

Simone Scott
Education Agencies
FY24 Budget Oversight Hearing Testimony
Wednesday, April 5, 2023

To Chairman Mendelson and fellow Committee Members,

I am Simone Scott a native Washingtonian, mother of 2; a thriving Sophomore at Digital Pioneers Academy (DPA) and a Kindergartener loving her learning experience at I Dream both are Public Charter Schools East of The River. Additionally, I am a dual Parent Board Member with DPA (Digital Pioneers Academy), and Ward 7 PLE member of PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices for Education).

With limited time, I thank you for every win added to budget specific asks regarding OST and SBMH programs. Specifically around:

- OSSE/DBH \$9.7 million grant for the next four years to support recruitment and retention of SBMH mental health clinicians.
- Ensuring a 5.05% increase in the UPSFF.

As a Social Impact Entrepreneur graduating the District's first DHS Business Entrepreneurship Course 5 years ago I am spearheading the need for a true self-sufficiency Business Entrepreneurship accredited model, to support our most vulnerable residents. Career training and placement through business entrepreneurship, ownership, and vocational trade curriculum should be areas of consideration.

I highlight the urgency of this matter because doing so will allow the city through accreditations to truly provide a whole child pipeline. Many of our youth and residents are passionate about using their act of service opportunity to work and or own a business in our city, especially as it relates to trade, OST and SBMH programming. I believe proposing this initiative and investing in our residents in this manner adds value to our bottom line, adds more earning and spending capital to our city's budget, increases funding to our in schools and out of school time programming. It increases diversified committed professional hiring within our city, builds more B2B to B2C sponsorships for our schools, an increased shift in how our youth can reinvest back into their communities, and lastly can address how we can increase

resource capital necessary to expand programs like OST and SBMH programs considering outlets such as film and television production to list just two examples.

We are experiencing certain gaps within the city that we already understand the need for our collaborative work to continue. Placing more passionate career professionals from our city, within our city to fill the vacancies within both OST and SBMH sponsorship programs is a key area. Cultivating more aspiring youth to become both vocationally and academically prepared to graduate higher level education entering 21st century professional career fields is another key point. Most impactful to OST and SBMH programming, are to considerably highlight the need for business entrepreneurship in our city. Our youth and their parents need a sustainable, proficient business entrepreneurship pipeline to provide true self sustainability through this 2 Generation sufficiency model. Most importantly, making business entrepreneurship a 2 Generational activity will bring back vocational training in schools most likely increasing graduation rates, reducing juvenile offenses on and off school grounds, transition more students into career placement training during their post, secondary, and high school academics, increase professional and college accreditations before high school graduation promoting more internship opportunities, and increasing the chances college graduates will choose to hire in/or own a business servicing the District.

I am more than willing to speak to act further with the Committees and others on what the Business Entrepreneurship Self Sufficient Model can look like, and how we can continue to work together to get more qualified, eligible career placement, vocational training, accredited certifications, and business ownership to our most vulnerable residents; increasing the probability of hiring passionate individuals for long term career placement within the District. Furthermore, truly preparing residents and others to own and operate within the District. Organizations such as DSLBD and WDCEP have been tremendous assets in understanding how the District has ranked high nationally in Business Entrepreneurship since 2007 and I support the city to extend and complete this whole child pipeline initiative.

Again, I thank you for your time, consideration, and this concludes my testimony.

Sincerely,

Simone Scott

Social Impact Founder, and Dual Ward 7 Board Member (PAVE PLE Board, and Digital Pioneers Academy)