

Maya Martin Cadogan PAVE Testimony

Good afternoon Councilmember Grosso, Chairman Mendelson, Councilmember White, Councilmember Allen, and members of the Committee on Education. My name is Maya Martin Cadogan and I'm the founder and Executive Director of PAVE.

Last night, I went to sleep with a military occupation of my city overhead but this morning, I woke to something that made me feel better about my country. Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and the LA City Council is reallocating \$250 million dollars in their budget to communities of color - as he said, "so we can invest in jobs, in education, and healing." The Council President, Nury Martinez, called this a resetting of priorities after the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor at the hands of police violence and the senseless death of Ahmaud Arbery and the miscarriage of justice in not prosecuting all of their murderers. Council President Martinez said it best, "we cannot talk about change, we have to be about change."

I am asking our Council, our DC Council, to work with our Mayor and to do the same - be about change.

We have a long history of wrongs in this city that we have done to generations of black and brown residents. And while this Council and administration might not have been the decision makers on all of those impacts, you are the decision makers NOW and you have the POWER to undo those generations of harm.

As I think about all of our parent leaders of PAVE, over 150 of which serve on our Parent Leader in Education Boards, meeting monthly to identify their policy solutions, I think about how the majority of them are black and brown, too many of them are living check to check, too many of them did not receive the educations that they deserved from our city, and ALL of them are fighting for ALL children to get the educations they are owed. Owed.

And while Los Angeles said they are trying to figure out how to invest in education and in communities of color, the beautiful thing is our black and brown parents in DC have already identified ways that we can do that.

- **Fund our kids equitably through an increase in at-risk funds, not just equally as the Mayor has proposed in the USPFF. They aren't asking for a lot - just what our city's own study said was adequate.**
- **Fund mental health supports for our kids. What they are experiencing right now with COVID is trauma, coupled on top of the traumas we have already created for them with too many DC families in poverty. That means \$16 mil for DBH which has experienced deep cuts in this budget and an increase of \$10.6mil for SEL and trauma-informed programs in schools.**
- **Fund \$10 million for childcare subsidies, and \$10 million in emergency funds to stabilize childcare centers so that black and brown parents who are often essential and front-line workers have the support they need.**
- **Expand funding to support distance learning and telehealth, including technology devices and wi-fi, so that next school year doesn't look like the inequity of this one when we went into closures.**

The why behind these asks comes directly from our parent leaders since communities of color are disproportionately impacted by this pandemic. 21 of them have submitted voicemail testimonies for this hearing.

We have to listen to THEM. We have to change the way we do business as a city. We have to undo the harm we have caused. We have to invest in them in our words but also our deeds - very specifically, our budget. And it doesn't just stop with education and childcare - we have to also invest in healthcare, housing, and economic and workforce development. We have to make sure that the black community who built our city and continue to strengthen it know that their lives matter and that they belong here for generations to come. As a sixth-generation Black Washingtonian who is the last of my 32 cousins and 6 aunts and uncles left in this city that all of our ancestors after being freed from slavery have called home, I ask you not to let one more black family in DC be my family's reality.

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To highlight a couple:

From Loretta Jones, a Ward 8 Parent Leader, and mother of a black boy and black girl:

“While things are going well for my daughter, that isn’t the case for my son. I am trying to help him, but I am not a teacher, and I get frustrated too. I understand the content, but I’m not able to teach it, it is a lot for me and I learned it a different way. But I don’t want my son to fall even further behind. I’m worried about what will happen if he shuts down. I’m not behavior specialist or a mental health specialist, I can only do so much. I need supports from the school to make sure my children can learn – and they need resources to make that happen.”

From Katrice Fuller, a Ward 6 Parent Leader and mother of five black boys:

“We need all of our city’s leaders to be more invested in child care and early childhood education, now more than ever. As a mom of five boys (two who are under the age of two), trying to maintain my job and attempting to offer a school/child care setting at home during this pandemic is not only difficult for me, but is truly taking a toll on my kiddos. Especially the babies.”