GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 15, 2017

The Public Hearing of the District of Columbia State Board of Education convened at 441 4th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20001, at 5:30 p.m., Karen Williams, President, presiding.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

KAREN WILLIAMS, President
JACK JACOBSON, Vice-President
MARKUS BATCHelor, Member
ASHLEY CARTER, Member
MARK JONES, Member
RUTH WATTENBERG, Member
JOE WEEDON, Member
LAURA WILSON PHELAN, Member
LANNETTE WOODRUFF, Member

JOHN-PAUL HAYWORTH, Executive Director

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION:

HANSEUL KANG, State Superintendent
APPEARANCES:

MERILYN HOLMES
ASHLEIGH TAYLOR
MAYA MARTIN
DANA RICHARD
ELIZABETH DEWHURST
DONNA ANTHONY
MIRIAM KENYON
BILL DIETZ
GREGG ALBRIGHT
CARLY WRIGHT
JACLYN KLINE
AUSTIN NICHOLS
FARHANA RABBI
ED LAZERE
DARYL FORTE
JOSH BOOTS
CATHARINE BELLINGER
SCOTT ABBOTT
JEFF SCHMIDT
COSBY HUNT
ANTOINETTE POINDEXTER
SAMi GRAVES
MAZARIA STEVENSON
JAYDEN ABNEY
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5:35 p.m.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Good evening.

The time is 5:32 p.m. on February 15th, 2017, and this public meeting of the District of Columbia State Board of Education is now called to order.

The roll will now be called to determine the presence of a quorum. Mr. Hayworth?

DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Ms. Williams.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Here.

DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Mr. Jacobson.

VICE-PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Here.

DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Ms. Carter.

MEMBER CARTER: Present.

DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Ms. Wilson Phelan.

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Present.

DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Ms. Wattenberg.

Ms. Wattenberg.

(No audible response.)

DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Dr. Woodruff.

MEMBER WOODRUFF: Here.
DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Mr. Jones.

MEMBER JONES: Present.

DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Mr. Weedon.

MEMBER WEEDON: Present.

DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Mr. Batchelor.

MEMBER BATCHELOR: Present.

DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Ms. Hall. Ms. Hall.

(No audible response.)

DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Mr. Dorosin. Mr. Dorosin. Madam President, you have a quorum.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: A quorum has been determined and the State Board will proceed now with the business portion of the meeting.

Members, we have a draft addendum before us. Are there any corrections or additions to the addendum?

DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Madam President, in Item 9, physical education standards, I inadvertently put a witness on the wrong panel.

Dr. Kline should be on the panel for ESSA and so, she will be added to Panel 1 under
Agenda Item 10.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Got that, the motion for that? Thank you.

Seeing no changes, I will entertain a motion to approve the agenda.

MEMBER JONES: So moved.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Second?

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Second.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: The motion being properly moved and seconded, I will ask for yeas and nays. All in favor say aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All opposed?

(No audible response.)

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: The motion is approved. Next on our agenda is the approval of the minutes from the January 13th, January 24th and February 1st working sessions.

Are there corrections or additions to the minutes?

(No audible response.)

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Hearing none, I
would entertain a motion to approve the minutes in a block. Is there a proposed -- proposed --
may I have a --

MEMBER BATCHELOR: So moved.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Second?

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Second.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: The motion being properly moved and seconded, I will ask for
approval. All in favor say aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All opposed?

(No audible response.)

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: The motion is approved. Good evening. My name is Karen Williams, Ward 7 Representative and President of the State Board of Education.

On behalf of the members of the District of Columbia State Board of Education, I want to welcome our guests and our viewing public to our Wednesday, February 15th public meeting. The State Board typically holds its regularly scheduled meetings on the third
Wednesday of every month, in the Old Council
Chambers at 441 4th Street, Northwest.

Tonight, the State Board will consider
two important items, new physical education
standards and a draft accountability plan for
public schools in the District of Columbia.

We will also recognize one of our
outstanding teachers, Elizabeth Dewhurst.

As the Washington Post reported in a
series of articles last year, the Council enacted
the Healthy Schools Act, in part to ensure that
our schools provided appropriate levels of
physical activity.

Not all of our schools are meeting the
goals of the Healthy Schools Act yet. The
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
is here tonight with an excellent panel of
witnesses, to discuss how the proposed changed to
our physical education standards will help
students develop motor skills, knowledge and
behaviors for a lifetime of healthy living.

The State Board will also continue its
work tonight related to ESSA, Every Student Succeeds Act.

We will be hearing from three panels of witnesses who will be providing their input on the draft accountability plan that OSSE put out for public comment on January 30th.

If you have not had time to review the plan, I urge you to go do so by visiting OSSE's website at osse.dc.gov/essa.

OSSE is collecting public input on the plan through March the 3rd, and will present a final draft of the plan for State Board to approve later in March.

In partnership with OSSE, the State Board is now holding meetings across the District to discuss the draft plan.

We have already visited Wards 1, 2 and 3. Information about the remaining meetings can be found on our website at sboe.dc.gov/essa.

Before we move to our recognition of Ms. Dewhurst and public comment, I would like to invite our State Superintendent of Education,
Hanseul Kang, to provide opening remarks.

SUPERINTENDENT KANG: Thank you very much, President Williams, and good evening everyone.

Again, my name is Hanseul Kang and I'm the State Superintendent of Education.

As the President said, tonight we will hear from a panel about the updated physical education standards that OSSE is proposing, based on national standards, updated to meet the D.C. context, that would also better align with the day to day needs of physical education teachers in D.C., and we're looking forward to that panel and the discussion.

Then on the Every Student Succeeds Act for ESSA, we have held community meetings for Wards 1 and 2, and Ward 3 to date. Ward 4 will take place tomorrow evening, and we're looking forward to that discussion, and the remaining meetings will take place over the next two weeks.

So, again, please check out our website osse.dc.gov/essa. We appreciate all the
feedback we are getting and look forward to continuing to receive feedback in person or online through March 3rd.

We will fully consider all of the feedback we have received before finalizing our plan, to share with the Board, and for submission to the U.S. Department of Education in April.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you, Ms. Kang. The State Board welcomes public participation and activities under our authority.

At every public meeting, we begin with testimony from public witnesses on education related matters. If you are a member of the public, and would like to speak at a future public meeting, please contact our staff at sboe@dc.gov or by calling 202-741-0888.

Tonight, our first panel will be Merilyn Homes, Ashleigh Taylor, Maya Martin, Dana Richard and Mazaria Stevenson. Come up front, please.

They're not here? All right, so,
we'll go to our second panel.

Antoinette Poindexter, Tirone Wilkinson, Jayden Abney, Sami Graves, Mauray McDuffie.

Okay, they're not here? All right, we'll go to the education standards?

All right, while we're waiting for our panelists to come, is Ms. Dewhurst here? Yes, thank you.

Tonight, we are joined by one of District's true heroines, Ms. Elizabeth Dewhurst. Ms. Dewhurst, please come down to the table.

Ms. Dewhurst is the District's teacher of the year, a reading intervention teacher at Stuart-Hobson Middle School. She has been inspiring students every day for over 10 years.

Ms. Dewhurst, would you like to make a few remarks before we consider a resolution honoring you and your achievements in the classroom?

MS. DEWHURST: Good evening. It's nice to be here. Am I on? I like the mic. I
might get used to that. It's great to be here. Thank you so much, and thank you State Superintendent Kang. It's nice to see your again, under different circumstances than the surprise in my classroom about a month ago, with three news crews. I view my role as the State teacher of the year as someone who garners the voice of especially students from across the city, and I'll be spending my time, while still working full time, to do just that, and then I'm already paying attention to legislation coming through this body and others, to share that voice in those gatherings, and as well as educators, but primarily students. So, thank you for the opportunity to share that voice.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. I'm having problems with the mic today too. Thank you for that, Ms. Dewhurst. It's an honor to have you here. Members, we have a ceremonial
resolution honoring Ms. Dewhurst before us.  

After a motion to consider the resolution, I will  
as Mr. Hayworth to read it into the record before  
opening the floors for comment. Is there a  
motion?

MEMBER WEEDON: So moved.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Second?

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Second.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: The motion being  
properly moved and seconded, Mr. Hayworth, would  
you now read the resolution into the record?

DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: District of  
Columbia State Board of Education, CR1701  
ceremonial resolution honoring Elizabeth  
Dewhurst, 2017 District of Columbia teacher of  
the year.

Whereas, every year a teacher who is  
an exemplary educator is named the District of  
Columbia teacher of the year and receives public  
recognition and an un-restricted financial award  
of $7,500.

Whereas, the State Board of Education
is proud to recognize a District of Columbia school teacher, Elizabeth Dewhurst as the 2017 recipient of this prestigious award.

Whereas, Ms. Dewhurst, a 10 year educator has been at Stuart-Hobson Middle School since 2013, where she teaches eight grade reading invention courses, while serving as the reading intervention team lead.

Whereas, Ms. Dewhurst's approach to teaching includes contributing to school-wide literacy efforts as a member of Stuart-Hobson Middle School's Academic Leadership Team and implementation of the school's first summer reading camp two years ago.

Whereas, Ms. Dewhurst has received praise from both parents and colleagues for her shining example and ability to instill a desire for academic achievement and character development for her students, and whereas, the State Board of Education recognizes the extraordinary examples set by Ms. Dewhurst, of setting high expectations for all of her students
to multiple their potential, which in turn, leads
to every one of her students working
exceptionally hard to succeed.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that on
February 15th, 2017, the District of Columbia
State Board of Education honors Elizabeth
Dewhurst, 2017 teacher of the year recipient and
recognizes her commitment to providing an
excellent education to students of the District
of Columbia.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Hayworth. Is there any discussion on the
resolution? Mr. Weedon?

MEMBER WEEDON: It's great to see you again. I'd just like to say on behalf of the
Ward 6 Stuart-Hobson Capitol Hill Cluster
community, thank you for all you do, inspiration
to us all, as we -- I've seen your classroom and
met some of the students. Fabulous work, and we
need to really capture and highlight what you and
all the teachers across the city do. So, thank
you.
PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Any more?

MEMBER BATCHELOR: Madam President,

I'll just offer my congratulations to Ms. Dewhurst.

Obviously, Joe can be very proud of your contributions to his students in Ward 6, but we're all very proud, and we know that there are teachers like you all over the city, and that you're a shining example for teachers who want to be dedicated and serve our students and go above and beyond.

So, thank you so much, and you're definitely an inspiration to all of us on the Board. Thank you.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: As a former teacher myself, I'd like to thank you for the exemplary job you're doing with our students. We need more like you. Can you clone yourself?

MS. DEWHURST: No, but you're all welcome to come by any time.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. Any other comments?
MEMBER WOODRUFF: Yes, I'd like to comment.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Okay.

MEMBER WOODRUFF: Ms. Dewhurst, I'd like to thank you for implementing your summer program. I met you and was going to take part in it, and you wrote -- you actually explained it all to me, and I -- and at that point, another job came along.

But in between that, I do understand and it seemed like it was going to be an awesome program, and I'm glad to hear it was. Congratulations.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Any other comments? Seeing no further discussion, the question of -- is approval of a ceremonial resolution honoring Elizabeth Dewhurst, D.C.'s, teacher of the year. All in favor?

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Opposed?

(No audible response.)

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: The motion is
approved. Thank you.

MS. DEWHURST: Thank you.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Ms. Dewhurst, can we -- we'd like to call a five minute recess, so the Board can get a picture. Recess.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 5:48 p.m. and resumed at 5:50 p.m.)

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: As I mentioned in the opening remarks, OSSE has proposed updates to our current physical education standards.

The proposed changes have come to us after extensive input from experts and District teachers.

Tonight, I am pleased to recognize Donna Anthony, Assistant Superintendent of Health and Wellness, who will provide her input on the proposed changes.

Ms. Anthony, you will have five minutes to provide testimony, followed by one round of questions from Board Members. You can begin whenever you're ready. Thank you.
MS. ANTHONY: Thank you for the opportunity to testify this evening regarding the physical education standards for the District of Columbia.

I'm Donna Anthony. I'm the Assistant Superintendent for Health and Wellness at the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, which is the longest title I think in our agency.

According to the Society of Health and Physical Educators, also known as SHAPE America, who we have here tonight, physical education is an academic subject that provides a planned, sequential K-12 standards based program of curriculum and instruction, designed to develop motor skills, knowledge and behaviors for a healthy active living, physical fitness, sportmanship, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence.

OSSE's strategy in supporting local educations around physical education is trifold. We want to ensure that all students have access to P.E. We want to incentivize adequate quantity
of P.E., making sure that students get enough minutes in their day and their week, and lastly, we want to support high quality instruction, and the P.E. standards are really what we view as the foundation of that quality instruction across the District, no matter what school you go to.

After the Health Standards were approved last Spring, OSSE stated the process to update the existing physical education standards, which were put in place in 2008.

We worked with our physical activity sub-committee, which reports to the Healthy Youth in Schools Commission. We have someone here from that group tonight, and they started the process by developing a working group to focus exclusively on the standards.

The working group was comprised of representatives from DCPS, the Public Charter School Board, community based organizations that do a lot of physical activity and education work with our schools, as well as OSSE.

The group is proposing the adoption of
the National Physical Education Standards that
were developed by SHAPE America.

We have a few minor changes that we
would like to propose, to make sure that they're
relevant, in terms of 2017 and not recommending
certain products or things that are no longer
used by youth, as well as making sure that
they're relevant to the District itself.

An additional benefit to adopting the
standards is that many teachers are trained on
these standards in their training, as well as a
lot of the P.E. curriculum that you can purchase
off the shelf are based off of these national
standards, and so, it's creating a lot of ease in
implementation, as well as alignment.

The proposed physical education
standards are also -- we circulated them to
teachers. We put them out through our weekly
newsletter and we've posted them on our website
for feedback.

We've sent them to all the physical
educators who have been grantees and who have
come to our trainings and asked for feedback, as well.

Once they're approved, our working group that we've been working on for these physical education standards, we'll tackle the developing adaptive physical education standards and that will help ensure that students with disabilities can go -- also get access to high quality physical education.

The National Physical Education Standards that were developed by SHAPE America in 2013, received input from a curriculum framework task force, and they're being adopted by several states across the country.

The proposed physical education standards are comprehensive and they address the three domains of learning, which is cognitive related to the knowledge of movement, effective, which address growth and feelings and attitudes and psycho-motor, which relate to movement literacy, which movement literacy was a new term for me.
OSSE will support the implementation of the standards by developing and distributing resources, organizing continued professional development and opportunities for teachers, and we will provide continued technical assistance to schools, based on request or based on when we think that they need it, because they are flagging with certain concerns.

Today I think my testimony just kind of introduces this topic. I have a group of expert panelists here with me today, and their testimony. They specialize in this area, and so, I want to make time for them. I'd like to thank them for joining me tonight, and I look forward to their testimony, and thank you again for this opportunity.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you for your insight. Members, to respect the time and energy of the many people who have joined us tonight to testify on the P.E. changes in ESSA, we will have a single round of questions, no more than three minutes from each board member for Ms.
Anthony, and for our other panels tonight.

Who would like to begin with a question? No questions? Well?

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: It just might be worth stating for the record that Ms. Anthony has been very generous and spoken with us now three times.

So, many of us have had the opportunity to ask her questions in the past. It's not that we're un-interested in a topic. I just wanted to make sure the public understood that.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: And I'd like to thank you for being here tonight and for all your work on behalf of these -- for putting together these standards and looking out for our students. So, thank you.

MS. ANTHONY: Thank you so much.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: You're welcome.

Our next panel will consist of Miriam Kenyon,

Director of Health and Physical Education at

DCPS, Bill Dietz, Director of Sumner M. Redstone,
Global Center for Protection and Wellness and Professor at GWU.

Gregg Albright, Athletic Director D.C. International and Carly Wright, Senior Manager of Advocacy for SHAPE. Would you all please come forward?

I'd just like to thank you all for coming down tonight to testify. We will begin on my right, your left. Please know that you have five minutes each. So, and after you've finished your testimony, each board members will have one round of questions, three minutes each. Thank you.

If you haven't -- if you have not already done so, please email your written version of your testimony to sboe.dc.gov, so we may add it to our official record.

Please begin when you're ready.

MS. KENYON: Great. Good evening and thank you. My name is Miriam Kenyon. I am the Director of Health and Physical Education for D.C. Public Schools, and I did already email my
testimony.

So, I'm going to just read what I wrote, which is, this is not your physical education class, or in some cases, your parents physical education class.

Twenty-first century physical education is likely vastly different from what most people's experience was growing up. When talking to adults about their experiences in P.E., many fall into two categories, love or hate.

Typically, so-called athletes were efficient movers, liked competition, enjoyed and won dodge ball or other elimination or human target games.

The folks that hated P.E. were usually the ones who fell subject domination of upper skilled three percent. They prayed to be out and didn't care whether they got the ball. Instead, sheepishly tried to become invisible.

Activities were designed to engage the students who were already highly skilled, and not
the other 80 percent of the population.

Competitive sports and elimination games, similar to organized play, like today we're going to play capture the flag, are examples of -- are not examples of objective, driven lessons for physical education class.

The goals for physical education are to develop physically literate individuals who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy a life time of healthful physical activity.

Through quality physical education, aligned to these new standards, we can meet this goal and change the health outcomes of our city's youth and adults.

In addition to meeting these goals, adopting the proposed standards will provide a clear distinction of the academic content taught in physical education class, that would not be met through participation on team sports or a club, that includes physical activity.

Merely participating regularly on the team does not meet the wide range of standards
including demonstrating proficiency in a variety of life time skills, or the content knowledge required to assess, develop, apply and re-evaluate fitness goals, with the quality physical education experience one would expect life long physical activity.

The following highlights, some of the significant changes from our previous D.C. standards to the new proposed standards.

One in high school standards focus on developing skills for life time physical activity, to include dance, net and wall sports, outdoor pursuits, personal and group fitness. This is vastly different from the previous standards that focus on refining team sport skills.

This makes sense because we need to prepare students for college and career readiness, so that when they're on their own, they won't need to get 10 friends together to exercise. They have the skills to assess, develop goals, create a variety of plans and
ultimately reach their health and fitness goals.

The lower grade ban outline -- outcomes that a teacher should expect, based on developmental appropriateness. This is extremely important when planning lessons, especially when P.E. teachers see grade levels ranging from pre-K through eighth grade.

Teachers can use the grade level standards and outcomes to make appropriate adjustments between grades, when designing lessons.

For example, in kindergarten, when working on catching, it's appropriate to allow two bounces before catching a dropped ball. By first grade, students should be able to catch a self-tossed ball before it bounces.

In summary, these standards reflect the national vision for physical education, to empower students with confidence to be life long movers and ultimately impact health outcomes for the District of Columbia. Thank you.

DR. DIETZ: Good evening, and thank
you for this opportunity.

I am Bill Dietz, a pediatrician and chair of the Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness at George Washington University. I also currently serve as chair of the Healthy Youth and Schools Commission Subcommittee on physical activity.

Prior to coming to Washington, I was the director of the Division of Nutrition Physical Activity and Obesity at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for nearly 17 years.

