



Testimony for the Committee of the Whole & Committee on Government Operations & Facilities

Joint Public Oversight Roundtable: School Facility Conditions During the Re-Opening for School Year 2021-2022

Wednesday September 28, 2021

To: Council of the District of Columbia

From: Tyesha Andrews, PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education) Ward 8 PLE Board Member

Date: September 28, 2021

Good morning, Council of the District of Columbia, Chairman Mendelson, and all District family and friends. Thanks to the Committee of the Whole for allowing me to speak this morning.

My name is Tyesha Andrews, and I am a current ward 8 resident, mother of a student at Plummer Elementary, and at Jefferson Middle Academy; I serve as a ward 8 PLE board member for Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE).

I will not be before you long as I only have a few of concerns. First at Plummer Elementary, the HVAC system has been being worked on for at least a week now. There is concern because periodically it stops working and there is no heat or AC in parts of the building. This is a serious health/COVID hazard. Small window units have been installed in each classroom and can be turned on as needed. Many teachers still can use AC as they need to and do not use the window units. The concern is the air quality and if it breaks, as it usually does, what will the air quality be in this age of COVID?

In addition, at Jefferson Middle Academy, logistically within the building, they have enough filters and PPE. However, Jefferson is in serious need of rapid testing for students and staff, especially when students are sent to the isolation room. They need to find out as soon as possible if someone is COVID Positive so that the necessary steps are taken. There is a large lag-time between when someone tests positive and when the school community is notified. This is unsafe for all staff and students.

Last, staff at both Plummer Elementary and Jefferson Middle Academy have concerns about DCPS COVID policies. Who gets notified when a case exists at school, do siblings quarantine? Sadly, that is not clear for all under what conditions will a class quarantine? DCPS policies are very vague. With the SIX Jefferson COVID cases so far since August, no teacher has been identified as a close contact, even though the students were in our classrooms. One teacher at Jefferson was notified by a child's parent that the child is positive. This teacher teaches in a



smaller classroom and never received notification about being a close contact. These are serious concerns that not only effect DCPS staff, but DCPS students, and the families of those DCPS students. This puts the entire DCPS community at risk!

Please consider the concerns of the staff at Plummer Elementary and Jefferson Middle Academy. Our children deserve a safe learning environment. Thank you.