

**DaSean Jones**  
**Committee on Recreation, Libraries, and Youth Affairs**  
**Department of Parks and Recreation**  
**Thursday, February 22nd, 2024**

Hello, Councilmember White and DC Council staff. My name is DaSean Jones. I am a PAVE Citywide Parent Leader, a native Washingtonian, and a resident of Ward 7. I have four kids. My youngest child is at KIPP Inspire, I have a 10th grader at Columbia Heights Education Campus, a son at Eastern Senior High School, and my oldest daughter who is currently in college and graduated from CHEC as well.

Throughout the years, my children and I have experienced and benefitted from many Department of Parks and Recreation programs over the years. My oldest daughter at twenty years old to my youngest child at seven have all been a part of DPR summer programming at some point in time. My children have participated in programs ranging from the Strong Start Summer Program in Rosedale to Aqua Day Camp summer swim league, Little Explorers, and the Discovery Camp.

I want to first say that as a parent and Washingtonian, I appreciate the expansion of various programs that DPR has done in the past several years like implementing STEAM in the Full Steam Ahead program and more. DPR programs are extremely important because many of the schools we as parents send our children to don't have the capacity to offer the wide range of programs that DPR does. Though Out-of-School time programs have grown over the years, a long-time PAVE parent priority, there are still challenges for families in accessing these opportunities due to financial and transportation constraints. As a result, I'd like to recommend a few improvements that can enhance the experience of DPR programs for DC youth and families.

One area DPR must do a better job at is the dissemination of information to parents about programs. Many parents, including myself, struggle to stay updated on program offerings and deadlines as we juggle work and other responsibilities. Collaboration with schools, both DCPS and public charters, to share information about DPR programming directly with parents could benefit families and ensure that more students can take advantage of these opportunities.



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I also want to highlight the importance of DPR programs and recreation centers as safe spaces for many youth in the District. Students must have a safe place they can go after school AND Safe Passage to get to their safe place whether it is home or to a DPR program. Many children in DC rely on DPR facilities to support and enrich their education, therefore, we must make sure they all have a way to access these programs safely.

I urge DPR to join our efforts in advocating for the Safe Passage of students to school and their safe place, wherever it may be, making sure parents are informed in a timely manner about program offerings. Together, let's work towards creating a safe and accessible environment for all students in the District.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

DaSean Jones

Citywide and Ward 7 PLE Board Member, PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education)