The District is fortunate to have the Healthy Schools Act, which recognizes the crucial importance of student's health to their academic and life long success. An essential part of the law is mandated physical education throughout the school week.

The CDC's comprehensive school physical activity program, designed to help students meet the recommended 60 minutes per day of physical activity and to develop the
"knowledge, skills and confidence to be physically active for a life time" includes physical education as a pillar.

The delivery of high quality physical education is foundational to building a comprehensive school physical activity program.

Therefore, I encourage the District's adoption of the physical activity -- physical education standards put forth tonight. These standards have a sound evidence base, insofar as there were adapted from the National P.E. Standards, developed by SHAPE America, the national authority in physical education.

Through high quality P.E. classes, students learn the confidence and skills necessary for a lifetime of fitness. P.E. classes also contribute to the 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity, which is the recommended level of physical activity, recommended by the National Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.

The Healthy Schools Act and these
proposed P.E. standards require that at least 50 percent of P.E. class be devoted to moderate to vigorous physical activity.

In a broader context, a significant decrease in physical activity has played a major role in the obesity epidemic. Schools can and should promote physical activity to help prevent obesity, including through P.E., recess and classroom activity breaks.

A recent study found that children gained weight over the summer when they're not in school, whereas they maintain their weight when they are in school. The lack of scheduled routine physical activity is a likely contributor to that summer weight gain.

Quality physical education provides vital minutes of physical activity. Many people recognize the preventive health benefits of physical activity, including a reduced risk for obesity, heart disease and diabetes.

Less well recognized is the important impact of physical activity on improved cognitive
development, learning and self-control in children.

A recent randomized controlled trial, published in the Journal of Pediatrics showed that seven to nine year olds who participated in an after-school program, that met the daily physical activity requirements not only improved aerobic fitness, but also showed better brain function and cognitive performance, specifically, executive brain function, compared to children who did not participate in the program, and this is a graphic that shows those differences. The activation of brains on the -- on your left, and a non-active brain on your right.

The development of healthy brain -- executive brain function underpins academic skills and social emotion development. It also supports self-control, that can reduce disruptive or aggressive behavior inside and outside the classroom. Such self-control not only benefits the individual student, it also improves the classroom environment and the uninterrupted
learning of other students.

The relationship between meeting national physical activity guidelines and academic success is illustrated by D.C. data from the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

One-third of high school students who reported getting mostly A's and B's, got at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day on five or more days of the previous week. Only 22 percent of students who reported getting mostly D's and F's got that little of physical activity.

Young children who experience adversity, including abuse, exposure to violence or parental dysfunction, such as divorce or depression may have diminished executive functioning, which will affect academic, health and life long outcomes.

Physical activity is closely associated with higher self-esteem and self-management, the executive functioning that also promotes learning.

Physical activity may therefore act as
a protective buffer that enables resilience among children exposed to adverse childhood experiences.

To ensure that our students reap the cognitive health and academic benefits of becoming physically active for a lifetime, we need to teach them how to do so, through quality physical education.

Nonetheless, D.C. school-based data shows that our schools are not meeting the physical education requirements set forth in the Health Schools Act, and many children fail to achieve the recommended physical activity requirements of 60 minutes per day.

These negative outcomes likely contributed to increased rates of obesity, unrealized academic success and diminished cognitive function for the District's youth, outcomes that follow them through their lives.

I encourage the State Board of Education to adopt the Physical Education Standards put forth tonight. I also encourage the
Board and all authorities and organizations in the District that impact students, to collaborate, to ensure full implementation of the levels of physical education required by the cell -- Healthy Schools Act and the recommended 60 minutes per day of physical activity. Thank you.

MR. ALBRIGHT: So, I'm the one in the trenches. I'm going to start with -- this is going to be a little different presentation. I don't want to be redundant.

So, I have a story. My vision of the ultimate culmination of physical education is reflected in the story and reactions that took place in Division 2 college softball came.

It was senior day and stepping up to the plate was the most unlikely home run hitter, in five foot two inch, Sara Tucholosky. In fact, she had never hit a home run in her career. She was from Western Oregon University.

But on the second pitch she delivered a blast over the center field wall for a three run home run.
When rounding first base, inner excitement, she missed the bag, and in returning to the base, she tore a ligament in her knee, crumpling to the ground, unable to move.

To get credit for the home run, she has to tag all of the bases without any help from teammates.

Enter opposing super star from Central Washington University, Mallory Holtman, who politely says to the umpire, "Excuse me, would it be okay if we carried her around and she touched each bag?"

So, the story ends with Holtman and teammate Liz Wallace carrying her around the bases, gently lowering her to touch each base, to the background of a standing ovation.

That is what I see and what can be and what we can do, using these -- this curriculum.

My name is Gregg Albright. I'm the Athletic Director, Head of Physical Education and Wellness Director at D.C. International School, a fully accredited IB and Tier 1 charter school,
currently located in Columbia Heights.

In my life, I've been fortunate to be part of many different experiences relating to physical activity as a participant, teacher and research faculty, coach and administrator. I was an enthusiastic athlete in elementary, middle, high school and college, culminating as a professional doubles volleyball player in California.

Activity was an important outlet for my life, so I relate to the plethora of student athletes in D.C., just looking for a place to play.

As a P.E. teacher for 28 years, 10 years in the IB, and a volleyball coach for middle and high school club, the University of Mary Washington and Olympic scout in London for the USA men's team, this journey has taken me from Southern California to Virginia, Atlanta, London, Lima, Peru, and now, in Washington, D.C.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify this evening regarding adoption of the
SHAPE America physical education standards for
the District of Columbia. I've been a long time
member of the previously named IFIRD organization
and have attended many conferences and utilized
their many resources and networks.

First, I would like to applaud and
thank the efforts and hard work by the OSSE
health and wellness team. I believe they are
making a difference in the District, with so many
challenges, and they've been accessible and
supportive.

The other testimonies from my esteemed
panel mates address the importance and logic of
adopting the national P.E. standards by SHAPE
America. I concur whole-heartedly.

So, as not to be redundant, I would
like to address the third point of Ms. Anthony's
testimony regarding the OSSE three-prong approach
to support schools and their LEAs, through
student access to high quality P.E. classes.

So, SHAPE America offers that and it
offers resources. It offers certifications. It
offers what we need in the trenches.

I have traveled to many of the schools, as a varsity coach in the Southeast District, in the Northwest, all over, and there -- the kids are being under-served in so many ways, and I am so frustrated as being -- coming from areas where they at least have proper facilities and curriculum and proper P.E. teachers and this is a long time coming, and I know it's seems like a slam dunk. We're in the phase of this. But it's not a fight that's over, and I really want to -- I really want to explore what happens after we pass this.

Yes, we can pass this. It will look great on the shelf, but what are we doing next, and I volunteered to go out with OSSE to go out and train other P.E. teachers. The charter schools, especially are struggling with facilities and equipment.

But these kids need more, and so, adopting the SHAPE America is step one, but I want to continue this and make it work, because
Just doing that, it looks great, but we need to implement it and we need to train those teachers how do they do it, how do they get these facilities that are seen non-existent, but I've been able to find a few, in working with the Department of Rec.

So, in the trenches, this is an awesome thing and let's continue with this. But I really want to implore the Board -- let's keep this going, because otherwise it will be lost, and I see it every day.

I see a lack of opportunity for many of the girls in the District. I'm a firm believer in Title IX, meeting Billie Jean King and others. So, I really want to see this move forward after this and I really applaud that D.C. is doing this, and actually one of the best states I've been in, in terms of saying, hey, we have an issue. Let's deal with it. Thank you for your time.

MS. WRIGHT: President Williams, Vice President Jacobson and members of the Board,
Thank you so much for the opportunity to be here today, to discuss the adoption of updated D.C. physical education standards.

My name is Carly Wright and I'm the senior manager of advocacy for SHAPE America Society of Health and Physical Educators.

As an organization, we are committed to empowering all children to lead healthy, active life styles through effective health and physical education programs.

As the nation's largest organization of health and physical education professionals, we work with states and school districts across the country to provide guidance, professional development, resources and best practices to educators and school leaders.

We also have a strong commitment to advocacy and have led the charge at the national level to have physical education included in the re-authorization of the elementary and secondary education act, the Every Student Succeeds Act.

In ESSA, physical education has been
included as part of a student's well rounded education and now acknowledged as a critical component in educating the whole child.

At SHAPE America we set the national standards for physical education, which have been published and updated since 1995. Forty-nine states and the District of Columbia have all adopted state physical education standards over the years that have aligned with our national standards.

We commend D.C. for taking the opportunity to update your standards to now align with the newest version of the national standards.

Over the past two decades physical education has undergone a transformation in rigor and focus and is now recognized as essential to a young person's overall education experience and a foundation for life long healthy living.

SHAPE America has helped to spearhead that transformation and re-define physical education in the new national standards and grade
level outcomes for K12 physical education, as the pursuit of physical literacy, which parallels the terminology used in other academic subject areas.

The new national standards adopted in 2014 and their accompanying grade level outcomes identify the skills and knowledge necessary to support the development of physically literate individuals, those who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of physical activity.

SHAPE America's national standards and grade level outcomes for K through 12 physical education define what a student should know and be able to do, as a result of a highly effective physical education program. The development of the national standards was based in evidence, research and best practices.

The updated standards were developed by a team of experts in the fields of physical education, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, motor development, skill development and biomechanics, with rigorous review and feedback.
from the field.

    The focus of the standards is on student learning and they address not only physical competence and knowledge, but also the attitudes, motivation, social and psychological skills needed for participation.

    In addition to the national standards for physical education, SHAPE America has developed grade level outcomes, accompanying lesson plans, appropriate instruction guidance and student assessment tools to help states and school districts effectively implement the new standards and support high quality physical education programs in schools.

    SHAPE America also provides states and school districts with expert technical assistance to support implementation of these standards.

    The ultimate focus of all of this work is to support amazing teachers, like the physical educators here in Washington, D.C., as they develop physically literate students that have a passion for physical activity.
We whole-heartedly support the great work that OSSE has done over the past year to update their standards and to ensure that they will serve the needs of D.C. students and teachers.

We urge you to support the implementation of these updated standards, as well. Thank you so much for the opportunity to be here.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: I'd like to thank all of you for taking the time to come down and testify on this very important issue.

Now, Board Members, are there any questions you'd like to ask? Mr. Weedon?

MEMBER WEEDON: Thank you, all. I wanted to touch on something that Mr. Albright, you brought up.

The barriers to implementation of the health standards. We know that many of the schools in the District are failing to meet the requirements under the law.

What are some of the barriers that you
see at the school level? Could you expand on
that a little bit, and then what are some of
resources that we, as a city, need to ensure get
put in place?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Absolutely. Great
question. What I've observed comes down to a
couple things.

I think that it's -- in some of the
areas, the teacher training and the teachers that
are experienced know what they're doing, and in
some areas, that's lacking.

So, I think teacher training and
supplementing that and making sure they're up to
speed and observing and mentoring on that is one
issue.

The other issue comes down to
sometimes it's facilities or equipment or safety.
I think that, if you ask some of the teachers,
would be an issue.

You -- I can even talk to our school,
where we're so fortunate to move to Walter Reed
with the new gym, next year, but we still don't
have a full field. We have to still use a field. So, I think the usage of and the opportunity to have fields in some leagues, games are cancelled because there's not a gym, not a field available or you're rearranging.

So, I know D.C. is a tough area because of the expense of everything and the lack of land, but I think it could be better organized, where if we had an agency that sought everything that's available, because I know the DPR has their areas, but they are private places.

We've rented Washington Sports Club. We've rented their gym and pool, and we had a swim team and that's where our basketball team played, because they had no gym the very first year.

So, there are other opportunities. I think some sort of council that would help them in facilities, how do I get equipment, in terms of expense, how do I train my teachers and mentor those teachers to teach in where they are?

So, if you're in a small space, how do
you adapt that small space? SHAPE America has a million games. I've used them a ton. So, rainy days and all that.

So, I think that comes down to those areas.

MEMBER WEEDON: Okay, I've just got a couple of seconds left, 45 second left, and I don't -- I want to be respectful of everyone's time.

I think that's absolutely a barrier. I have also seen a number of schools in my Ward, where the athletic budget kind of gets re-allocated outside of the athletics, and I think that's an issue that we need greater oversight from the Council or DCPS on.

But what about scheduling during the day? The P.E. standard should also be met during the day.

Does our over -- does our emphasis -- I don't want to say over-emphasis, but the emphasis on math, reading scores detract, or how can we consolidate those, so that we're getting
those literacy and math lessons during the physical activities?

MR. ALBRIGHT: There are -- and I'm sure you can speak.

They're always to incorporate -- we actually have a double-math, double-English for our sixth graders, if they need catching up.

So, there are ways to do it through your recess time, through your lunch time. We have lunch clubs. We have lunch soccer that we do.

So, there are ways to implement it.

It's just okay, here is -- what do you have? Let's look at it. Now, let's plan for it and make sure we get those 60 minutes and go.

So, I think it's just a planning and looking at it. I think there are schools that are just not putting the effort in sometimes and kind of letting it go.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Ms. Wilson Phelan.

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Thank you, all,
for your time this evening and your testimony.

I'm curious about two things. One, when you reviewed the standards and whatever role your participating in developing the standards, did you hear any disagreement about what should be included and could you share a little bit about what that disagreement might be?

The second is, as you likely know, we're having ongoing discussions about the Every Child Succeeds Act and the implementation in Washington, D.C., and in your professional opinion, should there be some kind of accountability at the school level associated with physical education?

DR. DIETZ: Who is that directed to?

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: That can be for anybody.

DR. DIETZ: So, I think there is a -- I've heard no objections to these standards. I think they're -- they're embraced. The issue is implementation, and your second question was the accountability.
I think that there is -- that it's certainly important to have accountability, in terms of course work.

But the other -- the thing that gets missed is accountability for the health of our students, and physical education is one measure of that.

I would argue that trips to the principal's office for discipline is another measure of health, and that -- that reflects some of the issues that I raised, particularly this exposure to adverse childhood experiences, which would be expected to play out in terms of behavioral issues.

I think that at -- even though non-health issues are recommended, they're not mandated, and I think that there would be -- it would be very worthwhile to think critically and constructively about what kind of health measures could be used to assess school functioning, particularly since these kinds of measures have an impact on learning.
MR. ALBRIGHT: I will tell you, if there is not accountability, it's going to be not as -- it's not going to be taken as seriously as it should be. Definitely needs to be in some form.

I don't think it's punitive, but encouragement, and I agree that there needs to be -- are you meeting those standards and how are they playing out in the nurses office visits and discipline and so on.

DR. DIETZ: Right, just to add to that. What gets measured, gets done.

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Ms. Kenyon, could you speak a little bit to your role at DCPS? I'm assuming there is some sort of accountability mechanism or role that you're playing in this.

MS. KENYON: Yes, so, we're different from the charter schools because we run our physical education, health education centrally. So, we get to provide professional development for teachers, and that's district-wide
professional development.

Then for the past eight years, six of those years, we benefitted from the PEP grants, which allowed us to one, provide resources for every school across the city, so that the first grant was just giving every school the basics, all of the teaching tools that you need, manipulatives and things like that.

Then the second grant really focused on fitness, nutrition and we were able to get things like heart rate monitors, so that students can get that individual assessment of what's going on with their body during physical education time.

I just want to make sure that there's a clear distinction in DCPS between physical education and athletics, and so, physical education, we're preparing students for a life time of activity.

So, we're not -- I mean, our focus isn't on team sports and you know, I would just ask the panel, when was the last time you played
on a team sport, and you're still within your life time, right?

    So, you know, hopefully you're exercising regularly with the skills and things that you learned, and hopefully, you know, you haven't had to go to a personal trainer for that or anything like that.

    So, I guess to answer your question about, should there be accountability? I totally agree, but with the accountability, we need access to resources, in order to make sure that we can do all of the things that our kids deserve.

    PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. Ms. Wattenberg.

    MEMBER WATTENBERG: This builds on Joe Weedon's question.

    I think the second person here that you -- yes, I think that you quoted some data, school-based data, and you indicated a percentage or a number of students who were not meeting measures, and I just wondered what is the data
and what are the -- and can you tell us anything about those numbers?

    DR. DIETZ: Yes, I think this -- they come from the school health profiles, which are self-reported -- self reports from schools, about the extent to which they're meeting P.E. or recess requirements.

    The problem is with the self-report, and for example, if a school reports in the Fall and that's when they're providing physical education, it may seem that they're meeting the standard, but they're not reporting for the full school year.

    So, the -- I think the assurance that a school is providing these activities would be to look at the school schedules as an outcome measure, and it may be a -- that's a harder measure, but one which is probably more reliable, in terms of scheduling of P.E., for example.

    MEMBER WATTENBERG: And based on the data that you do have, what portion of schools were or weren't meeting the --
DR. DIETZ: The majority of schools are not meeting the physical --

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Are not meeting the --

DR. DIETZ: -- education requirements. The -- some schools are, and this comes back to the earlier question about what are the barriers, and I think one of the most important barriers is space, and one of the things that Miriam has taught us is that the unoccupied space in schools may be on the roofs of schools, which can be converted into spaces for physical activity.

I think that -- I am -- we are -- we're unsure of what the engineering challenges are, with respect to that. But that's unused space and space that could be profitably used to increase physical activity resources.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Well, thank you all very much, and thanks to everybody who is involved in putting the standards together, and for giving us a sense of the implementation challenge.
MEMBER CARTER: I have one quick question. This is for the gentleman, third down. Your testimony spoke a little bit about some of the differences between boys and girls, even though we have -- that we're still seeing engine classes, even though we have Title IX. Could you elaborate about that a little further?

MR. ALBRIGHT: So, I think -- I think I'm thinking -- addressing two issues. One is after school sports, which is definitely separate from physical education, as a 28 year P.E. teacher.

So, definitely what I see, and it may generate from the physical education classes, not getting enough, for example.

Basketball is a very big sport in Washington, D.C. However, I've noticed there a lot more boys teams than girls teams, and sometimes schools have trouble even fielding a girls teams unless -- and sometimes they don't
really push it, to be honest.

    For me, that is something that -- we
have more girls teams than boys teams right now.
So, I think -- but that could generate from P.E.,
but I can't -- I don't want to say it may or may
not, but do the girls feel like they're competent
enough or is that something they want to do?

    I do know in other schools I've taught
if -- in the P.E. from kindergarten up, if they
feel confident in their movements and they feel
like they can try something without being
ridiculed, that they'll try sports, just to see,
and so, there will be more activity.

    So, I do notice overall that there is
an issue that way. That's an observation. It's
not a study. But I would like to follow that up
in some way to see what the figures are on that.

    MEMBER CARTER: Thank you.

    MEMBER BATCHELOR: Very quickly. One,
I was really excited when this was presented to
us, that we were going to have more of a focus on
social, emotional health, and when you think
about that in the physical education sense,
sometimes you think about just general
sportsmanship, behavior and team sports, things
like that.

But other than that, in terms of
STRAND 4, Standard 4, saying -- that says that a
physically literate individual exhibits
responsible, personal and social behavior that
respects self and others, other than that, what
ideally what we be engaging young people around
in the classroom or during the school day around
-- around something like that?

MS. KENYON: I'm not sure I get your
question.

