

**India Patrick**  
**State Board of Education**  
**State Board of Education Meeting**  
**April 26, 2023**

Hello and greetings to President Thompson, Vice President O’Leary, and State Board of Education members,

My name is India Patrick, and I live in Ward 8. I am a proud parent of one child who attends Maya Angelou PCS in Ward 7. I am a Special Education teacher, and my son has a disability called Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD). I currently serve as a PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education) parent leader on the Ward 8 PLE board.

I want to start by thanking you and your staff for your partnership and leadership in advocating for the needs of the students in our city.

Today, I’m testifying about OST Programs for students with disabilities.

This matters to me because I have a child with ODD, and as a result of his disability, oftentimes it was extremely hard to find adequate placement for him while I worked. Programs that could provide services for him were often in Virginia, or too far for me to travel; plus the cost was extremely high. I had to pull from his DC College Saving Plan a few times, and I had to take up a 2nd and 3rd job during the summer months to pay for him to attend different programs. Then to make matters worse, because of scheduling conflicts, I would have to pay for him to ride in an uber and/or public transportation by himself, worrying from the time he left my presence until he returned home.

On their website, DC Public Schools highlights how important high-quality afterschool programming is to students’ attendance, academic achievement, and attitudes toward learning. Did you know that students who attend two and a half hours of afterschool programs each day gain the equivalent of nearly two months of learning time? Imagine how much our students would benefit if their afterschool programs were tailored to meet their needs - especially for students like my son who have more specialized needs. The Mayor’s budget for next year includes wins for OST programming, but my vision is for every family to have access to a nearby high-quality OST program for their children that supports their individual needs, where they can explore their passions and enrich their learning regardless of income level or where they live.



I hope you will join me in advocating for equitable access to OST programming that meets the needs of ALL students.

Thank you, State Board of Education, for allowing me to testify and share. Nearby OST Programs for students with disabilities are essential. Over the years, I have spent thousands of dollars, and this issue has had a negative influence on my child. If I had had access to more nearby programs in the past, my past experiences with my child's OST Programs would have been different.

Thank you,  
India Patrick  
Ward 8 PLE Board Member