



PAVE DCPVCW Meeting with OSSE

**Agenda:**

- **Welcome - 5 minutes**
  - Kerry Savage, PAVE Director of Policy
  - Yolanda Corbett, Ward 7 PLE Board Member, Inspired Teaching School, Rocketship Legacy Prep PCS, Washington Leadership Academy PCS parent - Meeting chair
- **Introductions - 2 minutes**
  - Name
  - Ward of residence
  - Where your children attend school
- **OSSE Team Remarks - 8 minutes**
- **Parent Q&A - 40 minutes - See full questions below!**
  - *Meaghan Mountford, Citywide and Ward 4 PLE Board Member, Shepard Elementary - Testing and orientation to special education services*
  - *Renee Davis, Ward 1 PLE Board Member, Capital City and Children’s Guild PCS - Increasing access to medical professionals and services during COVID*
  - *Karla Reid-Witt, Ward 7 PLE Board Member - Coordination of services and supports across LEAs*
  - *Tiffany Blakney, Ward 6 PLE Board Member, Friendship PCS - Revising IEPs in response to COVID*
  - *Takia Shire, Ward 6 parent leader, DC Prep Benning Middle and Digital Pioneers Academy PCS - Addressing structural barriers to virtual special education supports and access to information*
- **Closing and Next Steps - 5 minutes**

Parent Name	Question
<p><b>Meaghan Mountford, Citywide Board member and Ward 4 PLE Board member, Shepard Elementary</b></p>	<p>Since my then 1<sup>st</sup> grader, now 2<sup>nd</sup> grader started virtual learning with me last March, my suspicions of a learning disability cemented. We are now joining legions of friends and peers who navigate the DCPS system to secure testing, services, and potential placement for their special needs children, friends who have, in some cases, spent years (and often \$1000s) seeking help. The team at our daughter’s school, Shepherd ES, has been wonderfully supportive, and I know great work is being done, but I also know many who struggled, faced discouragement, and were mired in the system.</p> <p>I recognize special education services in a pandemic are challenging and inequities have been further exposed and expanded as children are isolated and harder to reach.</p> <p>In math, students with an IEP, on average, have <u>experienced a 43% decline</u> in their expected growth from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020. In reading, students with an IEP have increased by 7%; however, the reading levels have a clear racial disparity. On average, a Black student with disabilities has experienced a drop of 33% in their expected growth. White students with disabilities have experienced an increase of 28% in their expected reading growth.</p>

	<p>I trust we ALL share the same goal: That when any parent (or grandparent or teacher or friend) expresses concern for a child, they are offered swift, transparent, and meaningful help with a clear and easy path to receive assistance.</p> <p>As we move towards schools re-opening, how can we partner with you to help our schools achieve this goal so EVERY child in need has access to appropriate special education services, both at virtually and in-person AND to ensure our DC education leaders prioritize supporting schools, parents, and OSSE in their roles to achieve this goal.</p>
<p><b>Renee Davis, Ward 1 PLE Board member, Capital City and Children’s Guild PCS</b></p>	<p>As PAVE parents, we want to partner with you to develop a flexible and resilient strategy for delivering special education services while we navigate changes due to coronavirus. If this would have been a normal day, my daughter 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 aide on the bus, a 1:1 aide in the school classroom, her teachers, and her job coach, the school psychologists, and the school nurse. Now, it is just me.</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>
<p><b>Karla Reid-Witt, Ward 7 PLE Board member</b></p>	<p>Per the OSSE’s 2019 Students with disabilities in DC Landscape Analysis and OSSE’s 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. We have a fragmented and complex [education and special education] system. Most students with disabilities spend the majority of their instruction time in the general education setting. Students of all types of disabilities and levels of need are spread across LEAs of varying sizes and capacities. In addition to the range of needs, students have varying types of services and levels of accommodation, requiring different staffing and learning environments.</p> <p>More than 5,000 students with disabilities are served in DC elementary schools and more than 4,000 are served in DC high schools. Black students are identified as having a disability more often than students of other races.</p> <p>However, many of DC’s LEAs are small, and more than 79% of LEAs enroll fewer than 100 students with disabilities, yet all LEAs are legally required to provide a full continuum of services for all students.</p> <p>Specifically, how will OSSE develop, promote, facilitate, support, and fund cooperation among LEAs to build specialized programs, to efficiently use city resources and take advantage of economies of scale, in order to provide high quality and meaningful special education services for students with disabilities?</p>
<p><b>Tiffany Blakney, Ward 6 PLE Board member, Friendship PCS</b></p>	<p>As the mother of a 10th grader with an IEP, I had been having challenges securing the support he needed ever since he transitioned to high school far before the onset of the pandemic. His IEP was revised in March 2020, and since COVID-19 disrupted school and life as we knew it before, I have not been able to concretely secure my child’s education at all. It has been a long and hard fight to get the support he needs from his school. Before, during, and after the time when DC schools formally reopen for in-person instruction, we need to prioritize our students with disabilities.</p> <p>According to the Washington Post, children with IEPs across the District are not only falling behind academically, but they are <a href="#">at risk of missing developmental milestones</a> and losing the necessary skills for an independent life. Even though all accommodations and supports are</p>