MEMBER BATCHELOR: So, I was saying in
terms of kind of the social, emotional standards,
we talked about kind of personal and social
behavior.

Other than the things we inherently
think of, like sportsmanship and things like
that, are there any other things that we should
emphasize educators to do or engage our students
around inside the classroom in relation to that?

          MS. KENYON: I think the main point in
the difference in the standards, and the way
they're created is they're not around
competition.

          So, competition brings out the
cheating and the lack of sportsmanship, and those
types of things.

          So, it's more about -- personalized
and individual challenges and making sure that
students have that cognitive -- the understanding
of how to analyze their fitness levels, create
goals that are achievable, track their goals, and
do that, and all of that brings about someone who
cares about their fitness, their personal health,
and then they can, you know, advocate for more
opportunity -- more playable spaces, more things
like that in their community.

          So, that's a social responsibility
that is created from, you know, taking that
individualized approach versus a competitive
approach in physical education. Does that --
MR. ALBRIGHT: Yes, and I just want to add to that. That's a great question.

So, with the IB physical education, which we also follow the SHAPE America, they're intertwined.

So, we look at kind of like my story, empathy, which is really difficult to teach in a sense, but we can model it and show it and then, in a class, I may talk about integrity. Could be simple tag game, and you know, when no one is looking and you get tagged, do you freeze or what it --

So, do you have integrity? So, integrity and caring. So, those are some of the big things, empathy, caring and integrity.

Obviously, respect, I feel like is almost over-used with the kids. So, we try to go another way.

We will also use Google Classroom and they'll have to reflect on a game or something they did.

So, incorporating those, but not just
to say it during the class, but actually they --
we talk about it and reflect about it, and that's
-- I agree, that's a very important thing because
if you can play on a team, then you can be in a
workplace and you can understand dynamics and
makes your more valuable, and I agree with the
individualized -- if they enjoy the sport,
because we try to make it fun. So, they can
continue on.

So, it's all those put together, and
I don't know how many of you could say, yes, I
had a bad P.E. experience, or I hate P.E., and
that's what we're trying to guard against, is
that you just enjoy it, and that's why the
equipment for individual -- we're doing bocce
ball right now. Just different things that the
kids can try.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you, panel.
Thank you for testifying for us today.
All right, we're going to try to go
back to our public panel. There's Merilyn
Holmes, executive director Total Sunshine,
Ashleigh Taylor, Ward 8 resident, she here?

Maya Martin, Parents Amplifying Voices in Education. PAVE. Donna Richards, D.C. parent. I'm, sorry, Dana Richards, and Mazaria Stevenson.

All right, we'll begin on my right, your left. Please note that you have five minutes -- three minutes each, and your microphone -- don't forget to turn on your microphones. Thank you. Merilyn.

MS. HOLMES: Good evening. I'm Merilyn Holmes. I'm the president of Total Sunshine Incorporated. We're a D.C. based non-profit 501(c)(3), and also a television show. I'll tell you, it's always a pleasure to come out here, and it's always an honor to be able to come before this panel -- body, and express all the interest and support I have in D.C. students.

I'll tell you it's been quite a day for me and I'm really glad that I made it. I was afraid I wasn't going to be able to testify, and I was so disheartened.
But moving forward. Total Sunshine is the medic to society. I'm a paramedic. I've been working in medicine for the last several years. I'm not going to tell my age, but it's been more than 15 years, and I started Total Sunshine because I saw a need for the young people to hear from medical professionals about what they were seeing out here on the ambulance, and I've done many anti-violence life-coping skill seminars with a lot of the young people in this city over these last 15+ years.

Just to give you a small snapshot of what some of the activities of our Total Sunshine school grade incentive program. Let's see. I'll start at the bottom.

We've supported 448 D.C. students with tools for success in the classroom. We've done 74 committee events. We've attended them and found the people that are there to support the community.

We've done 72 in-school life-coping skills anti-violence seminars. We've supported
520 D.C. valedictorians and salutatorians. I'm especially proud of that, and we've also -- we're actually working on show number 126. It airs on D.C. TV and Fairfax, and it's always inspirational programming. It's always something that we hope to bring a smile to people's faces, and it's always a pleasure of course, to keep on doing as we do.

Our school grade incentive program is essentially the vehicle that we use to impact young people in our city, and this year is no different. We're looking forward to our ninth annual Total Sunshine School Grade Reward Ceremony, where we're going to gather all of the valedictorians and salutatorians from the city, roughly 70 students, public schools, charter schools, it doesn't matter. If you did the best in your school, the top two graduates are going to be eligible to come to our event and receive a laptop or tablet to further their educational success in college with -- we of course, want these young people to come back to the city and
bring those talents, and we're really proud of them.

This year is going to be June 22nd. We're looking at the Verizon Center again, and I'm so hopeful to see each and every one of you there, with your clapping hands ready, because there is nothing to do but clap at this ceremony for these stellar young people, who have gotten straight A's in school for the last four years more likely. These are the 4.0 students. These are the ones we don't have to worry about there doing the wrong thing. They know what to do when it comes to being diligent in school, and we always make a good point to recognize them and give them whatever we can.

Now, it's unfortunate, but I'll tell you, it's been a struggle for us to keep these young people supported. Currently, recruiting a fund raising committee to help do see what we can do about keeping the school grade incentive program supported.

If people want to know more about
Total Sunshine, our efforts in the community or to support students, they can feel free to log onto totalsunshine.org or give us a call on the sunshine line at 202-575-0462.

One other small note. I've been teaching EMS in this area for quite some time. There are a lot of field providers that have been trained by me. I've just actually re-connected with the American Heart Association and I'm going to be teaching CPR in the community, and also for healthcare providers, and so, if someone wants to see about that, they can feel free to go to our website as well or get in touch. They can email me at info@totalsunshine.org. Thank you so much for this opportunity, and I'll look forward to continuing to support young people. That's it.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Ms. Taylor.

MS. TAYLOR: Good evening. My name is Ashleigh Taylor and I am Ward 8 resident and a parent of an awesome two-year old named Strummer, who will start school this coming Fall.
I am here tonight to share with you, my perspective as a parent of a child about to enter a public school system.

I am strongly in favor of the city-wide cross-sector accountability system that is easy for families like mine to understand while searching for schools.

In addition, I encourage the State Board of Education to ensure that academic measures are the focus of the system.

I have just applied for schools for Strummer on the My School D.C. application, so the experience of searching for school options is fresh on my mind. I explored both charter and DCPS options. I went to EdFEST and I searched online. I went to many, many websites to find more information about schools.

It was frustrating that I didn't have one place I could go for all the information. Since the data was so scattered, I ended up relying most heavily on my friends and professional contacts, to give me suggestions.
I am lucky to have a strong network of people I can ask for advice on these questions, but I am worried about the parents who aren't so lucky.

When I did my research, the most important factor in finding a school for Strummer was academics. It's not the only thing our family values, but it's a non-negotiable. I do care about making sure she has access to the arts, and I don't think testing is the only thing that matters.

I'm interesting in schools that offer a wide range of activities and programming. However, I want to make sure Strummer is prepared for middle school, high school and beyond, and so, the academic success of the school is critical for me.

I request my Board representative from Ward 8, Markus Batchelor, and all Board members to work with OSSE to ensure we create a common accountability system for all public schools that takes into account, a variety of measures, but
primarily focuses on academic performance and
growth. Thank you.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. Ms.

Martin.

MS. MARTIN: Good evening, D.C. State
Board of Education members, Superintendent Kang
and staff.

My name is Maya Martin and I'm a Ward
1 resident. I'm also the founder and executive
director of PAVE, Parents Amplifying Voices in
Education, whose mission is to empower, connect
and train charter parent leaders to give families
in D.C. a voice and a choice for the vision in
education in our city.

At PAVE, we believe that parents are
partners and leaders in developing a diversity of
safe, nurturing and great schools for every child
in every ward and community.

Last month, PAVE hosted nine events
with eight Council members and a deputy mayor for
education, in honor of National School Choice
Week, and in those events, one of the things that
parents made clear in their stories of choice was
that they were looking for the best schools for
each of their children, and they did not care
what type of school that it was, as long as it
was a great school.

In our one on one meetings with
parents, they've said the same. Time and again
we've learned that what parents care most about
is how each school educates their child.

As both a fifth generation
Washingtonian and someone who founded an
organization in our city with an all parent
governing board, I've been particularly engaged
in the conversations around the common
accountability framework proposed by OSSE.

I appreciate the Every Student
Succeeds Act, pushing states to think critically
about state accountability measures. Since our
charter schools parents have used these measures
through resources like the PCSB performance
management framework, to make the difficult
decision of choosing a school for their children.
OSSE's current proposal for a common accountability framework would create a clear system that is tied to student outcomes that parents care about. Three of our parent board members have submitted testimony about the importance of having a single accountability system in our city that can help parents to identify the best school options for their students regardless of sector, DCPS or public charter schools.

I'd like to share some of that with you today.

Cecily Miles Slater, a multi-generational Washingtonian herself and a Ward 5 resident, shared about her own search for her children's schools.

When researching which schools would be a good fit for my children, I'd greatschools.org, myschools.org, dcurbanmoms.com, as well as DCPSB.org. In addition, I spoke to parents in my network that had kids in charter schools. I relied heavily upon the PCBS PMF system. I studied the reports from the schools my
kids were matched with and was encouraged to find
that they were Tier 1 and Tier 2.

I feel very strongly about sending
them to schools that are succeeding and delivery
quality education to their students. I was also
concerned about the school climate, diversity and
college readiness. It was great to be able to
find all of this in one place.

Erika Harrell, a Ward 7 resident who
had to search for new D.C. schools for her
children from California shared this about her
own search.

When selecting schools for my kids, my
husband and I relied heavily on OSSE and PCSB's
rating as a preliminary step. We also looked
through Learn D.C., dcschoolreform.org,
myschooldc.gov as well as individual school
websites to determine whether or not a school was
a right fit for either of our children.

Performance was our beginning and
ending determining factor because ultimately, we
wanted a school with a strong track record for
excellence, in which we felt and still feel our children deserve.

We relied little on parent input because in the end, quantitative data matters, not just what other parents think is best for their children. The tiered system that PCSB uses was particularly helpful because it was simple, yet comprehensive, yet a comprehensive measure for identifying schools that met that our criteria.

LaToya Johnson Law, a Ward 8 parent of a special needs student, shared this about her search.

Abria is a special needs child that was born at 23 weeks gestation. In selecting a school, I look at the special education department, schools character, extracurricular activities and programs, teacher and leader assessment and the overall success rate by the PCSB PMF system of the school.

When Abria was attending NCC National Children's Center, she was recommended to several
charter schools. At the time, I was not aware of the two public sectors for children's education. As a parent, I just wanted the best school, public or charter that fit my child's needs.

I then made the decision for Abria to attend AppleTree PCS, and I based this decision on the PCSB PMF system and the strength of the special education department.

We support OSSE's current proposal because we have heard from many parents from communities and experience across the city, say the same, and we believe it is the best way to help inform parents about each -- our children's academic performance and growth.

Creating a common accountability framework for a public education system with over 90,000 students was no easy task, and so, I would like to sincerely thank our policy makers and elected officials at OSSE and the State Board for their hard work creating something that reflects the needs and concerns of parents, as they search for the best school for their children.
Reflecting on my conversations with parents from all different wards, backgrounds and schools, I would also like to advocate for a common accountability process to be looked at closely for the tenants for equity and fairness.

Parents care about finding a great school for their child and we should take their -- our cues from them, as we put away the side the way things have been done and move towards the way things should be done to serve all of our children, regardless of sector, but with regard to a quality and quality.

Thank you, State Board of Education members for working hard to ensure that all of our children have access to great schools and that make them feel a joy for learning every single day and ensure that they graduate ready to succeed in college, career and beyond.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. Mr. Richard.

MR. RICHARD: Hi. Good evening, Board members, staff, Superintendent Kang and
commenters and attendees. Thank you for this opportunity and for your work on updating D.C. School's physical education standards, which is a very important activity and particularly at this time, with the pending reorganization of D.C. Athletics Associations and passage of the D.C. Athletic Equity Act of 2015.

So, this is a -- this presents great challenges and opportunities for D.C. schools and students attending them, especially with the physical education curriculum, because it's -- it -- it's the day to day, week to week, I guess, opportunity for students to participate in athletic activities and to learn about physical fitness and to actually do physical fitness.

It seems a primary question is whether physical fitness, as distinguished from fitness literacy will be a central component of a exceptional physical education curriculum.

The -- I have a revised statement which I submitted today, and there's several clarifications I made from the last posting, and
I added a couple paragraphs at the end, which I'm not going to cover tonight, but you can read it.

It's about the last two paragraphs are about what has happened on the world stage with regard to athletics recently, with regard to the U.S. and Iran, and very positive development.

So, at the athletic equity act hearings, the issue arose of whether D.C. should remain the only jurisdiction outside of Mississippi that does not sponsor a key core physical fitness sport, which is wrestling, and others argue in addition of swimming and gymnastics, and I'm certainly not opposed to that.

I think the more the students are challenged and the more rigorous the activities and sports programs, the better. The better they're going to do physically, in terms of physical fitness, life long skills and academically, and I don't have all the data on that.

But I think if you look at the
philosophies of all the best private schools in D.C., you'll see that they have a very strong focus on both physical fitness and academic excellence, so, and the rest of my statement is there. Thank you for the opportunity.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. Ms. Stevenson.

MS. STEVENSON: Hi. My name is Mazaria. I'm from C.W. Harris.

My school recess -- we have -- we go to lunch at one -- 1:05 and we go out for recess at -- at one -- at 1:40 or 1:45, and we only get 15 minutes. We only get like 10 or 15 minutes to play, and we -- and sometimes they take our recess away.

Last week at school, they took all both of the grade classes recess away for the whole entire week and we didn't get to go outside, none that week, and we -- we wanted to -- we -- I -- and sometimes they take half of our recess. So, we only get like one minute to play.

Sometimes they hold us back in the
cafeteria and make us sit down or make us -- or make us walk around. We don't usually have our recess. We only have one day of recess because they usually make us do paragraphs or -- or they just take it away, and we do laps around the school.

We don't usually have our recess. The only time we will have our recess is on Monday, or we will get it taken away that Monday and we will have it on the next week and we -- if we would earn it.

My teacher, Mr. McNair he is -- he know about the law, about we supposed to have 30 minutes of recess and they can't take it. Twenty, I meant, sorry, and he don't really care about that law, but he still takes is, and if we don't -- and sometimes if we don't finish the paragraphs that he give us, we have to -- we have to stay behind or we can -- or we stand on the wall at recess and watch the other kids play.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you very much for your testimony. Thank you, panel.
Dismiss now. Thank you.

MEMBER WEEDON: Excuse me, Madam President.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Yes, sir.

MEMBER WEEDON: Before you dismiss this panel, is it possible for the board and it's -- I know it's not tradition, but we have done it before, to ask some of the panelists a question, please.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: You do it -- you like to ask a question, Mr. Jones?

MEMBER JONES: Yes.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Go ahead, Mr. Jones.

MEMBER JONES: Thank you. I'd like to ask in reference to -- thank you.

Ms. Ashleigh Taylor and Ms. Martin, a question in reference to your statements.

Have you read the OSSE proposal for -- and this is for both of you.

MS. MARTIN: Yes.

MS. TAYLOR: No, I have not read the
proposition.

MEMBER JONES: You have not? But Ms. Martin, you have?

MS. MARTIN: I have read it. Yes.

MEMBER JONES: Okay. So, you're suggesting that we vote for and adopt it in its present form, that -- the way they proposed it?

MS. MARTIN: So, yes.

MEMBER JONES: Because --

MS. MARTIN: So, I can't speak for --

MEMBER JONES: No, I mean, I'm asking you.

MS. MARTIN: From my perspective. So, when, myself and my parents took a look at it, we thought the -- kind of the construct of the proposal as it currently stands is strong. We thought it had a good balance of academic growth and performance measures, along with some of the other measures that are used to determine parent satisfaction, like re-enrollment and some of those components.

So, we think that the as it stands
currently, it's a strong measure.

MEMBER JONES: Okay, as it has been proposed?

MS. MARTIN: Yes, and what we appreciate is that OSSE has done the work to get parent input throughout the community and Ward by Ward meetings.

So, we've shared those with our families. We've put them in our monthly newsletters. Families have known about them. They've been able to take a look at the document. We feel like the process has been collaborative and it's been based on best practices.

MEMBER JONES: And you --

MS. MARTIN: So, yes, our families feel comfortable.

MEMBER JONES: Okay, have you heard of any other proposals?

MS. MARTIN: So, yes, I've had -- I've had myself conversations about other like, ideas. I haven't like --

MEMBER JONES: But yes --
MS. MARTIN: -- but I've heard about all of the other ideas about different performance measures and combinations of scores. So, I've had those conversations and meetings, yes.

MEMBER JONES: Are you flexible of any of it?

MS. MARTIN: Am I flexing? So, I mean, I think that -- you know at the -- so, I think one of the challenges that there is, is that when you talk to families, families really want to make sure that they know that what they are receiving is objective information, that's based upon academic performance and growth, which is the number one reason that they're going to us, an accountability measure, to figure out how well this school is doing.

When you talk to families, what they're also sharing is that when they have conversations with other families they -- they -- that is a part of their process and that's what all of my families said in their testimony, that
they're doing that, right?

They're going to places and talking to their friends and they're looking at D.C. Urban Moms and Dads which is all subjective, subjectivity.

So, they're doing that work on their own, but what they want to make sure of is that when they're getting a measure from a state agency, or from some a government entity that they can trust, they're getting something that is objective.

They know the sources and the ways to go about getting those subjective measures. But they also want to know something that is going to tell them what the academic performance of the school is, which when you talk to parents, is the main reason that they're sending their child to certain schools.

There is a satisfaction component that they want to get from different family members, but the main reason that they're looking at a school is will my child be able to graduate ready
to go to college? Are they going to be able to progress and do well and be able to succeed around the measures that we know they need to, that come out of school. So, reading, writing, mathematics.

 MEMBER JONES: Okay, thank you. Just a quick question. Sir? I have a quick question for you. Were you a wrestler?

 MR. RICHARD: Yes.

 MEMBER JONES: You were?

 MR. RICHARD: In high school and college and then beyond.

 MEMBER JONES: Okay, good. So, you like to see wrestling in D.C. public schools?

 MR. RICHARD: Actually, starting in about -- maybe sixth grade.

 MEMBER JONES: You'd like to see wrestling in D.C. public schools?

 MR. RICHARD: I -- in D.C., I help coach at Sidwell.

 MEMBER JONES: Right.

 MR. RICHARD: And also at American
University, at the college.

MEMBER JONES: I'm talking about D.C. public schools.

MR. RICHARD: D.C. Public Schools?

No, I've helped a couple of the schools --

MEMBER JONES: Which schools?

MR. RICHARD: -- on occasion. Let's see. I just -- I can't think of -- you know --

MEMBER JONES: No, that's okay, I just asked because I'd like to see wrestling in D.C. public schools.

MR. RICHARD: Well, what is --

MEMBER JONES: I don't think the --

MR. RICHARD: Wilson is the only --

MEMBER JONES: I know that.

