

Simone Scott
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 Simone Scott, a PAVE Citywide Parent Leader and resident of Ward 7. I am also a parent of two young children. My son attends Digital Pioneers Academy and my daughter attends I Dream.

The programs managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation are an important pillar in the education of children all across the District of Columbia. Families and youth are consistently searching for Out-of-School Time opportunities to engage in. Not only do DPR programs enhance students' education that they are receiving in school, or in many cases that they are NOT receiving in school, but they also serve as a safe harbor for many kids who don't have a safe place to go once school is out. With this in mind, I have some suggestions for DPR to enhance its programs in order to better serve the needs of parents and students.

One area that could be improved is for DPR to partner and collaborate with both DC Public Schools and public charter schools to establish OST programming in our schools after academic operating hours. Many of our scholars due to school travel do not allow them to participate or engage in OST opportunities. Thus, partnering and sponsoring OST programming in schools can increase DPR's yearly participation. In addition, city leaders should create plans for DPR to get students connected with external programming. This would not only deter children from unsafe environments but also connect them to services where they are. This will positively impact children's personal growth, their choices, and their learning.

Similarly, ensuring Safe Passage for students participating in DPR programs after school is crucial. By establishing Safe Passage routes to DPR programs and local recreation centers, we help mitigate the violent acts students often experience during their commute. Creating a safe and secure way for students will contribute to a safer city for all of our residents.

I am grateful for the steady expansion of DPR programming over the years as it has provided valuable opportunities for our kids. If DPR can partner with schools to offer programs students are interested in after school and provide Safe Passage for students to get to those programs,



then kids will have an easier time accessing a safe and nurturing environment until they return home to their loved ones.

Thank you for considering these suggestions. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Simone Scott

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