

Fari Ghamina Tempe
State Board of Education
State Board of Education Meeting
September 20, 2023

Good evening SBOE Members,

Jambo Bwana! I Am Fari Ghamina Tempe, a lifelong CAPITOL HILL Ward 6 resident and a very present custodial grandmother of three differently abled children that attend Brookland Middle and Gatari Child Development Center. I am a PAVE Ward 6 PLE board member who served for many years with several disability, healthcare, economic justice and educational rights organizations in our city. My current affiliations include Disability Rights DC, POH, DBH, AJE, Spaces In Action, the center for popular Democracy, and Community Change Action.

Today, I am testifying about the grave lack of affordable childcare in Ward 6. There are many intentional and targeted programs in Wards 5, 7 and 8. But because of the social and economic status of most residents in Ward 6, on Capitol Hill childcare averages \$2500 per month! There are three amazing centers within 2 to 6 blocks of my home that have absolutely no inclusionary placement slots through OSSE. I know that my 2yo autistic grandson would greatly benefit from establishing friendships within our neighborhood - he could learn and appreciate nature by walking around in our own community to and from school.

Oh yes! I know this, because I have first-hand experience in working with these very centers as a DC Childcare Champion, I worked closely with Council Member & Child Care Champion Christina Henderson, former Education Committee Director, and more recently with Chairman Mendelson, who is the current Education Chair. I dedicated many hours of hard work for the past three years with a coalition of other DC Childcare Champions on the Early Educators Pay Equity Fund. I've built community with these very centers in my neighborhood on projects, like Early Educators Day, and A Day Without Childcare. I spent countless hours with the very educators in these centers helping them to craft persuasive testimonies with SPACES In Action. We successfully collected over 100 testimonies this past budget season demanding no cuts to the pay equity fund.

And still, I have to travel several neighborhoods from my home to Gatari Child Development Center which some days cost \$60 per day if my grandson is not emotionally mentally or physically available to take public transportation. I have to do two round trips, which average \$30 each.

This existence has created hardships like choosing to buy food or medicines no longer covered by Medicaid, and there are so many other colliding nightmares without affordable, quality childcare in my community. A bold solution is to offer and accept child care vouchers in all Wards and neighborhoods in our city. It's inequitable and unjust that I am not able to reap good harvest of my service for my two year old autistic genius. His name is Daniel white, and he deserves to thrive in his own community. What power do you have - formally in your SBOE rep role, or other platforms - to advocate for these changes? Please join me in advocating for an equitable solution to this problem.

Thank you for your time.

Best,

Fari Ghamina Tempe

Ward 6 PLE Board