MR. RICHARD: Yes.

MEMBER JONES: Is the only school. I'm a former wrestler. I will -- Board member, Mr. Lockridge was a former wrestler and I know there have been challenges. But that's another -- but I'd like to see wrestling in D.C. --

MR. RICHARD: But I think you can't
have it -- students traveling to another school all across town. They're just not going to do it, and so, it's a sport that really -- it doesn't require a lot of space, and I think once it's introduced through P.E., then you have mats, and then you necessarily have also coaches and other coming in, and you know, wrestling is a foundation sport, as you know.

MEMBER JONES: Yes.

MR. RICHARD: And it makes the athletes -- the students -- it improves their performance in all other sports, in terms of their strengths, balance and endurance, stamina.

MEMBER JONES: Thank you. I did want to ask you that, but I wanted to ask the ladies if they'd read the proposal. But thank you, Madam President.

MEMBER BATCHelor: Madam President?

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

MEMBER BATCHelor: Madam --

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you for testifying.
MEMBER BATCHELOR: Madam President?

Just very quickly. I know this is -- this is not
the regular order of business, but I did want to
say one, to Ms. Taylor, I appreciate your
comments, and I definitely look forward to
working with you, especially as we meet in Ward 8
later this month, to have a more pointed
discussion on this about how we make sure that
this accountability plan does just that.

You know, like you, I'm definitely
interested in making sure that we have a system
that demonstrates the current academic success of
all of our schools, and I know my interests,
since I joined the Board, is also been making
sure to hold our schools accountable for those
things that also contribute to academic success.

So, I look forward to striking the
right balance in this plan, and so, I thank you.

To Ms. Stevenson, thank you for coming
and testifying before us. I know it's not easy at
your age, but I appreciate your eloquent and for
not only standing up for yourself, but for your
peers, and that's very important, and I appreciate you for being a leader in that regard.

We want to make sure, as you've heard our discussion, we want to make sure that you get as much physical time as possible at school, and we know, at least it's my opinion that it shouldn't be taken away for disciplinary issues, because it's a part of your education.

So, thank you for speaking up for that and you can rest assure, that this Board will fight on your behalf. Thank you.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. Thank you. Now, we're going to call up Ms. Point -- Antoinette Poindexter, student. Tirone Wilkinson, student. Jayden Abney, Sami Graves and Mauray McDuffie.

Okay, I don't --

MR. ELISTER: Hi. My name is Mark Elister. I wanted to talk about -- I went into school and I need -- I wanted to talk about in school, we should have more lunch time because -- because we need to have lunch.
Because my class, Ms. Lambert's class, we stayed back because the kids, they didn't want to follow directions and she say we can stay in for lunch, and about time when the time goes around, when we get down to lunch, we only have like 13 or 15 minutes of lunch and I rest my case.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Is that all you have to say?

MR. ELISTER: Yes.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Could you say your name again, please?

MR. ELISTER: Mark Elister.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you, and what school do you go to?

MR. ELISTER: C.W. Harris.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

MR. CECIL: Hello. My name is Mark Cecil. I want to speak on the behalf of Tirone Wilkinson, and I'm talking about recess, because we need more time and that when -- when we don't have time for recess, because we have a lot.
Our schedule is lot -- our schedule is a lot of time, and when we're talking in class, we get punished, like paragraphs, and the paragraphs go up to 105, and if you don't write paragraphs in time, you can't have recess or if there a field trip coming up, you can't have the -- you can't go on the field trip and that -- and that we need -- we need more time at recess, and Mr. McNair, he wouldn't -- he'll tell -- he take two weeks of recess from us.

MS. POINDEXTER: Hello. My name is Antoinette Poindexter. I go to C.W. Harris, and I always -- I wanted to talk about recess because our Arabic teacher, Mr. J, he took -- one time he took eight days of our recess and we only had two days of recess, and we -- and our recess is only 15 minutes, and the two days that we did have recess, our math teacher, Mr. Spinner, he took five minutes of our recess, so we had -- only had 10 minutes of recess.

I wanted to say that I think we should have more than 15 minutes because our schedule is
a lot, and sometimes when we come in from recess and we only have like five minutes of recess, it will -- we will be like bunched up and stuff and we'll be like, yelling and screaming in the hallways and stuff, and trying to play -- get our recess time inside, like during specials and stuff, during recess, trying to get our play time during specials, because we -- Mr. Spinner -- our teacher took our recess and I think that we should really have like, more than 15 minutes at our school, and not have -- our principal says that we only need 15 minutes.

But if we only have 15 minutes, and our teacher takes 10, when we only have five minutes and the principal says that it's okay for the teacher to take away the recess.

The fifth grade teacher, Mr. McNair, said that if he will keep on breaking the law of recess if it means that he'll -- he have to keep get his kids recess, he will keep on breaking the law, and of that.

MS. GRAVES: My name is Sami Graves
and I go to C.W. Harris Elementary School.

I want to talk about recess because my teacher, Mr. Spinner, threatened to take a month of recess from us, and we didn't have recess for four days of the week, and we don't get that much time at lunch, and that's all I have to say.

MS. ABNEY: My name is Jayden Abney and I would like to talk about recess because every time we line up to go -- to go to recess they would -- they would -- it's one person talk, they will tell us go sit down, and then they will punish all of us, and Mr. McNair, one time he threaten us to take two weeks of recess away from us, and every time we plan -- he only give us five minutes and then he tell us to line up and then we go line up.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. Are you all in the same class?

MS. POINDEXTER: Just us two. They're in the same class.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: So, this happens no matter what class you're in?
MS. POINDEXTER: Uh-huh.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

You're in my ward, so, I'll look into it, okay?

Miss?

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: I was just going to say thank you to all of the -- you students who came and thank you to the teacher who brought you here today.

We don't always know what's happening at the schools, and you're really speaking up, so that we know what's happening and we know when the law is being broken, and you picked a really, really good day to come because the people responsible for that are sitting right here, and now, they've heard it too.

So, if something isn't done, we want to hear back from you again. Thank you for coming tonight.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: You have something else to say?

MR. CECIL: Before I moved to D.C., I was in Oxon Hill, Maryland and they -- I went to
a school called Glassmanor Elementary, and they -
- they cut recess from second grade all the way
to the sixth grade.

So, only the law academy kids have
recess and all we did is after lunch, is come
back, do our work and wait to specials.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. So,
you've had trouble with recess for a long time,
huh? Yes, well, hopefully we can do something
about it. Thank you. All right.

All right, for over a year, the State
Board and OSSE have been soliciting input from
the public, national and local experts, students,
parents, teachers and other stakeholders related
to the new statewide consolidated plan required
by the Federal
Every Student Succeeds Act.

Before we hear from witnesses tonight,
I believe Superintendent Kang would like to
provide some comments on the draft accountability
plan that we mentioned earlier.

SUPERINTENDENT KANG: So, I actually
-- I don't want to hold us up any longer from
hearing from the panels, but I think if there are
points as we go along, where I might just be able
to provide clarification on the plan, that would
be great, just to have a chance to do that.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you,
Superintendent Kang. We have three panels of
witnesses this evening. So, I would ask all of
our witnesses, if you have not already done to,
to please email a written version of your
testimony to sboe@dc.gov, so we can add it to our
record.

I will call names in groups of four.
Our first panel is Dr. Austin Nichols, Abt
Associates, Dan Gordon, please come forward. Dan
Gordon, Senior Legal and Policy Advisor for
Education Counsel.

David Pickens, Executive Director of
D.C. School Reform Now.

DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Madam President,
Farhana Rabbi, a peer educator, is going to take
Mr. Pickens' place on the dais.
PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Okay. Frank Cervarich, Young Playwrights Theatre, and Dr. Jaclyn Kline from the D.C. chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

All right, so, why don't you two move up here, and I will call some people from the next panel, which are Ed Lazere, Executive Director of the D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute. Is he here? Yes, and Daryl Forte, P.E. teacher from DCPS, and one more, and Steven Glazerman, Mathematica Policy Research. Not here either? Okay.

How about Josh Boots, Executive Director of EmpowerK12?

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. We'll begin from your right, my left. Just introduce yourself and then start your testimony. You have five minutes. Thank you.

MS. RABBI: Hi. I'm Farhana Rabbi. I'm an advocate with D.C. School Reform Now, and I'm giving testimony on behalf of David Pickens.

Okay, good evening. My name is David
Pickens and I am the Executive Director of D.C. School Reform Now, an organization that seeks to educate, organize and advocate to build support for public education strategies that prepare kids to become college and career ready.

As someone who has been a leader at the school district and non-profit levels, I appreciate the opportunity to comment publicly regarding potential changes to the D.C. school accountability system under the Every Student Succeeds Act.

A major part of DCSRN's work is to educate and inform parents as they navigate the school choice system, providing them with guidance on school quality, as they apply for their children and alerting them to quality schools that they might not have previously considered.

DCSRN does not independently evaluate public traditional and charter schools, but rather relies on the rating systems currently in place, in order to make recommendations to
parents.

As DCSRN advises families during the application process, it is critical that they acquire a thorough understanding of what makes a school quality, and additionally, be able to compare many educational options via consistent objective criteria.

Members of the State Board of Education have -- have proposed that school accountability ratings should also take into account non-academic factors, and that these metrics should be given weight alongside student growth and proficiency.

My organization agrees that a school's curriculum, extracurricular offerings and parent surveys all have value and do help parents make application decisions, but they are not indicative of student outcomes, which is the only way to judge educational effectiveness.

Additionally, supplemental offerings and feedback do not reflect the academic quality of the school and can make evaluations difficult
to parse, due to the lack of consistency between schools, as well as stakeholder and non-responder biases from survey data.

Ratings based primarily on academic quality give parents a better picture of the academic rigor that the school has to offer their child and allows parents to accurately compare the academic quality of school options.

As schools seek to prepare students for college, it must always be kept in mind that colleges themselves, while they do take into account letters of recommendation, extracurricular activities and other merits, most highly rate a student's grade point average and test scores.

If D.C. as a city seeks to prepare students for that level of evaluation, the schools that prepare them must also be evaluated on their ability to help students reach the necessary academic proficiency.

Often we focus on school inputs, but emphasis must continue to be placed on student
outcomes, as their grades and test scores have very real repercussions on their futures.

Parents still use many metrics, other than grades and test scores when evaluating a school, and many variables inform different priorities between families.

Though parents take into account many factors when making decisions about the best school for their child, it is not necessary that every one of those factors be part of the government school accountability system. It would be more appropriate in a state report card, which could expand on the initial rating, thus providing additional context for families. Thank you.

DR. KLINE: So, my name is Dr. Jaclyn Kline. I am a pediatrician and I represent the District of Columbia chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

D.C. AAP is the Washington, D.C. chapter of a national organization of 64,000 pediatricians. The D.C. chapter has over 400
members, including pediatricians, residents and medical students from all of the District's hospitals, community clinics, private practices and school based health centers.

As a pediatrician and member of the D.C. AAP, I and my colleagues have a vested interest in child well-being and health in schools. We feel strongly that the Every Student Succeeds Act provides an opportunity for following and improving on the health of children in our schools.

We advocate that in order to learn, a child must be healthy, present and nourished. We applaud DCPS and public charter schools for setting out to be the fastest improving state and city in the nation in student achievement outcomes. We supple the ESSA draft that ensures greater equity for our students by accelerating progress for those who are farthest behind.

We feel that child wellness is a key component of reaching these goals, and that by including wellness markers in its ESSA proposal,
DCPS and public charter schools will see further rise in student achievement.

A key element to success in school is presence in the classroom. We recognize absenteeism as a potential area for improvement in D.C. public schools and charter schools.

We fear that children who have chronic absenteeism are at a unique and increased risk of poor academic performance, as well as failure to graduate, both of which have significant downstream effect in the child or young adult's life.

Chronic absenteeism data is already being collected by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights. So, gathering this data would not pose a new burden on our schools.

We advocate that D.C. public schools and charter schools use this data to focus efforts on school presence, in those schools that have highly -- particularly high rates of absenteeism.
The State of Oregon has served as an example of how those can be achieved. They conducted data and then conducted focus groups with parents of children who were chronically absent. They identified barrier to attendance including healthcare use or access, chronic illness, poor transportation, family responsibilities and neighborhood safety concerns.

They also collected data about aversions to attending school, including academic struggle, lack of engaging structure, poor school climate and ineffective school discipline, lack of transportation, parents own negative school experiences, and uncertain view of new environments.

Once barriers are identified here in the District, we can work to address them and improve our school attendance for all children.

A measurable outcome under ESSA could be the incidents of chronic absenteeism in the District or the number of hours of time dedicated
to focus groups and other preventive efforts by each school.

A related issue to chronic absenteeism is school suspension and expulsion rates. As data is being gathered on chronic absenteeism, we would also recommend that these schools report -- school reports include data on the number of children who are suspended or expelled each academic year.

Once trends and rates are identified, then preventative efforts can be formed with achievable metrics for improvement across the District. We note that chronic illness is a contributing factor to chronic absenteeism and suspension expulsion, and would welcome partnering with D.C. public schools and charter schools, as we represent the pediatricians of the District who serve your students.

Another key element to academic success is a child's physical well-being. A child cannot succeed in the classroom if they are not well nourished. Food and security is a large
determinant of pediatric health and as pediatricians, we value what DCPS and public charter schools does for our patients by free and subsidized breakfast and lunch.

We propose that as a part of ESSA, D.C. public schools and charter -- and public charter schools report the utilization of free and subsidized breakfast and lunch across the District. This would identify schools and zones within the District that have the highest incidents of food insecurity.

A measurable metric of improvement could be providing guidelines and standards of what is offered to children in schools. Implementation of a curriculum focused on health eating habits for children and providing nutritional education materials to families.

Chicago public schools have been a trying -- shining example, by placing a focus on student wellness throughout nutrition. They have developed tool kits for school personnel, students and parents, which set school standards
for caloric and fat content of snacks offered at schools, also set standards for vending machine placement in schools, and mandate nutrition education for students, among other metrics.

As DCPS and public charter schools states they hope to lead the nation by having the fastest improvement in student achievement, we hope you will use this opportunity to put a critical focus on student wellness, to help make this a reality. Thank you.

MR. LAZERE: Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak tonight.

My name is Ed Lazere and I am the executive director of the D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute. We're a non-profit organization that works to promote economic opportunity for all D.C. residents and to reduce income inequality in the District through thoughtful policy solutions.

I want to focus my remarks tonight on the portion of the ESSA state accountability plan that relates to measuring the achievement of low income students, and I want to encourage the
State Board to work with OSSE, to create a variety of measures of low income standards, to make sure that we're gathering information on the performance and school success of our poorest students.

This is important because the current measure of disadvantaged students, as I understand it, is broad and covers a large share of students in D.C. public schools and public charter schools, and it's also important because we know that the deeper a child falls into poverty, the more likely they are to face circumstances that affect their ability to succeed in school.

It's my understanding that the current measure of disadvantage for reporting of test scores is participation in free and reduced price lunch program, and this is likely to include a large group of low and moderate income residents for two reasons.

First, eligibility for school lunch is up to 185 percent of poverty or close to 30,000
for a family of three, and we know that many D.C. 
families have income far lower than that. 

    Also because we have a community 
eligibility option that makes some schools -- all 
students qualify for free lunch means that we 
could be counting some students who have actually 
have incomes well above even that threshold. 

    By contrasts, we know from census data 
that there are many families that live at or 
below poverty in the District. For example, 
about one out of four children in the District 
lives below the poverty line, so well below that 
185 percent standard. That's less than 19,000 
for a family of three, and in fact, one out of 
eight children lives below half the poverty line, 
or less than $10,000 for a family of three. 

    Poverty is especially high east of the 
rivers with roughly half of all children there 
living below poverty, compared to 13 percent of 
children elsewhere in the city, and we all know 
that the stresses of poverty directly affect a 
child's ability to succeed in school, that
children how live in poverty have worse outcomes in terms of health, cognitive development and emotional well-being, and that living in neighborhoods with high rates of poverty also have negative impacts on child success in school.

We also know that the fall -- the further a child falls into poverty, more likely there are other families to face affordable housing challenges, which is a huge and growing problem in the city, and that the lack of housing stability has particularly harmful effects on children if they are living in overcrowded conditions, unsafe conditions, moving frequently or ultimately ending up experiencing homelessness.

Finally, we know that the depth of a child's poverty matters and that even modest income gains can -- or differences can make a difference in a child's life. For example, one study found that increasing the income by just $3,000 for low income families during the early childhood period was associated with children
earning more than 20 percent more as adults when they were grown up.

So, for these reasons, we think it's important not just to measure disadvantaged students on that relatively broad standard, but to dis-aggregate the data to include some lower income standards and we -- I recommend two.

One is to measure the test scores and performance of students who are in families receiving TANF. These are often the lowest income children in the city with parents that have little or no earnings. The maximum TANF cash benefit is about $500 a month for a family of three, which means that most children in TANF families are in deep poverty.

I don't have the exact numbers but that's -- I believe that's roughly 30,000 children in the city, and second, we also can measure the test scores of children who are receiving SNAP, formerly known as food stamps.

The SNAP eligibility level is 130 percent of poverty. So, it's higher than the TANF
standard, but lower than the current free and
reduced price lunch standard, so it would just
allow another break out to identify students who
are low income, but not quite as disadvantaged as
those receiving TANF.

This kind of dis-segregation is
important to understanding how well our students
-- our schools are doing at educating low income
students, how well our schools are doing to close
the achievement gap and how best to target
resources to improve academic outcomes for the
most disadvantaged students.

If we continue to use just the current
measure, we'll not be as well informed on our
success at meeting these important goals.

Thank you very much again, for the
opportunity to testify.

MR. FORTE: Good afternoon. My name
is Daryl Forte. Health and Physical Educator at
Burrville Elementary School, and I want to thank
you for the opportunity to be able to speak
before you, and I'm kind of -- I'm going to go
between the Every Student Succeeds Act, as well
the standards for physical education.

I think it's very important that we
are here to increase student activity levels. I
know at my school, we have -- participate in 45
minutes once a week for health and physical
education and in addition to recess that they
have, which is 30 minutes.

Also I believe that quality physical
education is important to incorporate the
standards into our practice. It's also important
that students know the reasons why they're
participating in certain activities, in addition
to participating in activities that they may not
be familiar with.

We have the biking in the park program
with -- which teaches second graders how to
participate properly in riding bikes, as well as
putting on helmets and being able to enjoy just
riding a bike, and it was amazing to me, to see
the number of students that were not able to ride
a bike in second grade.
Things that I enjoyed as a child, students today do not have the opportunity to participate in because of the climate. They may not have a safe neighborhood to do those things.

So, I think it's important that the Every Student Succeed Act incorporate physical education to a standpoint of bringing it to the level of ELA and math subject areas, because it's important for the child. It's important for the whole child. It's important that students realize that the life long activities that they're learning in class, it carries with them over to the, you know, college, high school, after college, if they want to participate in adult programs.

So, it's important that they understand the life long aspects of physical education.

Also, like that in DCPS, we have measurements. Students are able to participate in the surveys for the bike program. We have school profiles through Let's Move! and Action
for Healthy Kids, where schools are able to see
where they stack up versus other schools, and see
and understand the things that need to work on,
as far as incorporating more physical activity or
more recess time in their schools.

