

Tyesha Andrews
State Board of Education
State Board of Education Meeting
September 20, 2023

Good evening,

My name is Ty Andrews, and I am a Ward 8 resident, and proud parent of one child at Plummer Elementary and one at McKinley Tech. I am also a parent leader with PAVE on the Citywide/Ward 8 PLE Boards; Plummer LSAT member, and McKinley Tech PTO committee member. Today I am testifying about DCPS renovations, DCPS administrative issues, and my priorities around Safe Passage.

I testified before you all in the Spring to inform you of the much-needed renovations for Plummer Elementary. After a discussion with Principal Fuller last week, I now know that the building issues at Plummer have gotten worse. Plummer has been having ongoing HVAC issues since 2016. In 2019, it was so hot in the school that they had to move the summer school to another location. Repairs for the system are always temporary; and some rooms must have window A/C units. In addition, Plummer has other remodeling/renovation issues. There is exposed piping in the stairwell and gym. They also have an electricity issue where they cannot get an electric marquee due to the inability to provide the appropriate power. There is limited storage in classrooms which does not compare to newer schools. The remodel that was completed for Plummer was done in one summer and is unfair and unacceptable to the school community. It is challenging for Plummer to compete for enrollment with an older building. Next, the lighting is not bright on the first floor; and many of the offices do not have windows. Last, the cafeteria also needs to be remodeled. Based on these facts, I believe that Plummer should be added to the list of schools on the DGS school modernization project.

Next, you would expect the first year of High School to be exciting for first-year students and their families, especially when they are accepted into the specialized school of their choice. That was not the case with my Freshman at McKinley Tech this school year. Information on Freshman orientation was sent last minute, so my family could not attend. Also, despite my son attending the summer bridge program, on his first day of school, he was not in the McKinley Tech system. We never included Eastern on the MyschoolDC application, but somehow, Eastern pulled all his information and enrolled him there. McKinley did not have a class schedule for my son, they couldn't provide him with a school ID because he wasn't in their system, and neither of us had access to the school announcement app because DCPS had not updated my family email

address, although the new address had been provided over a year ago. My son came home frustrated almost the entire first week of school due to either not having a schedule and not having his school ID or his schedule changing. Also, on the first few days of school, the students had to arrive on a staggered schedule because one of their X-ray machines was not working. My son had to be at school at 7:45 in Ward 5, traveling from Ward 8, on public transportation. This is a long, dangerous route for a child. This leads me to my last issue, safe passage.

Public transportation safety has deteriorated over the years. No one pays their fare anymore, children and women with strollers take over the handicapped seats, and people play loud derogatory music, and smoke cigarettes and marijuana on Metro. This is not a safe environment in general, let alone for a child, especially when you consider all the other issues that Metro has.

On September 12th, my children had a dental appointment. My youngest son takes the school bus through OSSE to and from Plummer, so I called to cancel his morning transportation that day; however, the bus still showed up. Then the next day, we never saw the bus, so I called, and the representative informed me that they had come, and they would not be sending another bus because my son was not ready. I ended up calling out of work that day because I knew I would have to take him to school on public transportation, which is draining. We had to catch two buses to get to his school.

We were already running late, and the bus stopped 15 minutes away from the school. The bus driver and trainee got off the bus and did not say anything. All the passengers on the bus looked confused. After about 5 minutes, I stepped off the bus to ask what was happening and they said they were on break and waiting for relief. I explained to them that I understand they have a schedule to abide by, but proper customer service would have been to inform the passengers before just stopping the bus and getting off. I had to call an Uber to take my son to school because their relief never showed up.

In closing, I would like to ask that you all consider producing a plan to speak with the necessary agencies to rectify or at least address the issues I have presented today. I can also make myself available to provide further details on any of the information I provided.

Thank you for your time.

Best,

Ty Andrews
Citywide / Ward 8 PLE Board