	<p>required by law, many students, including my child, aren't receiving what they need. Occupational therapists and other specialists are not able to effectively provide services to children virtually, and parents of students with special needs do not feel equipped to help teachers and specialists fulfill their children's IEP.</p> <p>How can we work together to ensure that for all our students with individualized education plans, their goals and supports - including virtual learning addendums - are adjusted and implemented as needed to account for the rapidly changing virtual, hybrid, or newly back in-person school contexts?</p>
<p><b>Takia Shire, Ward 6 parent leader, Plummer Elementary</b></p>	<p>Good afternoon! My name is Takia Shire and I am the proud mother of two boys in 7th and 4th grade who have IEPs. Managing my younger son's virtual education has been frustrating in particular 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. As a result, 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>There are other structural problems too. My school doesn't have an online IEP portal, for example. I've also asked for a new IEP meeting for my son since instruction went virtual, but have not heard back from the school's SPED Coordinator. Clearly, the IEP from before virtual learning is not working during virtual learning.</p> <p>These issues are urgent because my family is not the only one going through this. A month into this current school year, PAVE surveyed SPED families from all over the city and found that about half of them had not yet received the services required by their children's IEPs.</p> <p>The impact of this is backed up by the stories and data shared by other parents here today. Clearly, specialists aren't able to effectively provide services to children virtually, and us parents of students with special needs don't feel fully equipped to help teachers and specialists fulfill our children's IEPs.</p> <p>Given all that, my questions are: How does OSSE plan to address these types of structural barriers to providing families with the SPED services we deserve, like making sure that every 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>Parent Name</b></p>	<p><b>Chat Questions</b></p>
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<p><b>Corinne McKeever, Ward 4 parent leader, Cesar Chavez Parkside</b></p>	<p>What will you do for parents that still don't feel comfortable sending their children back once schools reopen?</p>
<p><b>Lakeshia Lloyd, Ward 7 parent leader, Woodrow Wilson HS and JC Nalle Elementary</b></p>	<p>Do we have enough PPE for all schools? Are there enough teachers to cover all CARE classrooms as well as virtual learning?</p>
<p><b>Jaimee Hall, Citywide Board member and Ward 7 PLE Board member, Rocketship Legacy Prep and Cesar Chavez Parkside HS</b></p>	<p>Agencies tend to listen to more personal testimonies when it comes to parent voice regarding what we'd like to see happening; however, I don't have personal experiences that pertain to Special Education... so how can we as parents without children with greater needs for services support those that do?</p>
<p><b>LaJoy Johnson-Law, Ward 8 parent leader, Rocketship Legacy Prep</b></p>	<p>How will OSSE ensure ALL LEA's are adhering to IDEA and hold them accountable to the federal law IDEA? Since OSSE receives federal funding for special education, how is OSSE partnering and making <i>sure</i> schools follow the law and not just encouraging LEAs to do so?</p>
<p><b>LaJoy Johnson-Law, Ward 8 parent leader, Rocketship Legacy Prep</b></p>	<p>How is OSSE partnering with the PTI and other nonprofits to help with implementation?</p>
<p><b>LaJoy Johnson-Law, Ward 8 parent leader, Rocketship Legacy Prep</b></p>	<p>What guidance is OSSE giving LEAs around compensatory education to help students with disabilities who may be further behind?</p>
<p><b>Lindsey Jones-Renaud, Ward 7 PLE Board member, EW Stokes Elementary</b></p>	<p>When will LEAs be submitting a new plan? Since it appears many LEAs will not be opening up to in-person school this school year, these plans look like they will be soon outdated.</p>
<p><b>Kesara Brewster, Ward 4 parent leader, KIPP Lead / Grow, Washington Global and Washington Jesuit</b></p>	<p>My student is new to special education. In trying to figure out which school would be best for his needs is there data or information on special education in the schools like there is on the regular services?</p>

