

DaSean Jones
State Board of Education
State Board of Education Meeting
March 15, 2023

My name is DaSean Jones, I am a constituent of Ward 7. I have 4 children, my oldest graduated from CHEC now attends North Carolina A&T, my son attends Eastern SHS, my other two daughters are a 9th grader at Columbia Heights educational campus, and a 1st grader at KIPP Inspire. I am also a parent leader in education board member with parents amplifying voices in education, better known as PAVE.

The importance of school based mental health is vital for the future success of students. College and career readiness programs are steps in the right direction. Some schools making strides with XQ redesign such as Columbia Heights education campus and Dunbar Senior High School just to name a couple. The stepping stones for children's future success are predicated on college and career readiness preparation. However, school based mental health services are equally important to develop tools that are important to build a well-developed social construct needed to succeed developing the whole child. Most of our schools aged children are tier 1 students who are overlooked because they are less likely to have major educational concerns. The expectation is they are the most likely to have progress.

My son is a tier 1 student having major challenges adjusting to high school, the freedom, autonomy, and the block schedule of four classes a day for 82 minutes. His struggles adjusting have increased to a detrimental level. Tardiness and coarse absences are drastically affecting his level of performance.

My connection with PAVE have focused my values on such things as all families should have access to high quality schools and the information they need to make the best decisions for their children as well as all parents should have the resources they need to support the success of their children at home and in school. Those values prompted me to ask questions of staff and administration which led me to request MTSS meeting to access the supportive and services of professionals seeking possible interventions to assist me in supporting my son and his academic success. My frustrations have been elevated because I am gaining knowledge and information of services that could have benefited me three months ago if I was thoroughly orientated and formerly introduced to individual services the school offer through seminars or workshops. to provide a solution for challenges my son is having. The in-house community-based organizations

my son has been connected with are access youth and communities in schools, but in my opinion, they are not promoted effectively enough allowing immediate accessibility for issues and concerns parents are having in attempts to reach every family.

Two months and two meetings into the MTSS process a referral to see a clinician was submitted but I have not received any communication from the service provider to begin the process connecting my son who I believe would give my family the support necessary to bring about viable solutions to support his academic success. I requested the MTSS process because I was told that was the first step in addressing my concerns with possible interventions to potentially support my son.

In the future I see a trauma-sensitive school program providing training to teachers to ask students in supporting social-emotional learning with the mental health professionals that are available. I envision a school incorporating course curriculum from training programs like Turnaround for children, Restorative DC, and Transcend for the staff and students to have an opportunity to share in the training, provide real-life examples of lived experience, and create ideas for future engagement.

While numerous challenges are necessary to improve educational and life outcomes for all children, SEL programs can provide students with important tools to improve both school and life success. SEL programs are not a panacea, but now there is a strong evidence base that suggests they can be part of the solution for enhancing students' social, personal and academic development. Actually, this statement should not be a surprise given both behavioral and neuroscience research showing the deep interrelatedness of various aspects of human development. Promoting positive development in one domain can lead to concomitant positive changes in other areas. Fostering young people's personal and social development should be a fundamental focus of our educational institutions.

Thank you for your time and partnership.

DaSean Jones
PAVE Ward 7 PLE Board Member