



**Tyesha Andrews**  
**State Board of Education**  
**State Board of Education Meeting**  
**April 26, 2023**

Greetings President Thompson, Vice President O'Leary, and State Board of Education members,

**My name is Tyesha D. Andrews, and I live in Ward 8. My kids attend Jefferson Middle Academy and Mary H. Plummer Elementary Schools, and I currently serve as a PAVE parent leader on the Ward 8 board.**

**Today, I'm testifying because my children's schools need additional funding for building renovations and community resources.** Due to enrollment changes, some DCPS schools East of the river have seen a decrease in funding for next year. **As a parent of a Plummer Elementary student, the decrease in funding concerns me.** Plummer has taught me that just because a school is in a troubled neighborhood doesn't mean greatness isn't happening within the school walls. Over the years, Plummer Elementary has consistently scored the highest in Wards 7 & 8 of the district on the nationwide assessment called Classroom Scoring System (CLASS). Due to the COVID pandemic, no assessments were conducted during the 2019-2020 school year. However, in August 2022, Plummer scored #1 in all DCPS. In addition, Plummer's PARCC scores have shown gains in one academic area or both. Despite this, in initial budgets for this year, Plummer is losing nearly \$260,000 in its budget. And our school still has many unmet needs.

All SBMH supports vary by school, based on budget and need. In 2021, PAVE conducted a 2021 Fall Back to School Survey, where we learned that only 54% of caregivers are knowledgeable about accessing mental health professionals/clinicians at school. . Outside of that, the National Survey of Children reports that almost 50% of children in the US have experienced "at least one type of severe childhood trauma. For the next two fiscal years, \$18 million are secured for SBMH in DC Schools. This funding can be used to conduct a citywide needs assessment to see what other schools need the same resources and more resources so that all DC Schools, including Plummer, can achieve better academic scores. Increased funding would ensure hiring of more mental health professionals and other staff to assist them. All schools need increased access to mental health professionals. Imagine the heights Plummer can achieve with more funding to support their SBMH.

Every family should have access to a high-quality OST program and education 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.

**Commented [1]:** @tdkornegay1@gmail.com could you provide a link to this stat? I want to make sure we're backing up our facts!

**Commented [2R1]:** I can't but it came directly from the principal. I can forward the msg to you. She sent it to the Plummer community through the Remind app.



**To make this vision a reality, I would like to see** Plummer Elementary receive a complete renovation with a new library, gymnasium, green space, and a space with more light. The school needs extensive renovations, especially on the first floor, due to lighting, and in the library. The first floor has limited natural lighting due to the lack of windows; the library has folding chairs and old carpets for the students to sit on. The bookshelves are not conducive to the height of elementary school children. The brightness and colors inside any school impact the mental stability of the staff and students; a brighter school is a happier school. Plummer needs to look more inviting to the community to increase enrollment and ensure that funding stays the same. How can schools like Plummer compete with the local Charter schools if they receive different funding? Charter schools with more funding cause low enrollment in all DCPS. Plummer is only a few blocks away from KIPP. Plummer should be able to match and compete with KIPP. There needs to be more equity and responses toward the needs of the Plummer school community. Additional funding needs to be provided for the before and after-school staff.

In closing, being a PAVE parent leader has encouraged me to be more involved in my children's educational and social growth. I confidently request anything to ensure a successful school experience. Therefore, I advocate for all DCPS, including Plummer Elementary, to receive increased mental health support funding and proper renovations. Plummer is a beautiful rose in a concrete jungle that needs additional love and care to continue blossoming and growing.

**Thank you for your time and partnership.**

**Best,**  
**Tyesha D. Andrews**  
Citywide/Ward 8 Board Member