<p><b>Randee Grant, Ward 7 PLE Board member</b></p>	<p>My youngest was diagnosed with PTSD, agoraphobia and anxiety - this was a diagnosis after a suicide attempt - and her school at the time did nothing to support her evaluation at the school level nor was I supported in understanding the process. How is OSSE ensuring that parents are supporting in navigating the process in getting IEPs completed <i>and</i> guided through how to hold schools accountable?</p>
<p><b>Lindsey Jones-Renaud, Ward 7 PLE Board member, EW Stokes Elementary</b></p>	<p>The DC Council recently passed the Dyslexia and Other Reading Disabilities Screening and Prevention Pilot Program Act. How is OSSE planning to fund and implement this act?</p>
<p><b>Lakeshia Lloyd, Ward 7, Woodrow Wilson HS and JC Nalle Elementary</b></p>	<p>Why are the services provided limited in certain wards?</p>
<p><b>Chioma Oruh, Ward 4 parent leader, Frost School</b></p>	<p>We don't have a lot of OST options for our children and there isn't a lot of guidance offered to LEAs to create inclusive environments. Does OSSE have some supports available for Universal Design for Learning or other evidence based tools that support LEAs? I don't want to assume that some of this is not happening, even as it's not visible to parents.</p>
<p><b>Chioma Oruh, Ward 4 parent leader, Frost School</b></p>	<p>LEAs resist offering home and hospital. Is OSSE prepared to support them in determining eligibility?</p>
<p><b>Andrea Jones, Ward 8, KIPP DC &amp; Learning Center, Minor Elementary</b></p>	<p>My son's school starts in person learning on Monday, however, transportation will not be provided due to the schedule being shortened to 1/2 day. Transportation is part of his IEP, why are these services being denied?</p>
<p><b>Chioma Oruh, Ward 4 parent leader, Frost School</b></p>	<p>Personally, I'm having difficulty getting DCPS (which remains my LEA) to offer home based dedicated aide - which my kids require for support during distance learning that their PCAs are not trained to offer. Can OSSE provide guidance that doesn't leave due process and dispute resolution as the only methods of resolving this? I have found it to be an exhausting and hostile process. This is a prominent issue.</p>
<p><b>Tracy Barnes, Ward 5 PLE Board member, Washington Leadership Academy PCS, Inspired Teaching School</b></p>	<p>What are the specific requirements to allow a child to travel on the school bus with an epi-pen or any other medically required device?</p>
<p><b>Tanya Jernigan-Rush, Ward 8 parent leader, Thurgood Marshall</b></p>	<p>How often does OSSE go into the schools to make sure they are in compliance with the kids' services?</p>



<b>Academy</b>	
<b>Randee Grant, Ward 7 PLE Board member</b>	What concrete steps will you take to demonstrate that there is an urgency in resolving the accountability and parent training to support our children’s needs being consistently addressed with a higher level of monitoring?
<b>Chioma Oruh, Ward 4 parent leader, Frost School</b>	Access to dispute resolution support is currently inequitable. Is there a partnership with the PTI and other parties that can help promote more equitable access to helping us achieve greater parental involvement?
<b>Caroline Pahaham, Ward 4 PLE Board member, Mundo Verde PCS and DC International PCS</b>	Second Randee’s question. Additionally it sounds like we have recourse if our children’s needs are not being met, so what do you recommend we do? What can we do if our child is not getting the services 504 or IEP is not being implemented?
<b>LaJoy Johnson-Law, Ward 8 parent leader, Rocketship Legacy Prep</b>	Just an FYI the alarming part is that this is normal. Takia and so many other families are experiencing this everyday and many of the families do not know their rights and do not know how to hold the school accountable. Has OSSE looked into breaking all the LEAs down into groups and hired technical assistance individuals to help schools with special education?