

**SBOE Public Meeting  
Wednesday March 17, 2021**

**To:** DC State Board of Education Representatives  
**From:** Loretta Jones  
**Date:** March 17, 2021

Good evening State Board of Education Representatives! My name is Loretta Jones and I am a proud parent of three who attend Ingenuity Prep Bright, Beginnings Inc. and Childrens' Guild in Ward 8 and PG county. I am speaking today with Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE).

As a parent, I am appreciative that our city is investing in education, but we must still do more. Although distance learning has been stressful, it has been the only way that I know that my children are safe, as we move through the Pandemic.

I'm happy that the city is beginning to distribute the vaccine and re-open schools, but until we know coronavirus is under control, the city has to continue to prioritize support for kids and families at home and those who are doing a mix between in-person and virtual learning. Things are going well for my daughter, but that isn't the case for my son. He is in private placement and often isn't able to get on Zoom with the other kids. If he doesn't say anything or engage, they will push him off. He is really resistant to getting on and getting help in this different way of schooling and learning.

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 a behavior specialist or a mental health specialist, I can only do so much. I need support from the school to make sure my children can learn – and they need resources to make that happen.

I'm also not able to spend as much time with my other kids because I am having to spend time with my 3 year old to make sure he isn't bothering the others or distracting them and that he has activities and things to for him to learn, because he isn't getting the social emotional development he would normally get in school.

I know there are several other parents who feel the same way and need support, so we MUST invest more in our schools, mental health supports, and special education services both while kids are learning at home to make sure parents like me can support their learning AND when

we fully come back to school, so that schools and child care centers can keep kids safe and productive.

Please support us in making sure that our city:

- Increases the UPSFF and at-risk weight
- Increases funding for DBH ( \$6.4M expanding access to mental health professionals at 80 more schools and \$4M to restore cuts to community based mental health providers)
- Increases funding for childcare centers

More funding will help provide resources such as behavior specialists and mental health specialists to help children with their social emotional development as well as educational growth.

Thanks,  
Loretta Jones  
Ward 8 Parent Leader