MR. BOOTS: Good evening. My name is
Josh Boots, executive director of EmpowerK12, and
I have been before this group before. Just want
to know that I have participated on the ESEA
waiver accountability system and the Public
Charter School Board's performance management
framework, and my comments are around the ESSA
accountability system.

I have been involved in similar
communications over the various stakeholders over
the last couple months about the ESSA
accountability system.

In general, you know, everyone is in
agreement that there is plenty to like about
OSSE's consolidated plan accountability
framework.

The framework emphasizes the
achievement and academic achievement and growth for all students and sub-groups. It includes additional measures of school success like chronic absenteeism, graduate rate and student re-enrollment rates.

The ratings are broken down into five groups, which will help stakeholders distinguish the quality amongst the educational options, and schools identified for additional state support, comprehensive and targeted will maintain that status for up to three years, which would ensure lasting and effective engagement.

These are the great aspects of the OSSE proposal and they build on the accountability work efforts in D.C. over the last 10 years.

The basis of the accountability system, the periodical basis is solid. We have several minor recommendations for the State Board of Education and OSSE staff to consider before final submission to the U.S. Department of Education.
There are -- there will -- I do suspect that most of these recommendations would be better considered by a technical working group, that would support OSSE, once the plan has been approved by the Department of Ed later this summer.

But the recommendations do include that the -- first, that the OSSE and the State Board of Education consider variable weighting and achievement in growth by school, based on the students prior achievement.

For example, schools with lower achievers will have more emphasis placed on growth over achievement. The reason why we recommend this is that we still see that even with the accountability systems that we've had, that have emphasized both achievement and growth, that lower achievers in the District of Columbia are still failing to grow at the same rates as other lower achievers nationwide.

So, the emphasis on growth, especially for schools that are accepting lots of lower
achievers, we believe is important.

Two, that we placed additional emphasis on the achievement of students in the school's terminal grade, especially for students who have been at the school for multiple years.

So, are kids who are leaving schools prepared for college and career?

Three, we would expect that there maybe a tighten the alignment between the growth to proficiency measures for English language acquisition and PARCC, or that there is a reconsideration of the reliability of subgroups and sizes between 10 and 24 and the accountability score.

Five, that there is -- that the -- OSSE and the State Board analyze whether the current subgroup weighting would mask within school achievement and subgroup gaps.

We do -- we -- we do like to re-emphasize that we do our own process OSSE's proposal that includes subgroups, just wondering if there is potential that the some achievement
gaps might be masked by the current weighting system.

Six, that research that the group researched the reliability of class observations for accountability purposes, and whether the measure of early childhood learning environments could be extended to include both kindergarten through second grade, not just pre-kindergarten.

Seven, reconsider whether the state should target 2038/2039 as the year for meeting goals or whether we should set a more aggressive target, five or ten years from now to meet our goals.

We will submit all of our details concerning our recommendations later on the public comment period, so they will be able, and again, we believe that the OSSE ESSA plan has the right ingredients for approval.

A quality technical advisory committee will help ensure that the plan is implemented with fidelity and in the best interest of all of our students and parents.
PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank all of you for testifying. Superintendent Kang, would like to respond to any of this testimony?

SUPERINTENDENT KANG: Yes, just briefly, and again, I'll just limit any of my comments to any clarifications that might be needed, about the contents of OSSE's plan.

On the goals piece, I'll just note that while the ultimate long-term goal we set was for 20 years out, that we also speak to trying to cut -- aggressively cut caps in half over a 10 year period, and to interim annual goals as well. So, just for clarification.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Board members, we can now have one round of questioning. Mr. Batchelor?

MEMBER BATCHELOR: No, thank you, Madam President.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: So, I'm trying to figure out how to divide my questions here with my few minutes.

Let me start with Mr. Lazere and ask
you what is the -- what is to be gained by dis-aggregating according to these different
categories, that is what do we misunderstand when
we don't dis-aggregate like that and what could
we do better if we did dis-aggregate?

MR. LAZERE: I mean, to the extent
that we might find out, and not surprisingly,
find out that the greatest academic challenges
are faced by the children who are in the poorest families, those for example, who are in families receiving TANF cash assistance, that might help
us, help schools make individual decisions or you all make decisions about how to target resources.

To the extent that you're covering the current measure includes children with incomes that may be well below $10,000 in families all the way up to $30,000, it's just -- you may be missing the children who most need extra academic support to succeed in school.

MR. BOOTS: I just want to jump in. I agree with Ed on that one. We are collecting data around the OSSE at-risk category, which
includes kids that are on -- receiving SNAP and TANF benefits.

So, to not use it as a potential at-risk or sub -- group category, I think we are missing.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: One thing that's been raised with me is that you could have schools that have much poorer populations and schools with less poor populations and they would look similarly poor, and one would have much greater growth and proficiencies than the others, and that you could misunderstand that it was the quality of the school, or lack of quality of the school, as opposed to this. Is that a --

MR. LAZERE: I think that's totally fair. I had intended before the meeting, but didn't just have a chance to do it, to -- to look at some different schools because my guess is that many schools have pretty high participation free and reduced priced school lunch, but yet, may have very different profiles. So, the students include very different income profiles.
So, I do think that it is -- it is masking what may be substantial differences between schools, and therefore, substantially mis-gauge how well schools are performing relative to the low income students.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Let me use that to jump off and ask Mr. Boots a question, which is when you looked at the proposal that exists, how concerned are you or how concerned should we be, or what questions should we ask in order to make sure that we don't inaccurately or misleadingly identify schools with very low ratings, when in fact they may have high growth, because I -- when I think about the rating system, I think there's all kinds of useful information we can get from the rating systems.

All rating systems have downsides as well, and it seems to me the greatest possible downside could be, especially in a -- a system of school choice like we have, if you give a school -- if a school gets a very negative rating, and maybe because the kids come in with low scores,
and they grow a lot, it's really a school that's on the up and up. It's really growing its students and it gets a very low rating, that the worst possible result of this system could be to misleadingly rate that school badly, because it would lead to an outflux of students and outflux of funds and outflux of programming, and here we would have had a very successful school, serving a group of students who need very good schools, and it would be hurt.

So, my question is given the 50/50 split of proficiency and growth, do you have any concerns that schools that are growing their kids well, could be caught with a low rating?

MR. BOOTS: I would say probably not.

In terms of our prior -- like, we've done research on looking at using the median growth percentile data from the performance management framework for charter schools, and comparing that to the school's achievement.

There's a pretty strong correlation between the achievement score and the growth
score.

So, while it's probably theoretically possible, no, I actually don't even know if it's theoretically possible. I think OSSE would know necessarily that, based off of, because the growth measure is part, meeting growth percentile and part growth to proficiency.

We don't have access to all of that data, to be able to look at that, but my suspension is the fact that high growth schools also tend to have higher achievement, just because they're pushing more kids across the bar for achievement, that a high growth school would end up with a low rating, one or two stars, is probably very remote, is my guess.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Even if it had -- I mean, our high schools, for example, have proficiency rates that are in -- in the teens, even lower.

So, even with those levels of proficiency rates, you think that if it would -- if it was a --
MR. BOOTS: If they're moving --

MEMBER WATTENBERG: -- 15 percent --

MR. BOOTS: Right, if they're moving kids compared to the rest of the kids in -- if they're -- if their kids are having high growth and they're on the path to proficiency, my suspicion is that they will not have low one or two star rating.

Again, OSSE would be able to --

MEMBER WATTENBERG: But we would need to --

MR. BOOTS: -- prove that --

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Okay, thank you.

MR. BOOTS: But my suspicion is that no.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Okay, thank you.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Ms. Phelan?

Laura?

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: I just had one question for Mr. Boots.

You mentioned -- sorry, I had your testimony up and I closed it.
It was your third point, the things that you wanted to change. Sorry. Can you pull it back up?

MR. BOOTS: My third point specifically was to look at the alignment of the growth to proficiency measures for the English language acquisition, the access test and PARCC.

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Oh, sorry, no, it's the end sizes. So, I wanted to better understand.

You said reconsider the reliability of including sub-groups with end sizes between 10 and 24.

Why are you using the word reliability? Could you explain that a little bit more, about what your concerns are?

MR. BOOTS: Yes. So, an end size of 10 is pretty small. That would be pushing it, in terms of, if you look at other states and what they are looking at, in terms of end sizes, most are in the 20 to 30 range, in terms of using it for accountability.
Now, for reporting purposes, I think 10 is a good size for reporting purposes.

Now, whether the measures themselves, if you could -- basically what I mean by reliability is if you could take 10 kids of the same sub-group and then randomly select 10 out of a huge group, say the group was 100 and but, we were reporting on just 10. We randomly selected 10 out of 100.

Would we end up getting a similar score, sub-score for that same group of 10, no matter whether it was like any group of 10 within that 100, right, because the sample is 10. Those 10 are meaningful but they're just a small sample size of all our kids.

So, what I mean by reliability is like, is the measure strong enough, in terms of its overall scientific validity and reliability to be able to handle the fact that like, any group of 10, like that the -- that a school's performance with those subgroup of 10 is meaningful and repeatable and reliable.
So, that if we see an issue with that
group of 10, is that actually because of the
group of 10 students or because of the school's
performance with those 10?

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: I would be
curious, Mr. Lazere, given your background in
this, whether you would concur with that concern.

MR. LAZERE: I sorry, I don't actually
feel like I know enough about it, but I would be
happy to talk with you further --

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Right, now, the
reportable end size is 25 and the recommendation
is to reduce that to 10, in part because the
diversity in our schools, we lose track of
actually how many of our students are doing,
because there is an end size of less than 10 in
so many of our schools, based on race right now.

So, if we really want to see how
students are doing by race, you do have to lower
the end size. There is so many years where you
can see the pockets of data where it starts off
where you can start to track it, and then maybe
one student will leave the class and there will
only be 24. You can no longer --

MR. BOOTS: Right, right.

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: -- see what's
happening.

MR. BOOTS: For reporting purposes, 10
is a good number to look at but for to hold a
school accountable, say it's possible that like,
if we're talking about a group size of 10, then
that could be one or two families, right, and so,
are -- should we be holding a school accountable,
in terms of like potentially dropping a star,
because they had an issue with serving one
particular -- one -- just one family out of
hundreds of families that the school serves?

So, I just don't know, like, we would
have to look at the -- again, I don't have access
to enough data because we haven't been reporting
end size of 10, so, I wouldn't know whether
that's -- if you could look at the validity and
reliability over the last five years and see if
things are the same, but --
MR. LAZERE: I mean, my instinct is that it's sample size of 10 is too small to give you something that you would want to make decisions on and make assessments based on. I mean, it's a pretty small sample size.

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: And -- yes, go ahead and clarify.

SUPERINTENDENT KANG: Just a quick clarification. So, one thing is one of the reasons why we've looked at actually having a single end size requirement instead of separate ones for accountability and for reporting is in D.C. given our choice environment, often reporting and accountability purposes are hard to distinguish from each other.

So, having two different end sizes led to very similar data appearing differently in different places and causing a lot of confusion, not just for suppression, but literally, if you meet both end sizes, you know, in one place, a school's proficiency rate might be shown as 26 percent and other for the same grade and subject
25 percent, and it might be because of the end size difference, and aggregation, right?

So, that was one thing we'd heard in terms of just consistency, and then the second thing is I think the -- in order to address the point that Josh is making around one family leaving or coming, causing a difference in the 
accountability rating, in addition to end size, we've built in a different feature in the system called a minimum points possible threshold, which we're happy to follow up and talk about more.

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN:  Madam President, I know I'm out of time. Can I ask another quickie? It's okay.

I just wanted to ask Dr. Kline, it was hard for me to discern from your testimony whether you're recommending that our schools be held accountable for various health components and whether you're recommending that that -- I think all of us would concur that those are really important for the growth and well-being of children and I wanted to understand whether
you're actually recommending a shift in what's included in the accountability framework.

DR. KLINE: I mean, I guess yes. When I reviewed it, I just didn't see any mention of child health, nutrition, anything about like chronic illness contributing to absenteeism. I saw a lot of thing about absenteeism, but nothing about, you know, partnering with pediatricians or people, to understand our -- I mean, we have very high rates of asthma in the District. Is that leading to a lot of absenteeism? Could we be partnering with schools to get, you know, a better understanding of education in our schools, to help our students, things like that.

I was just kind of surprised by the absence of mention of any of that.

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Okay. So, and just to -- just a quick point of clarification.

So, this is accountability system. So, it's the -- the set of things we're holding schools accountable for versus reporting out. So, it's lots more that schools are reporting out
on.

So, if it -- if it -- finding the data is the point you're most interesting in, so that we can address what's going on, I think that that is possible. I'm not sure if it's fully possible with what we collect now, and I would love to hear your thoughts on that at another time, but I'm curious about whether you think schools should be held accountable for that.

DR. KLINE: I think similar to what other people have said in past testimony, unless there's an accountability component, I just worry that it won't happen at all.

So, I think putting some language into the ESSA guidelines for D.C., like other places have done, I think would, you know, hold our schools more accountable to make sure that our kids are healthy.

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Thank you.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. Jones?

MEMBER JONES: Thank you, Madam President. Mr. Lazere, I have couple -- well,
just basically a few questions in reference to
the TANF and SNAP recipients.

I agree that we could probably have
more data out of this accountability. But do we
need that to determine that families who are TANF
and SNAP typically perform lower, worse than
their families who are better off, and do we
really need that for us to have a discussion on,
as you suggested, how we redistribute our
resources?

Because we've studied this for decades
of studies on -- on -- on how the alignment of
poor families and how they perform in schools,
and they don't perform as well as the wealthy
families.

So, I'm just trying to follow the
value there of -- of de-segregating that and --

MR. LAZERE: And I guess if the -- the
issue is trying to assess the -- to measure
accountability and measure a school's outcomes,
to compare two different schools, which is what
would happen here, right?
You'd be looking at two different schools that might have the exact same profile in terms of number of children who are disadvantaged using a free and reduced right, priced lunch standard, could have very different profiles in terms of how many children they have who are on TANF, for example.

So, it would help better understand what might be explaining the difference in performance between two different schools, if you had information not only on who is low income, but who is extremely low income.

MEMBER JONES: Okay, thank you.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: I'd like to thank the panel for coming. I'm sorry. Sorry, Joe.

MEMBER WEEDON: So, I'd to thank you all for being here. There are a couple things I kind of wanted to touch on.

First, 100 percent agreement, and I think we've heard this time and time again, all parents want a high quality school. The sad fact of the matter is, not all parents have access to
a high quality school right now, and we need to
move forward and do a better job of measuring
academic achievement, and I'd like to say, Mr.
Boots, I like the idea of -- a stronger emphasis
on a terminal grade. I think that's really the
measure.

Are we really graduating students?
Are we promoting students who are ready to
succeed?

There's been a lot of dichotomy in the
testimony. Folks who are saying we need to focus
on those academic measures, and then -- and the
need for clear objective data, and using that to
advocate for essentially test scores.

The other side of the coin has been
the impact of a well-rounded education, and I
think there is a question about how do we get
high quality data that we can use for
accountability, if we bring in things around the
richness of the curriculum, P.E., minutes, other
things.

So, I'd love to get your thoughts on,
are there ways that we can measure some of these
tings objectively and use it for accountability,
because I think the research is pretty clear and
we've heard this earlier tonight.

Access to P.E. promotes academic
growth. Access to dual languages, language is
emersion. All students achieve better. Diverse
school body, student body, all students achieve
better.

So, how -- back to my question. How
can we identify and accurately measure some of
these factors, because I think that's a critical
thing to do, if we're going to keep it in an
accountability framework.

MR. BOOTS: Great question, Joe. Lots
of other states also assess students in science
and social studies as part of a well-rounded
curriculum.

The state could choose to assess
science and appropriate grade levels, and social
studies at appropriate grade levels. The
District of Columbia has chosen not to do that.
We do -- we do test science in fifth grade,
eighth grade, and in biology. So, it is possible
that that could be folded in potentially somehow,
as part of the well-rounded curriculum.

But I would strongly consider, like
the state considers science and social studies as
part of the well-rounded curriculum and assessing
them reliably through -- there are some things
that could do that. That would be my
recommendation.

MR. FORTE: I would also like to add
that the unfortunate aspect of that is that
students need to reach a certain number of ELA
minutes and a certain number of math minutes.

So, that kind of goes into what each
school is able to put into their schedule. Like
I said, I only have 45 minutes that I see my
students for, one time a week, and of course, I
know 60 minutes is the recommendation.

So, it's guess it's really school-
dependent upon what they're able to fit into
their schedule.
MR. LAZERE: So, this isn't my area of expertise, but I just would point out that I think everything you mentioned is other important factors, are all measurable things. So, I guess I don't know why it wouldn't be possible to come up with measures to distinguish among within those factors.

MEMBER WEEDON: And to the point on the P.E. minutes, I think we've heard tonight when students get 30 minutes for recess, or 20 minutes of recess, they don't.

So, there has to be a transparency in that data, and there has to be some level to prevent the manipulation of that data, if it's going to be in an accountability framework.

Any thoughts on how we can do that from a teacher's perspective, or is it just public relations, public parents are going to hold people accountable?

MR. FORTE: Well, I guess the reason why we're here tonight, just getting the word out to schools that the 60 minutes is very important,
and then that way schools will have to adjust their schedules.

MEMBER WEEDON: Thank you, all.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Again, thank you very much for coming to testify tonight.

Appreciate the information. Thank you.

All right, for our next panel, Cosby Hunt. Who? Catharine Bellinger. Scott Abbott and Jeff Schmidt and Dr. Austin Nichols. Okay, Dr. Nichols. Dan Gordon. Steven Glazerman.

Since we're out of order, just have a seat and when you begin your testimony, just please give us your name and your organization, and we're going to start here, whenever you're ready.

MS. BELLINGER: Good evening, members of the State Board of Education. My name is Catharine Bellinger and I am testifying on behalf of Democrats for Education Reform, a national policy and advocacy organization that advocates for access to high quality public schools for all children.
I serve as our D.C. Director. I'm testifying tonight to urge the State Board of Education to support the State Superintendent's proposed ESSA implementation plan, particularly with regard to the proposed school accountability framework.

As context, over the past two years DFER has been active in supporting within the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, as well as implementation of those provisions at the state level, that we believe are crucial to advancing equity and ensuring that the most vulnerable children receive the education they are entitled to.

We are very active in a coalition of child and civil rights advocates, including the Education Trust, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the National Council of La Raza, and the National Center for Learning Disabilities.

To quote from our recent coalition letter to Congress, our collective goals include state-adopted standards aligned with the demands
of post-secondary education in the workforce,
annual statewide assessment of all students in
grades three through eight, and once again in
high school, with a strictly limited exception
for students with the most significant cognitive
disabilities.

Transparent accessible reporting of
data, dis-aggregated by race, income, disability
status and English proficiency at the state,
district and school levels, so that educators,
parents and students themselves have objective
information on where they are on their journey to
college and career readiness.

Finally, state-wide accountability
systems that include achievement and graduation
rate goals for all groups of students, rate
schools in large part on the academic performance
of all groups of students and require action when
any group of students consistently under-
performs, and I've included a link to our
coalition letter in my electronic testimony.

