

Simone Scott
State Board of Education
State Board of Education Meeting
February 15, 2023

Dear Board Leaders and Fellow Members,

Thank you for meeting with us today to hear our voices and testimony. My name is Simone Scott. I am sharing my time today as a parent of 2 children thriving at 2 of our cities East of the River Charter schools. In addition I am a 2 Board Member Holder. I hold parent positions at both Digital Pioneers Academy and the other, PAVE; an organization amplifying voices of education many of you are familiar with. Thus, I appreciate your consistent consideration of our asks. As we know safety, high quality equity education, mental health, accessible affordable programming during and outside of school are matters you are addressing. With limited time I have gathered some points I believe are necessary to share.

First, to my community, our educational lottery system is a privilege. Having the ability to select the best schools we believe suitable for our families again, is a privilege. Safety is a major concern everywhere in our city. Every child and staff member deserves the right to be safe in their school environments and it starts with us. We have to collectively increase our presence in our classrooms, schools, communities, and youth programs to positively address the increase of youth offenses, especially during the academic day. Second, it is imperative for the safety of our students that we continue to explore how we can extend the DC Connect service Program to fulfill the needs around Out of School Time enrichment.

Further, I ask you to consider supporting implementing an elective magnet program model, for our schools to increase career readiness, and cognitive behavioral strategies. Both have shown effectiveness in elevating the school setting and better servicing the needs of every student on their level. This model allows educators, parents, and professionals to place scholars in particular pods for their specific developments, increasing the probability of on track scholars. In addition, pairing parents and students with trusted professionals to provide the proper resources for the family together to remain on target helps students. Lastly, although college readiness is our academic mission, I find many of our kids crave a more creative rigorous curriculum. Reintroducing vocational trade learning back into our schools is critical. It creates



the ability for our principals to build more local, national, and international relationships. As our scholars earn their credits required for graduation, these experiences build more life skills and accessibility to sustain any continuing educational or career path. To close, studies have also shown schools that expanded meditation such as Transcendental and mindfulness practices during the school day have also proven to lower hyper activity, increase focus, and stimulate creativity within their scholars and school staff promoting overall School- Based Mental Health. Lastly, we should assist our DC Committees progress further in reciprocity methods around hiring quality professionals in positions unfilled. As I have provided a copy of my testimony to The Board I hope you consider these points to propel our scholars, and our city to compete and create innovative leaders throughout the 21st century. Thank you for your time. I now close my testimony,

Simone Scott Parent Board Member of Digital Pioneers Academy, PAVE Ward 7 PLE Board Leader, Social Impact Entrepreneur