

Dominique Moore
Committee on Health
Department of Behavioral Health
Wednesday, April 10th, 2024

Hello Councilmember Henderson and the representatives of the Committee of the Whole. My name is Dominique Moore. I serve as a PAVE Ward 4 PLE board member.

I have been living in Washington DC since 2002. I have personally experienced the devastating impact of inadequate school-based mental health across the city. The mental health of students and communities is far too important to cut funds from which is why I believe that the Mayor's Budget should increase funding for the Department of Behavioral Health and allocate some of that funding for the recruitment and hiring of mental health providers.

All education systems here in our nation's capital should have at least one or two mental health clinicians in the building. Not only do these providers offer a safe space and teach students about social-emotional learning, they are also the first responders for when a student is experiencing loss or a mental health crisis. I urge the Council to work with the Department of Behavioral Health to find more incentives for mental health providers and Community-based organizations so they can be the key parts of a child's education that we know they can be.

Students are getting shot on metro platforms, robbed outside of their school, jumped while on the train, and more at an alarming rate in the city. Barriers to safe passage from home and school and challenges in gaining access to specialized school programs already exist. As students are faced with these difficult challenges, now is not the time to cut the supports in place that can actually help students. There is a reason PAVE parents like myself chose School-Based Mental Health as our time priority for many years in a row; it is because we know and cannot stress enough how desperate our children are for help. Please work together with parents, schools, and students to solve this issue and get mental health clinicians in every school.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to the solutions you develop and am available for questions.

Sincerely,



Dominique Moore, Citywide and Ward 4 PLE Board Member, PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education)