

Elizabeth Reddick
State Board of Education
State Board of Education Meeting
September 20, 2023

Good evening state board Of Education Representatives.

Thank you for your hard work and due diligence in being change agents for families in the District of Columbia. My name is Elizabeth Reddick, a Ward 7 Resident and parent of 5 children. I'm testifying today on behalf of my family and especially my SPED student. You see, we rely on OSSE to provide transportation for him both during the year and extended school year. I am a single mom and sole proprietor of a small business. I have very small contracts that sometimes require me to be away from home at a moment's notice. I also have a recent graduate at home that helps me with her brother.

Why do these factors matter, you may ask? It's because transportation is a necessity for us. Reliable transportation. I don't have the leisure to simply have my child picked up and dropped off because transportation is unavailable. My son missed the first 2 weeks of school because I had a pre scheduled working opportunity out of the region and my daughter had to Work. She rearranged her schedule so that she could meet him for a bus that never showed. Not only did I contact his school but also transportation on numerous occasions about my absence and how to properly locate my residence.

The communication with the Parent Resource center is very hit or miss. I've had agents go above and beyond for my family and others that outright lie about my child's bus coming when in fact ESY had been delayed a week and that was why no bus came. I don't have a car nor a steady enough income to accommodate taking him to and from school. I also am not receiving EBT benefits so I don't qualify for WMATAs Lift benefits. This has become an extreme burden on us financially because not only am I missing work opportunities, I am choosing between getting him to school and feeding him many weeks.

Time and time again, economic disparities show up in our lives and waivers and reimbursements are not enough for us to have access to a free and equitable education. I ask you to consider my position, a mother who became an entrepreneur so that she could better support her child during COVid but now that we are in person, I am back to no longer being able to provide due to

unreliable transportation that can be hours late or not show up at all. How do you all plan to assist families like mine that continue to fall behind because we lack resources and support.

Best,

Elizabeth Reddick
Ward 7 PLE Board