

Takiyah Worthy
Education Agencies
FY24 Budget Oversight Hearing Testimony
Wednesday, April 5, 2023

Hello Chairman Mendelson, Committee of the Whole members, and Committee staff

My name is Takiyah Worthy and I live in Ward 7. My son is a third grader at E.W. Stokes East End. I currently serve as a PAVE parent leader on the Ward 7 board.

I want to thank you for your partnership and leadership on Out-of-School Time and School-Based Mental Health. We have made some progress but there is still much to get done.

Today, I'm testifying with a focus on School-Based Mental Health. Resources are still lacking across many schools in DC and evidence of this shortfall is spilling over into the community. It is especially noticeable in areas where there's a mix of younger and older school-aged children attending schools in close proximity to one another or traveling routes that overlap. Just last month, my good friend's 11-year old grandson was robbed at gunpoint for his coat. This happened on his short walk from school to home and the young man who robbed him was 15-16 years old. Two weeks later my cousin witnessed a young boy robbed for everything he was wearing on his way to school. I mean, I literally live behind my son's school...I can see the parking lot from my porch...I don't think I would ever allow him to walk to school alone.

School-Based Mental Health matters to me because my community matters to me. My child being able to walk to school safely, attend school safely and play in his neighborhood safely matters to me. A real investment in SBMH is an investment in our kids but it is ultimately an investment in the health of our community and city as a whole. It is imperative that every student and staff in every school have access to quality comprehensive mental health resources, or the victims of violence will become the offenders because they are scared, they are hurt, and they are not processing those feelings in a healthy way.

Currently only 63% of DC schools are matched with a provider and many schools are still in need of a partnership with a CBO.

In order to make this vision a reality, alongside PAVE parent leaders, I would like to see more people trained and ready to support student mental health. This can only become a reality with a funded strategy for building a pipeline of mental health professionals and ensuring we



adequately fund our existing community-based organizations so we don't lose the providers doing this important work.

Thank you for your time and partnership.

Best,
Takiyah Worthy
Ward 7 Board Member

Quick Note Template

Dear _____,

My name is _____ and I live in Ward _____ and I serve as a PAVE parent leader on the Ward _____ PLE Board. My kids go to _____ school. ISSUE really matters to my family and me because _____. To advance equity/vision for specific issue, I would like to see _____, _____, and _____.

It is only when we center our communities' voices and experiences in our budgets and policy that we can advance the lives for each and every one of our DC kids.

Please reach out if you have any questions around PAVE parent leaders' priorities and how we can partner together. My email is _____ and my phone number is _____.

Best,
Name
Citywide/Ward X Board Member

Email Template for Setting Up Meetings

Dear Elected Official,

My name is _____ and I live in Ward _____. I currently serve as a PAVE parent leader on the Ward _____ board.

We are grateful for your partnership and dedication towards ensuring there are great schools in every Ward that support and nurture ALL DC kids!

Introduce issue:

- What is it?
- Why does it matter?
- How has your family and community been impacted?

What is your vision for this issue? And how would you like to see this issue be addressed (PAVE priorities)? (link matching Statement of Beliefs to email)



PAVE parents would appreciate a 30 minute meeting with you or your staff in the next few weeks to discuss how we can partner together on (specific OST or SBMH policy solution based on needed follow up for the policymaker). It is only when we come together, put our communities at the center of our work, and deeply believe in the promise of their leadership that we can advance equity and excellence for each and every one of our kids.

Best,

NAME

Citywide/Ward X Board Member