

Tyesha Andrews
Committee of the Whole
Deputy Mayor for Education, Office of the State Superintendent of Education,
and District of Columbia Public Schools Hearing
Wednesday, February 28th, 2024

Hello, Chairman Mendelson and DC Council staff. My name is Tyesha Andrews. I am a Ward 8 resident and I serve as a PAVE Citywide member. I am also a parent and my children attend Plummer Elementary and Jefferson.

As a Ward 8 resident and native Washingtonian, I have seen firsthand the inequities that exist for families and students who live East of the River. These inequities exist in many aspects, however, it is especially present in education. Access to specialized school programs such as STEM, Career and Technical Education, and Dual Language, among many others, is unequal across parts of the city. According to the best available data, West of the River has 76% of specialized school programs while East of the River only has 24% of specialized school programs even though East of the River is where more students call home. This lack of equitable access to programs hinders students in Ward 7 and 8 from benefitting fully from educational opportunities.

The lack of specialized school programs not only poses an equity challenge but also impacts the safety of students commuting to school. If there were high-quality specialized school programs more equally distributed East of the River, students in Wards 5, 7, and 8 would not have to be traveling two or more miles to school each day. For example, my son travels across the city just so he can obtain a great education that meets his needs and interests. If we had more choices for specialized school programs for kids like my son, then I wouldn't have to put my son through the hardships of having him take two trains, a bus, and walk or get on another bus to get to school.

It is so important that we all communicate and convene regularly, create programs that students, especially students in Wards 7 and 8, are interested in and want to pursue, and that they always have a safe and efficient way to get to their school and back home.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to engage in further discussions and am available for questions.



Sincerely,

Tyesha Andrews

Citywide and Ward 8 PLE Board Member, PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education)