

**Education Agencies
Performance Oversight Hearing Testimony Guide
Committee of the Whole
Wednesday, March 2, 2022**

To: Committee of the Whole, Chairman Mendelson, Committee of the Whole members, and Committee of the Whole staff

From: Kiara Childs, PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education) Ward 8 PLE Board

Date: March 2, 2022

Good morning Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee of the Whole. My name is Kiara Childs and my daughter Peyton is a Kindergartener at Friendship PCS Online. I am speaking here today because it is important for my child and the thousands of other families across the city who have chosen to do virtual learning or who are homeschooled to also have access to face to face interpersonal connections and real life communities outside of the virtual space! I live in Anacostia where it feels like incidents are always happening– so I am especially concerned about having a space where my daughter will feel both physically and emotionally safe. We all know Kids need safe places to learn, play and become active members of their community. I feel like there have always been issues, but for the most part I had these things growing up here in the District and I want the same for Peyton! I am here advocating for the DC to provide 25 million in OST funding, For the District to provide dedicated funding for schools for before and after school, summer, and winter programs. I am also calling for you to redesign the cost structure and requirements for vouchers and financial aid, so that lower income families can get the access they need . Over all, almost one-half of DC students (45%) participate in OST programs, but participation varies inversely with income. Those in low-income families are less likely than those in higher income families to participate at all.

I often go out of state to Maryland and to private institutions for our OST needs. That's because there just isn't a large variety of programs available in my area! Peyton is at the age where she needs opportunities for Social and Emotional Learning. I'd like to see more programs with activities where she can learn useful skills and learn how to interact with other kids and adults!

I'd like to see DPR summer and afterschool programs both at schools and recreation centers as a home away from home for kids in the city! A lot of young people need help and mentorship but are afraid to ask! When we have a community of adults that know them personally and are invested in helping to guide them, it will help to keep them out of trouble

When I think of what I want to see from the District in terms of family and community engagement, I want to prioritize making sure that parents are in the loop in the decision making, not just on a one time basis but throughout the process, especially in the case of responding when negative incidents happen.

The city gets a lot of money in terms of partnerships, but it's about more than just the funding! We need to make sure that money is going to where it will make the best and serve the most families. We need to develop our community and help it grow!

Thank you for allowing me to testify and share what I want to see for our kids and our District!

Kiara Childs

PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education) Ward 8 PLE Board