

Simone Scott
Committee of the Whole
Teacher and Principal Retention
Tuesday, November 28th 2023

Good afternoon Chairman Mendelson, members of the Committee of the Whole, and DC Council staff.

My name is Simone Scott. I am a Ward 7 and Citywide parent leader with PAVE, and I have two children thriving at two East of the River Public Charter Schools - I Dream and Digital Pioneers Academy

Thank you for your work to address teacher retention. As a child who suffered with undiagnosed adolescent mental health, my teachers were my life line. Not only did they address my academic needs but my life skills as well. If it had not been for dedicated teachers going beyond the classroom, I can guarantee I would have not graduated high school let alone with honors.

In my testimony today, I only want to quickly highlight the necessity of teacher retention. Thank you again for your attentiveness to properly address these critical issues. As we both know without quality teachers there would not be a successful academic model.

The critical points I would like to make are:

With such emphasis on the importance of SBMH, is Wellness Wednesday's for our teachers and staff enough? Many educators are still sharing much of this dedicated Wellness time with Staff training. Notably and rightfully exhausted, many teachers choose to opt out of participating in SBMH activities in school for self-care outside of school.

- What more can we do for our teachers to ensure that we are nourishing and enriching them in ways that keep them invigorated and valued each week?

Also as we know, affordable housing in the District is also a major concern. The cost of living vs. teachers salary is not enough to cover personal and professional barriers. How

are we making sure that our teachers are being paid enough to live in the city where they teach? Recently at a SBMH event, a SPED teacher shared they were not able to participate in the event as their almost 2 hour daily commute to/from Baltimore would not permit them.

- What more are we considering to ensure our teachers can work, live, and adult right here in the District of Columbia? Having to endure such a prolonged commitment can push any qualified teacher out of DC.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Simone Scott
Ward 7 and Citywide PAVE PLE Board Member