Our policy team has carefully read
through OSSE's proposed state plan for D.C. and we believe the D.C. plan meets, and in many ways, exceeds these four criteria.

Just as background, our team is led by Charlie Barone, our federal policy director, who spent 20 years working on ESCA, implementation and re-authorization on the Hill. He actually helped draft the key provisions within ESSA that maintain equity.

We believe that the single score a school receives from one to five stars in the D.C. plan should primarily reflect the academic performance of students on college and career ready exams, such as PARCC.

Why is this important? When a parent or policy maker looks at a star rating, the rating should demonstrate whether a school is meeting its primary mission of preparing children to succeed in college and in life.

A recent mathematical study in Massachusetts concludes that student's PARCC scores are highly correlated with success in
college. The research is right.

We found that the PARCC exam predicts college grades. Students with higher PARCC tend to receive higher grades in college. We realized and as Joe has brought up, that questions around the weight of student test scores generate significant debate, both in D.C. and nationally.

However, it's our belief that if we are not honest with ourselves about how well our schools are educating children across demographic groups, particularly in the crucial, foundational subjects of reading and math, we are reducing equity by distorting the picture of school performance.

Both parents and policy makers deserve transparency around both a school's academic performance overall, and any significant gaps in achievement and opportunity for our most vulnerable children.

By and large, the D.C. parents with whom we speak, and we've actually over the last few weeks, have been speaking with hundreds of
parents, and I know many of them have spoken with you on the phone, as well. Parents have made clear that they want a single summative school rating that primarily reflects student academic outcomes.

Just as an example, the public charter school sector as a whole has also heard repeatedly from parents about how effective the Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 system is for communicating quality to parents.

Of course, the accountability framework as a whole can and should also provide families with a more holistic picture of a school's program, whether a school offers art or P.E., the minutes of P.E., the family engagement opportunities, extracurricular, while giving educators important data that drives improvement in classroom practice.

We believe this will be achieved through the D.C. state report cards which are also mandated under ESSA.

We recognize that there are those who
fear an accountability based primarily on PARCC proficiency and growth can lead to an over-emphasis on test preparation, but it's important to keep two things in mind.

First, over-emphasis on test preparation is a phenomenon driven by adult responses, which need not occur to the accountability system, as opposed to an involuntary response somehow required by the system itself.

Second, it's actually a self-defeating response at that. The research is clear that the best way to increase student learning is to de-emphasize test preparation such as item based sort or drill and kill, and instead embrace a rich curriculum as you all have talked about, engaged in active learners and critical thinkers, and teach students to master challenging content and skills.

The answer to too much test preparation therefore is not to reduce the weight of academic outcomes. The answer is to select,
support and retain the best possible talent at
the LEA and school level who can teach to mastery
and beyond.

We think our public schools are up to
the challenge. Regardless, diminishing our
expectations for academic results or obscuring
the picture of school quality we provide to
parents is not an acceptable option.

To conclude, we at Democrats for
Education Reform ask our State Board members in
D.C. to work with our State Superintendent, and
we know there are a lot of really strong
recommendations for tweaks and changes to the
plan, but ultimately, we ask you to approve the
final state plan in March, for April submission
to the Department of Education. We know our work
in D.C. won't end with the approval of the ESSA
plan.

Once approved, the hard work begins.
There is no perfect policy or even perfect
implementation of a policy. But our state plan
is very strong and can be improved every year.
Let's not kick the can farther down the road. Every year that we delay in giving parents, educators and policy makers crucial information about school performance is another year that we're putting adult interests ahead of kids.

DR. NICHOLS: Hi. I'm Austin Nichols. I am -- I have done a fair amount of work over the course of the years in measuring teacher performance and school quality. I've written several reports for IAS on the topic, but I was asked to come and speak about the properties of tests that are relevant here.

So, I just want to emphasize that a student's PARCC score or achievement, measured achievement on any test are not a measure of growth over time. An average of student's scores or proficiency rates are not a measure of school quality.

So, I think that parents are often led astray by misunderstanding this very simple fact. I think this explains why some parents believe
that certain private schools are superior to public schools, and unfortunately, choose to spend a lot of money or take up a voucher to spend -- to spend the public money on what they think is inferior improvement in test scores over time.

On the other hand, growth on tests, assuming that number one, the growth can be well measured, and that number two, tests measure the entire variety of skills that need to be taught by schools are the only reasonable way to measure school quality.

Good tests should therefore, be the focus of any accountability regime or measurement of school quality. Good tests measure -- give a robust measure of growth or value added by schools. Those tests should also be usable in small parts during the course of the year, by teachers, to inform instruction. This is called formative assessment. That kind of formative assessment can dramatically improve instruction and thereby, school quality.
I believe the current tests do not --
they're in use not only by D.C., but in other
places as well, do not particular support
particularly well, good measures of growth, do
not allow this kind of formative assessment and
do not measure all the relevant skills, including
the so-called non-cognitive skills, but they
could.

Most importantly, even without
improving on the tests that are currently used in
D.C. and elsewhere, and without any kind of
fancy, kind of metric models, just estimating the
mean improvement on test scores, measured in
scale terms on the theta score, is really the
best model to identify high quality schools.
Those models that measure that use that simple
growth measure are going to identify the high
quality schools with the highest probability.

So, I just want to mention one
important caveat. Test design can really be
tweaked in very subtle ways, to give any kind of
answer that you want. You can find any kind of
test score gap that you want with subtle features of test score design.

You can also achieve any result on growth with a strategic test, so you can effectively show any essentially any distribution of growth, can be achieved by carefully adjusting weights given the questions at different difficulty levels.

So, the very detailed pieces of test score design, of test design are important for assessing whether you've got the right measure for measuring school quality, as well. Thanks.

DR. ABBOTT: Good evening. Thank you for having me here. My name is Scott Abbott. I'm the director of social studies for D.C. public schools. I'm also a Ward 4 resident and parent of two students in Ward 6.

I'm speaking tonight in reference to some recommendations that I've submitted online, and so, you should be able to have those in front of you and I'm going to highlight a few points from those tonight.
I also want to clarify that these are my own views that have been shared with DCPS leadership. But they do not necessarily reflect the views of DCPS as a whole.

There have been some changes to the No Child Left Behind Law, as a result of the Every Student Succeeds Act, to attempt to address some of its shortcomings. In particular, the over-reliance on math and reading proficiency as measured by standardized assessments.

Since 2001, when No Child Left Behind was approved, schools have increasingly seen a narrowing curriculum with subjects like science, social studies and the arts, receiving considerably less time and focus, particularly in elementary grades.

Given ESSA's aim to allow states to provide students with a more well-rounded education, the current ESSA plan, and particularly the accountability measures does not take full advantage of the new flexibility provided by ESSA.
Specifically a few notes. In the 117 page ESSA plan, social studies is directly referenced only twice. On page 76, the plan says that, "D.C. has rigorous state educational standards in a number of subjects, including social studies, despite the fact that our social studies standards were last updated over 10 years ago in 2006."

On page 78 the plan also does list accurately the five current social studies courses required for graduation.

The word 'citizen' does not appear anywhere in this document, despite the important role that public education is meant to play in the preparation of students to be informed and engaged citizens, as required by our democracy.

The accountability measure for pre-K5, pre-K8 and 68 schools weighed English language arts and math assessments as 80 percent of the overall metrics.

Now, others have testified this evening about the importance of academic
achievement, and I am certainly in support of that, as well. I do think that is a high percentage, that actually could be lowered a little bit to make room for some of the other subject areas, that make up a well-rounded education.

So, as a couple of specific recommendations. Given ESSA's focus on providing students with a well-rounded education, I would encourage that we add a well-rounded education index to the accountability metrics that are currently proposed for schools K5, K8 and 68, that would focus on subjects like social studies, science and the arts in particular.

This category could be added by reducing the academic achievement weighing from 40 percent to 30 percent, 2.5 from each of the four indicators. That would allow schools to report information on some very specific questions. That would still leave 70 percent for math and English, and so, I think that does seem sufficient.
Some of the things that we should gather information on, for example, how many minutes of instruction per week, per grade are students getting coherent and dedicated instruction that is standards based in social studies, science and the arts?

How are we making you -- how are schools making use of the city as a classroom?

So, for example, taking advantage of field experiences, visits to museums, performances.

How are we preparing students to be citizens? So, are we having students participate in competitions like National History Day or We, the People Congressional simulations or the Make the Challenges Project Soapbox.

Then what other instructional focuses do schools provide for students? For example, dual language, STEM focus, globally themed, arts integration.

Providing time for social studies and science by measuring in the accountability
metrics, some of these elements is deeply important because as we know what is measured is what gets -- what actually gets taught and what happens.

This is a civil rights issue for our students. Higher income students have significantly more background content knowledge by the time they start school compared to students from low income backgrounds, which is the case for many of our students in D.C.

This discrepancy creates an inequitable opportunity gap for our students, that limits their success in schools, careers and most importantly, their ability to participate as citizens in our democracy.

The proposed revisions would help create -- would help to close the achievement gap that we see in Washington, D.C. which is one of our biggest priorities.

Well-rounded education was the intention of ESSA from its inception, and we've heard former Secretary of Education John King
speak about this a number of times. At many of
the community meetings where I have attended,
I've also heard from a lot of parents and social
studies, science and arts educators that there is
strong support for including these other subject
areas in the recommendations.

We also know that content knowledge
and skills supports literacy. So, even with
keeping literacy and math very much as our focus,
we know that additional time for students to
move, as they move from decoding to reading
comprehension, we know the role of background
content knowledge plays an increasingly important
role in their ability to make sense of complex
text, and we need to make sure that they're
getting appropriate time for that.

I'll mention two other things.
Historical thinking skills have been increasingly
necessary, as students are being exposed to more
and more "fake news". We know that recent
research has shown students are not -- are often
lacking the skills to source, corroborate and
contextualize the information that they're hearing from the news, and we must equip them with these skills from historical thinking to be able to make sense of the world around them.

Finally, the primary mission of public schools in this country, in their founding, was preparation for citizenship, and we need to make sure that we do not forget that third 'C', along with college and careers, we must prepare our students to be citizens. Thank you.

MR. SCHMIDT: Good evening. I am Jeff Schmidt, a D.C. resident and author of Disciplined Minds, book about education.

My daughter attended public school here in Washington, D.C. from grades K through 12, and is now a beginning student at the University of Maryland College Park.

I object to your plan to subject the children of Washington, D.C. to academic racial profiling. I have read the 117 page plan that the Superintendent wrote with your input.

It is astounding that you want D.C.
public schools to have lower math and English
proficiency goals for black and Latino children
than for white children.

For example, the plan requires schools
to teach only one-third of today's black seventh
graders to read at grade level by the time they
are tested in high school, in the Spring of 2020.
But the plan calls for 82 percent of white high
school students to be reading at grade level by
then.

Nothing in the new federal education
law, the Every Student Succeeds Act, requires you
to have lower academic expectations for black and
Latino children than for white children. So, you
don't have to do that.

If you want to set different
proficiency goals for different students, then
you should do so according to each student's
proficiency, which you measure every year, not
according to your pre-judgements based on the
student's race.

It is arguably reasonable to have a
lower end of year proficiency expectation for a
student, if that student begins the year with
extremely low proficiency. But not simply
because the student is black.

According to the draft ESSA plan, you
plan to pre-judge minority children for the next
22 years, until 2039. That means you have
already decided that tens of thousands of black
and Latino children, who haven't even been born
yet, will be put into low proficiency expectation
groups, not because they've scored poorly on a
test, but because they were born black or Latino.

Everyone knows that expectation
affects outcome. Putting a student into a group
with low academic goals make the student wear a
badge of inferiority. That undermines the
student's moral and has life-long consequences
for the student.

Will you please change your plan, so
that you don't put any student into a low goals
group, unless you have actually tested that
student and sought permission from the student's
parents?

I testified here on November 16th, 2016, and asked you to make D.C.'s education plan equitable for all races. But you made no effort to do that, even though it would be easy to do. You have shown no will to make D.C.'s education plan equitable.

You need to establish a working group open to all stakeholders, to recommend a plan that is free of academic racial profiling, that is a plan with proficiency goals that are based on student's actual measured proficiencies, not on their race. Will you do that?

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you for your testimony. Before we get questions from the Board, Superintendent Kang, would you like to respond to any of this testimony?

SUPERINTENDENT KANG: Thank you. I'll keep my comments brief, but I just wanted to address the last testimony in particular, because I think it's really important to not leave any mis-impressions here.
I want to be very clear that we at OSSE, and I believe all members of the State Board of Education, believe deeply that all children have the ability and the potential to succeed at incredibly high levels, and to pursue their life opportunities and that's why I think we all do what we do.

I want to be again, very clear, that the goals that we have outlined in the state plan do not, in any way, determine our individual expectations for any individual child, and we believe it's our mission to ensure that all children, we are supporting all children in achieving their goals and their dreams, and achieving all life opportunities.

I'll be candid that we went through a lot of thought and debate about how we would establish the goal-setting mechanism that is required for outlining long-term and annual interim goals in the state plan.

I think we debated a lot around the time line and the aggressiveness with which we
could pursue growth. The reality right now is unfortunately, that our current outcomes for students showed deeply troubling gaps that don't in any way match our aspirations and our beliefs in the potential of all students.

For example, currently six percent of students in special education are on track for college and career readiness. Between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged, and we heard tonight about some of the ways in which our economically disadvantaged measure could even be further sharpened, but with our current measure, we see that about 70 percent -- 17 percent of economically disadvantaged students are currently on track for college and career, compared to nearly 60 percent of non-economically disadvantaged students.

That does not reflect the potential of our students, but that is our current reality, and so, we need to work actively and aggressively to address those gaps, and we will do so as an
education system over time.

But in order to set the same goals that were literally the same across all subgroups, it would be ignoring the current reality that exists in our schools and our classrooms.

So, we believe -- and I will again, note the point I made earlier, which is that we set out 20 year goals that aimed towards all students reaching the same level of proficiency, aiming for 85 percent of all students at the college and career ready level, and we also talked about a 10 year goal of having gaps, cutting gaps in half, and working actively towards that point.

We had debated whether to set out that 10 year goal as our long term goal, but we worry that leaving our long term goal is cutting gaps in half, would leave the impression that we didn't believe that all students could ultimately reach the same level, we thought it was important to make that statement on paper, as well as
through our intentions.

Finally, I'll just note that the way we've set out our goals does require faster progress for the students who are furthest behind, because we are aiming to support those students in making even more growth and improvement, and improving faster than the overall student population in D.C.

So, certainly we welcome all feedback, but I just wanted to make sure that there wasn't a misleading impression about how we had set our goals.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you, Superintendent Kang. Any questions, Board members? Mr. Weedon?

MEMBER WEEDON: Thank you all for coming tonight. Catharine, you've cited some data that shows that students who do best in college that are -- are those who score best on the PARCC score. I'd love to see that research.

But the question that I have, that I think is most relevant, what about poor students?
Is that data consistent for both high -- rich
students and poor students, or economically
disadvantaged students?

MS. BELLINGER: I believe so. I'd be
happy to send you the study. It was done in 2015,
by Mathematica Policy Research, I know a well-
regarded think-tank here in D.C.

So, I'd be happy to send that to you,
and put you in touch with the study authors.

MEMBER WEEDON: Yes, I'd love to see
that because one of the other things that's come
out today, and this leads to my next question, is
around that well-rounded curriculum, and with
admissions in college and the background,
experience background knowledge, my experience
has been the students that have that background
knowledge tend to do better. So, I'm really
interested in that point.

You also, and Mr. Abbott, you also
talked about the focus on test preparation.
The current system under No Child Left
Behind, puts 100 percent of weight on test
scores, and as a result of that, we have
developed a system that focuses on testing, test
preparation at the expense of other things.

We've heard three times tonight though
that if something is not measured, it's not
reported. So, how do we balance these two
things?

Does policy lead practice or how do we
encourage practice to change, if we're not
willing to change our policy?

MS. BELLINGER: I have some thoughts
and then Dr. Nichols can share his.

So, we had an interesting conversation
with our policy director about this, and Ruth was
there, as well.

Our policy director, Charlie Barone's
view, is that if you think something is vitally
important, like P.E., which we all think is
vitally important, or recess or art, we should
just mandate it, and I mean, what I would say is,
have a real conversation about what is important.

In our view there is a difference
between saying that something must happen, and actually measuring it as an outcome.

I think what I would be more -- what I think we would be more interested in is looking at the student outcomes that we care about around well-rounded curriculum.

So, I know right now, we've only done one year of a science exam in D.C., and I know that in OSSE state plan, they're willing to look at, you know, ultimately, the incorporation of other subjects, but right now, we only have one year of data, and I think that that's something certainly worth looking into.

But you know, it would be our view that just like a check box, like does a school have art or does it have social studies, or what is the well-roundedness of the curriculum?

That's a description, but not an outcome. So, in terms of whether policy drives practice, I would say, you know, one thing we've heard from LEA leaders and I think you all have heard in some of your working groups, you know,
we're looking to find the teachers and principals here in D.C., who can transcend, you know, just practicing the test all day, and I think that that's something we all want, just having a temperature check and having a thermometer of how kids are doing doesn't mean that in any way, you know, OSSE or the State Board is telling teachers, you know, like practice taking tests all day long.

I think we can hold these concepts in our mind at the same time, that we can have a school quality rating, but that we can also recruit, retain and support teachers and principals to provide a joyful and engaging environment for our kids.

DR. ABBOTT: I'd like to add something here too.

So, I think your question around do we need the policy or do we need to just sort of support the practice, I think is what I'm hearing here, and I think we need both, frankly.

I hear from a lot of elementary
teachers that they really want to spend more time
doing science and social studies, but that
there's a lot of pressure based on the current
accountability system, to deliver in English and
math.

As others have pointed out, providing
background content knowledge and providing high
quality instruction in those other areas will
contribute to better literacy scores, but I think
that message gets lost a lot of times, when it
comes down to it, it's the PARCC score that a lot
of folks are looking at.

So, I think if we actually want to
have a system that reflects the values that we
have, and if those values include things like
preparing students to be citizens, I think the
accountability plan has to reflect that as well,
and then I think we need to do a lot of work
probably, to get schools prepared and supported
in doing that kind of instruction, which is going
to be a shift for some folks.

But there is a lot of schools who are
already doing great things, in terms of setting
kids up for success on science fair projects and
national history day and things like this, and I
think if we could flip the conversation from us,
sort of waving our hands and saying there is
great things over here, we'd love for you to do
them, to them coming to us and saying, hey,
there's actually this requirement. We are now
taking this more seriously to provide our kids a
more well-rounded education, I think that would
have tremendous difference for the lives of our
students.

MS. BELLINGER: I just had a point of
clarification about what's required by law.

One thing that I'm aware of, and you
know, I realize certainly that under a more lax
administration, things may change. I hope we
would maintain our democratic high standards.

Under the ESSA law, it's required that
if you use a measure in a state's accountability
plan, it must be differentiable by subgroup.

I would just point out that whether a
school offers a certain subject or minutes of, you know, a certain subject, it's actually not differentiable by subgroup. You can measure an outcome, like how students perform on a science exam or how they perform on a social studies exam.

