

Stephanie Griffith-Richardson
Deputy Mayor for Education, Office of the State Superintendent of Education,
and District of Columbia Public Schools Hearing
Wednesday, February 28th, 2024

Greetings, My name is Stephanie Griffith-Richardson, and my son Langston attends Elsie Whitlow Stokes East End. Stokes is one of the few Specialty Schools East of the River in Ward 7. I also serve with PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education) on the Ward 7 PLE Board.

I am here today as a concerned Ward 7 parent and active community member, in hopes that you will continue to protect students in underperforming schools AND the often ignored students who are not doing well at high performing schools. On a personal note, I am struggling to bring attention to my son's school who has outstanding PARCC scores for white children, however, in the last two years black and brown children saw a 30% decline in all test scores. The leadership has continuously provided vague answers and inadequate substantive planning for closing the deficit testing gap. When pressed about what additional support really looked like, parents were given more talking points with no follow-up plan. The achievement gap is alarming and needs immediate action. I know that the school can build capacity like the neighboring Burrville Elementary who has even more limited resources and developed a program to close the gap for their students and was named a BOLD Performance School for its 360!

We, however, as Stokes concerned parents have no one to hold the school accountable for improving its achievement gaps. After many pointless meetings with leadership, unanswered communications to the board of directors and futile outreach to Charter Board, I am turning to the Committee of the Whole to help build system structure, so no other parent have to face this type of adversity.

I believe DCPS and DCPCS needs an advisory commission that investigates achievement gaps, police poor performing schools and provides BOLD Performance benchmark resources to guide schools with a population of students who are falling behind.

I ASK THAT YOU CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- To improve information sharing about achievement programs and cost-saving options, you as the Deputy Mayor of Education (DME) should create and convene a School Performance Advisory group.
- To increase transparency and oversight for performance gaps, the DME should ensure the commission completes baseline standard scores like Restaurant Health Inspection Score cards.

A tall order in these fiscally fragile times, but a priority that cannot be ignored for DC KIDS.

Thank you for allowing me to testify and share what I want to see for our kids and our District.