arises, system leaders clearly and quickly articulate that information, potential solutions and/or plans to address issues or decisions, and ways that the community can get involved. This is especially important in times of crisis.
- *I have the right to be a **valued partner** in my child's education.*
 - Parents are valued partners in their child's education at every level of the system and have shared power.
 - All families' input and concerns are equally valued regardless of race, ethnicity, income-level, education, or background.
 - System leaders work to seek out voices from marginalized communities that are not always heard - not just those that speak most often - and continuously assess who they are not hearing from or are unable to reach.
 - System leaders establish structures for two-way communication. Families have opportunities to get information from the system and to connect with system leaders to share their experiences, needs, and input.
 - System leaders regularly communicate what they have heard from families and other education stakeholders and how they have or planned to incorporate that input.
 - These opportunities are intentional and equitable to meet parents where they are and in the languages they speak. There are a diversity of methods and times for parents to engage.

TRANSPARENCY

- *I have the right to **accessible, reliable, and comprehensive data about our schools** so that I can make informed decisions and be able to impact and advocate for outcomes in our city's education system.*
 - Rather than parents having to search for this information, this data is proactively and consistently communicated to parents in accessible ways.
 - This information includes parent-friendly visuals and language, which is translated into the languages for each of our communities.
 - System leaders regularly create public opportunities for parents to discuss the data and co-develop solutions and plans.
 - The system is transparent about what data is collected about our children, its purpose and how it will be used, as well as how individual information will be protected, and the rationale behind any data that isn't available or cannot be shared. Parents are made aware of their rights to opt out of sharing data.
- *I have the right to **transparency about staffing in our schools and in system leadership** - and our system ensures that parent voice is represented in hiring and evaluation processes.*
 - These processes ensure the voices of parents of students who are most vulnerable or are not always heard are represented, including families with children with disabilities, who are at-risk, or are English Learners.
 - Parent voice is represented and valued in the hiring and evaluation processes for all levels of leadership - teachers, principals, central offices, and agencies.
- *I have the right to **understand how schools are funded and how that funding is spent.***
 - The system creates opportunities to inform parents about how the school funding process works and how they can engage in decision-making.
 - Parents see where and how much funding for our schools is spent - including public and private dollars, and see how that compares with other schools in the system.
 - Parents are active partners in conversations about how to ensure the equitable allocation of resources in our schools and systems - including public and private dollars.

EQUITABLE RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *I have the right to a **fully funded education system** so that all of our children have an excellent and well-rounded education in support of the whole child.*
 - This is determined based on the real, lived experiences of families and communities and what support they need to achieve the best education for their children.
- *The system provides equitable access to **educational, social emotional, and enrichment resources, support, and/or opportunities both in and outside of school** that will help children learn, grow, and succeed in life.*
 - The system provides equitable staffing and funding so that all schools have what they need to serve all kids, including children of all ability levels and students from different Wards, communities, and backgrounds.
 - Programs and resources are allocated equitably so they are available to families in all communities.
 - The system reduces barriers to access and proactively share information to promote each families' agency, so those who need them most are able to benefit from the available resources and programs.

ADDRESSING BIAS

- *I have the right to an education system that **addresses bias and historical injustice while also challenging assumptions** that we have about our city's communities, schools, and people in order to ensure equity for our kids.*
 - In particular, system and school leaders actively address and eradicate bias in our schools around setting high expectations for all students, family engagement, school discipline and behavior, hiring decisions, and identification of disability and/or gifted and talented students.
 - The system supports schools to take direct action to foster school experiences that are culturally competent, including restorative justice practices and support for the whole child.
 - The system ensures that Black, Brown, low-income, LGBTQ+, students with disabilities, students that are at-risk, English-language learners, as well as their family members - are centered in the work to promote safety and equity for all.
 - Schools engage with families with an anti-bias and equity lens, (e.g. accessible surveys, community meeting times and structures, etc.).