But well-roundedness of curriculum, again, we could certainly decide as a community, that it should be mandatory, and you know, if the State Board came together or the Council -- the PCSB came together and said, these things should be mandatory, you know, certainly, we'd entertain that.

But it can't be differentiable by student subgroup, and so, it's actually prohibited under ESSA.

MEMBER WEEDON: I think there is some questions about metrics and how we make that measurable. I'm over time. So, I'll just end by saying we heard earlier about the mandate for P.E. hours, and we certainly haven't met that as a city.
So, I do think there has to be this balance here between professional development and curriculum, as well as what's mandated, mandating it on its own, does not seem to be working, at least in that category.

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Thank you, all for being with us tonight and sharing your thoughts. I had a question for Dr. Nichols.

It was -- I didn't fully understand how you were defining high quality schools. You referenced in your testimony several times that high quality schools aren't this or that.

Could you talk to us about a little bit about how you define that?

DR. NICHOLS: So, my -- I mean, this is -- obviously, it's a term of art. There is no strict definition of a high quality school.

My idea of a school is a school that produces some value for the students over time, that improves their performance on some metrics that you can measure, which means you could test for those things, and improves performance is the
key thing.

It doesn't just select high performing kids and then keep them there until they're ready to graduate and go to college, which by the way, 60 percent of Americans will go to college and only 40 percent of them will finish college. So, let's not forget that either. It's not everyone who is going to college.

But high quality and -- in the way that I was thinking about it is, is school that provides additional value added over -- over and above whatever would be business as usual, in the absence.

We did not always have schools, 150 years ago we didn't have high schools. So, you could just imagine that people get their instruction some other way.

So, what is a high quality school? It's a school that provides value over, you know -- versus, you know, someone who is a dropout, to study on their own in a library.

Now, high quality versus low quality
school, low quality is not going to provide any extra value over that. I would hope that a high quality school would provide a lot of extra value over that.

So, I think that, you know, the reason we focus on math and reading, math and English language arts, is that those are key skills that are needed the first minute you get into college. You know, if you don't have those, you're in remediation which, you know, many of the education programs that we have focus on the sort of -- the success metric is the percent of kids who go to school -- who go to college and matriculate and do not need remedial classes when they get there.

So, that's why we focus on those particular tests, but of course, those are only two of the many, many skills that you should get -- that a high quality school should be delivering and so, this -- you know, we would like to be able to measure on many, many dimensions, not just two.
MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Thank you. Mr. Schmidt, I really appreciate the spirit of what you're sharing, and the call to think about race and equity in ways that are really critical and fundamental to the democracy that we live in.

I wondered, what I heard you saying is, could we readjust the way that we think about subgroups, so that it's based on previous levels of proficiency, rather than race, is that accurate?

MR. SCHMIDT: Yes, indeed. The most obvious way to do that would be a decile system, where you just look at your annual test and put the students into 10 proficiency groups, and set goals for each proficiency group.

The lower proficiency groups would have -- would expect -- you would expect higher growth of course. ESSA calls for higher growth for the lowest achieving students.

Within each proficiency group, all the races would be treated equally. They would all have the same growth expectation.
MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: I wonder what your thoughts are, given that you -- it seems that you've thought about this quite a bit, about the fact that all races aren't treated equally in our country.

So, therefore, it's incredibly important for us to be recognizing or acknowledging, whether our system is actually serving students across multiple races equally well, and having the decile system you're recommending be able to pull out that kind of information.

MR. SCHMIDT: Well, you could pull it out with the -- you could and should pull it out with a computer program that would show that if the goals of the decile system are met, then African American students would be advancing such and such amount. Latino students, white students. These are all implicit in the plan.

We definitely cannot go back to the situation before No Child Left Behind, where the achievement gap was kept secret. These things
have to be -- the tests have to be given every
eyear, and the results have to be given -- broken
down by subgroup, racial subgroup. That has to be
made public. But --

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: That's helpful.

MR. SCHMIDT: -- that doesn't mean you
have to tell members of racial subgroups that you
have lower expectations for them.

I talked to a public charter school
person recently. He said that their black
students are all over the map. Some of them are
whizzes at math and some of them are way behind.
It's not -- it's not fair to the individual black
student, to put them in a group, to put a label
on them that says you're in a group that we
expect -- of which we expect only one-third to be
able to read by high school.

We don't -- the ESSA law gives states
enough flexibility to write a plan that doesn't
involve such affixing of badges of inferiority or
academic racial profiling.

In fact, with the -- ironically, with
the rise of the Trump administration, the ESSA flexibility has actually increased.

I don't know if you're aware, but about 10 days ago, Lamar Alexander, who heads the Senate Committee, that deals with education, he told State Board leaders, "Assume that the U.S. Department of Education will say yes," to their ESSA plans, "You will have a President and an Education Secretary who do not believe in a National School Board."

So, it's very unlikely that if you sent a plan to the federal government, that did not involve academic racial profiling, it's very unlikely that Betsy DeVos is going to come back and say, "No, no, you have to set lower goals for black students that for white students." Very unlikely.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. Thank you.

DR. NICHOLS: Can I just offer clarification on one --

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Go ahead.
DR. NICHOLS: It is the property of tests, that the highest average growth will be in the middle of the distribution. That is the fourth, fifth and sixth, seventh deciles will have much higher growth than the first and second and the ninth and tenth. That is just the property of standardized tests.

So, just bear that in mind, when you consider that kind of approach.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. Ms. Wattenberg?

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Yes, first, I just want to say it's my -- this is just a comment with regards to Mr. Schmidt's statement.

It's my understanding that the accountability plan does not make use of these long term ethnic and racially based goals. It's my understanding that these goals are a moral statement and goals against which the agency and others can judge progress.

I would like to have confirmation that they are not part of what gets used in the school
accountability plan. Is that -- okay, we can --
we can -- that was now confirmed. Okay, I want
to make sure of that. So, it doesn't affect the
scores. Okay, number two.

MR. SCHMIDT: That's not quite true. On
page 49 of the plan, it says that schools are
rated according to the subgroup, the proficiency.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Right, but that
subgroup proficiency is unrelated to the goal.
It is related to their score. I just want to
clarify that.

MR. SCHMIDT: That's not clear at all.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: I agree with you,
that it's not clear, but we have now had it
clarified, which I am very glad to have done.
Thank you very much for clarifying that.

So, in my judgement, I believe we're
set on that. So, that's good. So, let me move
on.

I want to go to Mr. Nichols. So,
you're saying that a high PARCC score, contrary
to what we've heard from some witnesses tonight,
does not reflect high quality necessarily in the
schools.

So, my question is, what does a high PARCC score reflect? If a school has high PARCC
scores, what does that reflect?

DR. NICHOLS: Well, predominately selection of students who had higher initial
scores. This is, you know, quite easy to see, looking at the data in D.C., that the schools
that have the highest PARCC scores will tend to have the highest scores of entering students, as
well.

So, it's not to say that the growth and proficiency are entirely uncorrelated, but
there is a very nice scatter plot that you can do, that shows you that in fact, they're not very
highly correlated.

Some of the highest quality schools have in fact, very low proficiency rates and vice versa, that some of the -- some of the schools that are adding the least value have very high proficiency rates.
MEMBER WATTENBERG: And you have that scatter plot for D.C. schools?

DR. NICHOLS: Well, I have it for -- I have it for past years. It hasn't been done recently.

So, the easiest way to do that is to just look at median growth percentiles, which is not maybe the ideal measure of growth, but at least it's one that's produced for --

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Well, one concern I've had throughout, and I raised it earlier in the evening, is that do we end up the way we're -- the current proposal is, do we end up with a system that could conceivably judge low proficiency, high growth schools with a low rating?

That is that the low growth -- I'm sorry, that the low proficiency would drag down a high --

DR. NICHOLS: Did you say low proficiency or low growth?

MEMBER WATTENBERG: No, I'm sorry.
DR. NICHOLS: Low proficiency, high growth is --

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Correct.

DR. NICHOLS: -- could get a low rating. Right?

MEMBER WATTENBERG: That's right, and it seems to me --

DR. NICHOLS: That's why -- right?

MEMBER WATTENBERG: What?

DR. NICHOLS: That's the real danger. If you have -- if you downgrade a school that's got low proficiency and high growth, you're effectively penalizing a school that is doing exactly the thing that the public school system -- that you really most need from a public school system, that is to even out some of the inequities in access to education, by giving the greatest gains to those who start out at the lowest initial test scores.

So, you definitely do not want to rank those scores lower -- those schools lower.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: That's the
greatest concern, is if we looked at that -- that
one concern that a number of us have raised a
number of times, is we don't have the data to be
able to understand whether this proposal will
have that effect.

If we looked at this scatter plot with
you, would we be able to understand what the
effect would be, if that is something we
definitely want to avoid?

DR. NICHOLS: Well, I mean, so you
need to identify what the growth metric is that
is -- that enters in the current formula, and
there are several proposed -- I've seen several
proposed formulas.

But for sure, you need -- so, if it is
median growth percentile versus initial
proficiency score, you know, average proficiency
score, ideally averaged over a couple of years to
reduce the influence of variability in this
estimates, and then you apply the most current
metric to the most recent year, and just see
where -- you know, which schools are ranked at
different levels, you can see whether that seems to make sense given, you know, where schools fall on the -- in the various parts of that two by -- you know, that Cartesian plane, that graph of median growth percentile versus initial proficiency score and the --

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Well, that's the kind of thing, Superintendent, that we've talked about, trying to figure out how to do, and I wonder is that public data that we could work with an independent researcher to look at?

SUPERINTENDENT KANG: So, we can follow up on which specific data is available publicly.

I just want to clarify that we have spent considerable time at OSSE, generating for the State Board data which we shared at the last working session, which took into account not just MGP and proficiency, but the multiple factors that are currently built into the accountability system and sharing where different schools fell out.
MEMBER WATTENBERG: So, we've had two examples and I'm just saying I don't think two -- I -- I understand that it takes time, but it's totally critical to the judgement of the plan, in my judgement.

DR. NICHOLS: Wait. Two examples of schools or two examples of systems?

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Two examples of --

SUPERINTENDENT KANG: Categories of schools based on how they -- different characteristics. I just want to be clear that I think the reason I referenced the time is because the information we've provided is meant to help the Board make an informed decision, and we have limited resources on where we put our time.

So, I would hope that that information is helpful, but there are limits to what we are able to do.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: That's why I'm asking if the data is public, so that we could look into it ourselves. All right.

DR. NICHOLS: So, I don't believe the
last year of data is public, but previous years are.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Previous years are?

DR. NICHOLS: Yes.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Would be --

DR. NICHOLS: So, you could go back and compare for previous years.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Thank you. I want to move to Mr. Abbott, and the light is flashing.

I guess you talked about national studies that talked about the decline in social studies, science, arts and so on, and I wonder if you either have information or anecdotal information.

What is your sense of what the effect of this has been at the D.C. level?

DR. ABBOTT: Right. Well, in high school because we have required graduation credits, we've actually been able to maintain a -- I would say a pretty significant amount of social studies time, which is great.
Middle school in DCPS, we recently
have had some success and partially I would
attribute that the fact that we now have a DCPS-
wide social studies assessment that is a growth
assessment, which actually has shown that it's
been highly correlated to PARCC, as well. PARCC
LEA.

In elementary school it's very much a
mixed bag, and I think schools are attempting to
do as much as they can to meet the requirements.

So, some folks will often report that
they are trying to integrate social studies or
science into their literacy block, and you know,
at DCPS we have unit themes which are chosen
based on content topics, which helps to some
degree.

I would argue that there is a need
really for separate social studies time and
separate science time, as well because there is a
lot of things that you would look at differently
based on this particular disciplines.

So, we might look at a text and an ELA
through a literacy lens and look at things about, you know, the vocabulary, the text structure, understanding the main ideas of that, but we would stop short sometimes of moving to how historians might look at that same text.

So, considering things about the historical context in which it was written, considering the source, which becomes increasingly important, considering corroboration. So, not just looking at one text to get information about a topic, but looking at multiple text to think about how we are building our understanding of the past.

So, I think, you know, given some of the challenges of integrating all of those disciplinary specific skills and a really purposeful move through content that is provided by our state standards, I don't think the current guidelines allow sufficient time for schools to do that.

I also think that because of the focus on math and reading, that is sort of laser-like,
which is in many ways good, I think it's hard for
us to sort of get a foot in the door with
schools, in terms of training and getting
teachers to pay attention to these other
disciplines, as well.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Thank you very
much. Thanks to all of you, and Catharine, I'm
sorry, my red light went off, or I was going to
have one for you too.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. Batchelor.

MEMBER BATCHELOR: Thank you, Madam
President. I just want to one, thank you all for
-- for staying a little late with us and
testifying.

I did want to acknowledge the
conversation we had. Multiple panelists had
pretty extensively about testing and its
reliability and I know there were a few folks, I
think at least a couple, who mentioned that often
times, things like test design and human behavior
on the school level can -- can alter outcomes,
right, at least on standardized tests, and we
know that broadly, sometimes the ends are often
altered by means, right? That's just simple.

However, testing is kind of the basic
way we judge how students are -- how well
students are prepared for career and college
across the board.

But like I mentioned earlier, my
interest is that we come out of this process with
an accountability system that measures both --
both how -- that measures the demonstration of
academic achievement through test scores, but
also mentions what contributes to academic
success, right?

So, I think you know, testing is a
demonstration, but we also should hold our
schools accountable for contributing to academic
success, right, because I think you know, it was
mentioned that, you know, while, you know, some
schools may have high test scores, that does not
mean that they can necessarily work with my
student to get to the same level, because they
may have a population of students that
perpetually score high, right?

So, I guess for any of the panelists, you know, I'm asking for advice, how do we get to a -- how do we -- or what metrics could we include that hold schools specifically accountable for not only demonstrating success, but also doing those things that we know contribute to academic success?

DR. NICHOLS: So, I hear you asking for accountability measures that include input as well as output, that includes the education input and possibly, sort of intermediate outcomes, outcomes for example like students actually showing up to school and not having -- exhibiting chronic absenteeism.

So, I should have started by saying that I'm a graduate of the D.C. public school system. I graduated in 1989.

So, I came up through a very different D.C. public school system. My kids are currently in the D.C. public school system and are going through a very different public school system.
than I went through, and I have seen a dramatic
change in the input certainly, the kinds of
investments that are made in the -- in teaching
quality and other attributes of schools is just
astonishing to me, having grown up in D.C.

I don't think -- having said that, I
don't think a school accountability system should
be focused nearly as much on those kind of inputs
or outcomes as they should be, attending to the
final outcomes that are of most interest.

Now, that said, test scores are not
the only outcome of interest. Obviously,
matriculation in college, later performance in
life. Ultimately, I would like to see labor
market outcomes attached to these things, as
well.

So, obviously these final -- these
sort of more distal outcomes are harder to
measure. The proximate intermediate outcomes,
these things are -- you can observe this week are
much easier to measure.

You know, are kids actually showing up
to school? That's an easier thing to measure, and so, it's very tempting to put those -- to give great weight to those things in your accountability measure.

MS. BELLINGER: I'd love to weigh in here, just to agree with Dr. Nichols, because what you're asking is whether we can hold schools accountable for practice and their inputs, and I guess I would say that at least in DFER's perspective and the work we've done on ESSA, along with our -- the civil rights coalition, we believe that -- state's accountability framework.

So, when we rate schools quality and communicate that information to parents and schools, those should focus primarily on outcomes.

The one place that I think there has been broad agreement and it's a big shift from NCLB to ESSA is growth, focus on growth, and then also focus, as Dr. Nichols mentioned, on some of the research based most significant factors that contribute to student success.
So, including English language learning growth, attendance, absenteeism, as Dr. Nichols mentioned.

Your question of can policy makers hold schools accountable? I think it's actually just using the word accountable in a different way.

We absolutely can hold our schools accountable for being great schools, and it's something that parents do every day. Actually, I would say that re-enrollment rate is a really, really strong predictor of parent and student satisfaction with a school.

If a school is not engaging students, if they don't love that school, you're going to see really seriously declining enrollment, and so, in terms of what to look at, that would indicate, you know, some of these other measures that you talk about, that make up a great school, there are ways that policy makers can hold schools accountable, but the accountability framework itself, the quality rating system, I
think it's agreed largely, should focus on outcomes.

DR. ABBOTT: I'd weigh in here a little bit as well.

I mean, I think -- I'm actually in substantial agreement with what Catharine and Dr. Nichols are saying, and I think very much, I would believe -- I believe as well in academic achievement and focusing on what students are able to do, and I think along with that we need to remember that academic achievement is not limited to reading and math.

So, if we feel like the measures that we have are imperfect, maybe that's something that we need to consider for other content areas, as well.

You know, in addition to our state, I know Louisiana came out with a plan last week, in which they proposed an interest and opportunity index, sort of similar to what we're talking about here.

So, I know other states are interested
in this. Currently, 25 states test in social studies. I don't know what the number is for science. But I mean, there are other measurable ways that we can take these things into account, and we have to remember that academic achievement, while important, is also not the only goal of our schools, as well.

We want students to be prepared for college. We want them to be prepared for careers, and we need them to be able to participate as citizens, as well.

MEMBER BATCHELOR: Thank you.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Yes.

MEMBER JONES: Thank you, Madam President. Dr. Nichols, can you repeat what you said about expectations related to testing? A couple of board members -- well --

DR. NICHOLS: I think you're asking about the sort of deciles you might expect to see --

MEMBER JONES: Yes.

DR. NICHOLS: -- the growth you might
expect to see at different deciles.

So, it's a property of tests that they average across effectively, a bunch of curvilinear growth curves, and what you see is that the maximum growth on a test will happen at the point where the test has the greatest reliability of measuring.

So, the expected growth will be highest effectively at the median test score. So, the middle of the distribution of test scores should expect to see the highest test score growth time at any point in time.

So, if you design a test to measure the median third graders reading ability, and you measure reading ability across third graders, the test score growth -- assuming you've very accurately measured the baseline test score for third graders, the lowest scores will tend to have lower growth than the median test scores -- than the median students, and the highest students will also have lower growth than the median students.
The median students, the kids right in the middle will have the highest test score growth over time.

Now, one factor that interferes with this is we don't accurately measure baseline test scores. There is a lot of measurement error in the baseline test scores.

So, that adds a layer of complexity here. So, in fact, there is a lot of noise in test scores, and so, there is this additional factor that -- that sort of flattens all of that out, essentially, that some of the very low scoring -- if you look at the baseline test scores, a lot of them, there is very low scoring students are in fact, might be middle of the road achievement levels, but they just got a bad draw on that test, essentially, and so, they will have higher than expected growth, and a lot of the highest scoring students are actually middle of the road achievement levels and they just got a lucky draw on the test, effectively.

So, they will tend to have even lower
growth expected, which will tend to -- to add a
layer of noise and smooth all those gains out.

But on average, you should expect to
see the graphed growth versus baseline test
scores, you could expect to see a kind of upside
down U curve of growth, with respect to baseline
test scores.

Sorry, maybe I'm not answering the
question you were actually asking.

MEMBER JONES: No, you did. But --

DR. NICHOLS: Okay.

MEMBER JONES: -- I have some
questions.

DR. NICHOLS: Okay.

MEMBER JONES: If you've got a -- that
U-line curve, my history is in -- in following
market. So, you're going to see a regression at
one point.

DR. NICHOLS: Right. So, you -- if
you estimate for example, a local intergression
of test score growth on baseline test scores, you
will see that upside down -- that sort of upside
down U, that hump-shaped curve in many state
assessments across the country.

So, for sure it's available. You can
see that in North Carolina's tests. You can see
that in Florida's tests.

MEMBER JONES: Okay, yes.

DR. NICHOLS: So, for what it's worth.
I mean, it's -- it's just a -- it's -- it's also
just an intrinsic property of tests. The way the
psycho-metrics work, they design the tests to
accurately measure really accurately measure at
the middle of the distribution, because that's
where the bulk of the kids are.

So, if you want to maximize your --
you know, average quality of measurement, you're
going to design your test to really accurately
measure at that point, and what that means is,
there is a lot - there are a lot of questions
that get right at the level of ability, and if
you're making gains on a whole lot of -- in a
whole lot of areas, that are all tested, and
you're nowhere near that level of ability, you're
not going to be making gains on those, you know, 60 percent of questions that are really focused at the middle of the distribution.

If you've already passed that level, you're not going to be making gains on those 60 questions, because you're already answering them correctly. So, that's just a property of tests in general.

MEMBER JONES: Yes. You're basically justifying what your earlier statement, as far as tests.

DR. NICHOLS: Right, I mean, so you can design tests to measure any sort of -- any set of abilities very accurately. You could design tests to really accurately measure at the bottom and the top of the distribution, instead of right in the middle, which I think is -- you know, it's something that we should worry about, because you really don't want floor and ceiling effects of tests. You don't want people who can't make any progress on the test, or we can't measure potential slide on
the test, when you're focused on accountability
based on growth, for all students, not just
students sort of in the middle of the
distribution.

MEMBER JONES: Thank you. I have
another question for all of you.

I hear everyone speak about re-
enrollment as a good indicator, and I -- it may
be. I don't -- I don't have the data to prove
that it is or isn't.

But you know, the parents that I speak
to all across the city, it's probably a better
indicator of families with influence, affluence
and knowledge. But then there is a large
population of families that just don't know.

Those children are re-enrolled in the
same bad school, year after year. So, often, you
know, I hear that all the time, but I also hear
families that are stuck.

So, I don't know if it's good
indicator and is there enough data to truly
suggest that it's a good indicator, other than
being anecdotal, because that's all I've -- I've heard both sides. I don't know. But I want to know if there is any real data that suggests that it's a real indicator.

It isn't for me, because I haven't seen any data.

DR. NICHOLS: I mean, it's intuitively very appealing, right? You know, revealed preference, parents must prefer that school.

Yet, the data does not support that very well. So, for example, if you look at the study of Chicago public schools, where parents and students won the lottery to attend a different school, so, this is not -- this is not a charter school system. This is a lottery school system, you know, like school choice was before 1996 in D.C.

If you won a lottery to attend a different school and you see that parents that won the lottery, the kid goes to a different school, on average, that student that goes to a different school is not substantially better off
on academic metrics, although the students and parents seem to prefer that school.

So, parents and students are not choosing that school based on the academic quality or the improvement in it -- in academic performance that that school would achieve, that that school would produce for that student.

There are some other features of the social environment, the sports, music, what have you environment that may be more appealing.

You also see this for childcare where parents sort of uniformly report that they're choosing first on the quality of the childcare, and then maybe second, they'll mention the cost of the childcare, and then far down the bottom is this -- the convenience of the childcare.

When you observe the actual pattern of behavior, by far, the most important thing is the convenience of the childcare.

So, you know, there is a little bit of motivated reasoning you have -- that happens here, that parents convince themselves that
they're making the choice that is in their
child's best interest, that they are in fact,
choosing the highest quality schools, the highest
quality -- you know, center-based care that they
can -- that's achievable, when in fact, a big
part of that is simply the convenience, and we
should not discount that convenience matters,
right?

If you're going to your neighborhood
school and it's just down the block, that's a
pretty appealing option, and it may be difficult
for all kinds of reasons, not just because you
know, the commuting costs and the -- the cost of
time of getting to a different school. There is
the cost in going further away. So, we should
not completely discount this.

On the other hand, people are making
those choices based on things that are not
directly related to academic achievement.

MS. BELLINGER: That's a Chicago
study. I just wanted to bring up, the 2016
Mathematic study by Steve Glazerman, who couldn't
attend tonight.

I would never want to contradict Dr. Nichols, because I am not a researcher, but I would say that Steve Glazerman's study of parents revealed preferences in Washington, D.C., where we do have a strong choice system, a strong charter authorizer and we are trying to communicate more to parents about quality, particularly through the charter's tier system, there is a correlation to location.

However, also strongly correlated with parent preferences are school index scores, which is the old OSSE system, and one thing that the charter sector has also observed is more and more parents enrolling their children in Tier 1 schools.

Every year that we've used the tier system, we've had much higher enrollment in Tier 1 schools. Partially, it's because we've been closing Tier 3 schools, but it's also partially because we've been aggressive about communicating with parents, whether schools are Tier 1, Tier 2
or Tier 3.

So, while I think the Chicago choice landscape is interesting, I wish Steve Glazerman were here to talk about the D.C. landscape, just because I think it's unique.

All that is to say I'm sure there is a lot of differing opinions on re-enrollment and I'm sure OSSE is --

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All right, we still -- we have another question, and we have a -- Cosby Hunt, who has not had an opportunity to testify. So, if we can keep our answers a little shorter next time -- in this next round. Mr. Jacobson. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT JACOBSON: I want to thank you all for being here and for bringing your perspectives and your backgrounds and experience to us. It's very helpful.

Mr. Abbott, this is -- one of the issues that came up in the meeting of the ESSA committee was this idea at our meeting on Monday, was this idea of having a suite of academic
experiences at a school that would showcase that
the school has a well-rounded curriculum and
well-rounded offerings.

I appreciated you, Ms. Bellinger, sort
of clarifying the constraints that we're under,
under ESSA, in terms of measurability and
different ability by subgroup.

Mr. Abbott, do you think there is any
way to take those two differing viewpoints and
marry them in an effective way?

DR. ABBOTT: Right. I think this is the
question a lot of folks are asking across the
country right now.

So, I think we would have to -- I
mean, I think for things like seat time, that is
something that you could get down to the
individual student level, if you're looking at it
by grade.

So, I think that you could break that
information down according to the standards that
ESSA requires. My understanding.

I think if you're looking at other
indicators, yes, I think it becomes a little bit more challenging. So, I think you'd have to do things like track which students are participating in which of these kinds of events.

So, like, if we had a science fair, for example, you'd have to know, you know, which students are eligible to participate in that science fair at that particular school, and which students actually did. But it depends on how you want to set up, say a rubric to evaluate that.

I know looking at some of the other states, they're looking at say a percentage of students in different subgroups who would be hitting each of the benchmarks.

So, yes, I mean, I think if we were going to move forward on an index like that, we would have to come up with a rubric that would account for different levels of performance, so that it would be quantitative and meet the requirements of ESSA. I think it's possible.

VICE-PRESIDENT JACOBSON: And Ms. Bellinger or Dr. Nichols, do you see any
similarities, and I don't know if you caught the question.

But the tension between having a broad suite of educational experiences available at a school versus what Ms. Bellinger pointed out, the need to have measurable and differentiable by subgroup metrics. Is there a way to resolve those two pieces that seem to be in tension?

DR. NICHOLS: I mean, I do believe that every school should offer all of those things. The problem is, of course, that the provision of those sort of extraneous two measured outcomes or possibly extraneous to measured outcomes provisions are concentrated in the areas where you don't need to spend as much time on the measured -- on improving the measured outcomes.

You know, it's an unfair system, essentially. But beyond that, I don't know what to say. You should be measuring the outcomes that you care about, one of those things is sort of civic engagement. Another of those things is a
variety of non-cognitive skills that are much more important to predicting outcomes and success in college, for that matter, than your math score even, even though math score is crucial to your earnings in later life, for sure.

So, I mean, to the extent that you can measure a broader set of things and not measure, you know, sort of each specific type of extracurricular -- shouldn't be extracurricular, but any -- any specific type of service and just measure this -- this set of skills and say, different schools can make different choices about, you know, whether a music program is more appropriate to achieve that set of -- you know, sort of non-cognitive outcomes that you're looking to achieve or something else.

VICE-PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Right.

Thank you, and Ms. Bellinger, I'm going to apologize, I'm passed time and I --

MS. BELLINGER: I was just going to say that I agree. Dr. Nichols and I may disagree on some things, but I think that was the --
VICE-PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you for interjecting that, and just lastly, to the point of measuring additional subjects, I think what we've heard frequently is having less of -- less focus on assessments and I think testing additional subjects would just be counter-intuitive and would seem to put even more emphasis on testing.

So, I just -- I want to -- we're working on this. We're working with our partners at OSSE and we appreciate you sharing your viewpoints and your expertise.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. Thank you. I really appreciate your help. Thank you.


MR. HUNT: Well, that's a lot of pressure. One person panel.

Dear members of the State Board of Education. Thank you for this opportunity to
speak in favor of including a measurement for
well-rounded education in our city's Every
Student Succeeds Act accountability plan.

Just this week, my fourth grade son
proudly informed me that his classes unit on the
Revolutionary War would include reading, writing
and social studies.

This warms my heart and at the same
time, picked at an old wound.

Why is it that reading and writing are
so often seen as things separate from social
studies?

When I write to other people's
Senators, about our current Secretary of
Education, I'm not just doing an English
assignment. One might say that I'm being a
citizen, a word not found in the current
accountability plan.

As I looked at the marvelous signs my
fellow citizens created for the recent Women's
March, I was reminded that citizenship includes
not only reading about the things we care about,
but sometimes writing about and creating visual representations to protect them.

As one sign put it, science, it's a thing. In an era of fake news, we need students who don't just trust what they read, but can test their own hypothesis.

My son's teachers have taken them upon themselves to teach art, social studies and science, but right now, there is no mandate that they do so. Without some kind of accountability measure for their K to eight schools, our young people are at a severe disadvantage when they arrive in high schools that require multiple credits in those disciplines.

Having taught high school in D.C. public schools for 16 years now, I can assure you that students who are just for the first time, learning the difference between a primary and secondary source in ninth grade or later are at a severe disadvantage.

I can assure you that middle schoolers who have written a process paper and prepared an
annotated bibliography through the National History Day program, for example, are considerably more prepared for success in high school and in life than their classmates who have not.

I can also assure that DCPS's wonderful study abroad initiative will have an even greater impact if students have tried their hand at making a mural for instance, before they stand before the impressive work of Diego Rivera in Mexico City.

I can assure you that students who have an understanding of the chemistry behind eat your vegetables and fruits will help you keep our country's healthcare costs down, and I can assure that it is the students who come to understand why our D.C. license say 'taxation without representation' early in the game, are in the best position to change that game as adults.

The PARCC test will not matter to our young people after 10th grade. The need to read, write, to arithmetic, follow the scientific
method, express themselves creatively and be
citizens will matter to them always.

Let's make room for all those
disciplines and what we expect of our schools.
Thank you for your time.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you for
your testimony. Board members, do we have any
questions for Mr. Cosby? Ms. Wattenberg?

MEMBER WATTENBERG: I'm just going to
say here, here. Thank you so much for coming,
and speaking for myself and perhaps everybody,
we're so exhausted, that I have no question for
you. But I am so delighted that you came out,
and to hear your testimony and I really do hope
that we're going to be able to figure out a way
to include that for all the reasons that you say,
and I will also just say that our Ward meeting,
held last week, I think it was the issue that
came up the most, was this issue of well-
roundedness and the concern about it.

MR. HUNT: And I'll say that I am also
leery of over-testing. So, I am not necessarily
sitting here saying we have to test social
studies.

I do think that events like National
History Day, like Project Soapbox are things that
can move students along. Those things can be
very hard to measure. But we have to make sure
that -- there's got to be some way that kids are
doing science, social studies and the arts in
elementary school.

If I'm not mistaken, the second-most
failed course in DCPS is World History I, and
that doesn't surprise me, because if they haven't
gotten any social studies until ninth grade,
they're not going to do well when you start
talking about ancient civilization.

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: So, just a
quick question. Thank you for coming.

As far as I understand it right now,
I know that charters establish their own systems
for evaluating teachers, but DCPS has a very high
percentage just assigned for teacher performance
related to test scores, at least for grades three
and up, and I think for the lower grades, it's not the state test, but it's another version of academics.

So, if things were shifted in the state plan related to the way that test scores count, in terms of accountability for a school, from your perspective as a teacher, would anything really change in the classroom, so long as teacher accountability and principal accountability is so tied to our state standardized tests?

MR. HUNT: I would like to think that something would change. I'm not sure. I'm sure that Mr. Abbott spoke earlier about a way to shift the accountability plan to make room for the well-rounded education, but the answer to your question is, I'm not sure. I'd like to think yes.

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Thank you.

MEMBER CARTER: I don't have a question, so much as a comment.

I want to say thank you very much for
your testimony. It's eloquently written and it
will be taken into account, not only looking
forward to ESSA and a well-rounded education, but
also as we move into later this year, our
graduation requirements and our new curriculum
requirements.

MEMBER WOODRUFF: I'd like to say
thank you, as well, for this very well worded
speech.

Inspired teaching is a school that was
my son's first experience in school and studying
there was a -- the experience that changed his
projection in life at an early age, and it
basically was because of the expeditionary
learning that goes on there, that goes beyond
that of just reading and writing, and doing math,
is that social studies is ingrained in that
particular school, and that we -- we need to
identify schools that are doing that at an early
age, and have them come and speak to us, of how
they've been able to utilize their time wisely,
so that social studies is a major component of
it, at an early age, because my son, at three,
was quoting Shakespeare because they were at the
Shakespeare theater by the time they were six.

So, it can be done, it's just that I
think part of it is getting our schools -- our
communities to talk to each other, so that social
studies can be seen as a very important part in
early age, in early grades, as well.

So, I'd like to thank you for your --
your -- your -- your paper and your comments
because it truly speaks to what we need to be
doing more of, in the District of Columbia,
besides just reading and math. Thank you.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. Jones?

MEMBER JONES: Thank you, Madam
President. Cosby, I didn't want to ask you a
question because it's so late, but I must because
you --

MR. HUNT: Well, I showed up late, so
you can -- you know. Everybody else can go home
and we can just hang out.

MEMBER JONES: That's cool. But when
you said you're weary of over-testing, help me out here.

What is considered over-testing and --

MR. HUNT: Well, let me -- let me say going back to the -- thank you for the comment about the inspired teaching school, where my two sons go.

I think one of the reasons why that school appeals to a lot of people is that we take the tests, when we have to take them, but the teachers, the adults and by effect, the students don't spend much time talking about them.

There are some schools where, you know, the field trips get shut down around February, and everybody goes into testing mode up until April, and it's just kind of a nightmare, and there are other schools where they just take the tests and they just get on with it, and that's a lot healthier, in my opinion.

So, I am weary that if we get into a science, an arts and a social studies test on top of math and reading, everybody is going to be
stressed out and there's going to be more of the -- of the shutting down the field trips to get ready for the tests kind of phenomenon. Yes.

MEMBER JONES: Thank you.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: I'd like to thank you for coming to testify.

This is the model that I think the Common Core wanted, that even though the emphasis is on language arts and math, the language arts includes social studies and others, science and the arts.

So, I am inspired by your school having mastered this ability to take other subjects and put them into the curriculum and make it part of the program to give our children the rich education and experience that they need, and thank you for this model.

MR. HUNT: Right.

MEMBER BATCHELOR: Madam President?

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Yes, Mr. Batchelor?

MEMBER BATCHELOR: I will be brief,
but I do want to thank you for your testimony, and you know, I think we -- we spent a great deal of time understandably talking about outcomes and outputs.

But I do think it's -- it's nice when we get to talk a little bit about what goes into making great outcomes, and I think what you mentioned is absolutely right.

I think parents choose schools based on achievement and academic performance. But also, based on the experience that the student will get.

You know, I think, you know, the thing that my experience, for instance, at Martin Luther King Elementary School great was, you know, not just -- not just those standards things, but getting into not only learning Dr. King's words, but understand them, right?

I think what made my experience at Hardy Middle School great was being able to learn how to play an instrument and be in the theater, which enhanced my critical thinking skills. I did
National History Day, you know, as a middle schooler.

You know, going to Thurgood Marshall Academy, and really having all of our academics focused on a social justice bin, made me a good citizen, right?

So, we should definitely encourage all of our schools to insert those things, right and focus on those things because you're right, they're not only important for great outcomes, but also for making our students great citizens, and so, I really appreciate that, and thank you very much.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: May I make one -- use my remaining time to make one comment?

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Do you have any remaining time?

MEMBER WATTENBERG: I do. I was so quick, all I said was thank you for being here.

I just wanted to pick up on this point about the over-testing and your point that at a school, it is possible, and Catharine Bellinger
mentioned this as well, it is possible to just
take an end of the year test and not freak out
over it all year long, and I think we do a great
disservice to our kids in this city, by allowing
and even having some of the LEAs encourage the
freaking out over the testing.

I would like to suggest that as we
move forward, and we may want to include other
tests, but I'll tell you, we only want to include
them, and politically we only could include them
if we could get rid of all the excessive test
prep and pre test and this test and that test
that goes on now.

So, I want to just raise the
possibility and we had talked about this a while
ago, but there is Federal money, I think still
available, Superintendent, to do a kind of
testing that would bring stakeholders together,
or really, the LEAs to talk about how to reduce
the testing, so that they're taking the end of
the year test, but not inundating the kids in the
school year with testing, and I wonder if that's
something we could think about.

SUPERINTENDENT KANG: I'm aware of the requirement you're speaking of. It's not new federal dollars. It's an allowable use for --

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Allowable use.

MR. HUNT: The last thing I'll say is, Dr. Nichols mentioned something about a labor market study.

I sure would love to see us, as a city, put in some money toward a longitudinal study, take, I don't know, 400 kids and try to track them over eight years, and interview them and try to find out what were the things for you that worked in your school experience and what were the things that were worthless, and I think we might get some very valuable information, just by following a small group or larger group of young people, as they move out of our schools.

That's -- obviously, you know, we're not going to get that information for a decade, but it could be very valuable.

PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Seeing no further
questions, I would like to thank all of our
witnesses for their input and for their patience
during this lengthy hearing.

With no further witnesses, no further
business before the Board, I would like to
entertain a motion to adjourn.

    MEMBER WATTENBERG: So moved.
    PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Is there a
    second?
    MEMBER CARTER: Second.
    PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All those in
    favor say aye.
    (Chorus of ayes.)
    PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All those
    opposed? Anybody opposed? Okay, so, the Board -
    - this meeting of the District of Columbia State
    Board of Education is adjourned at 9:08 p.m.
    Thank you.
    (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
    went off the record at 9:10 p.m.)
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In the matter of: Board Meeting

Before: DC State Board of Education

Date: 02-15-17

Place: Washington, DC

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

______________________________
Neal R. Gross
Court Reporter