

1 GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

2 STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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5 Transcript of

6 DC State Board of Education

7 Public Meeting

8 441 4th Street NW, Suite 530S

9 Old Council Chambers

10 Washington, DC 20001

11

12 Wednesday, March 15, 2017

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Good afternoon.
3 The time is 5:30 p.m. on March 15, 2017. And
4 thus, the Public Meeting of the District of
5 Columbia State Board of Education is now
6 called to order. The roll will now be called
7 to determine the presence of a panel.
8 Mr. Hayworth, please call the roll.

9 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Williams.

10 CHAIRWOMAN WILLIAMS: Here.

11 MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Jacobson.

12 MR. JACOBSON: Here.

13 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Carter.

14 MS. CARTER: Here.

15 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Wilson Phelan.

16 Ms. Wilson Phelan.

17 (No audible response)

18 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Wattenberg.

19 MS. WATTENBERG: Present.

20 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Woodruff.

21 MS. WOODRUFF: Here.

22 MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Jones.

1 (No audible response)

2 MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Weedon.

3 MR. WEEDON: Present.

4 MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Batchelor.

5 Mr. Batchelor.

6 (No audible response)

7 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Hall. Ms. Hall.

8 (No audible response)

9 MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Dorosin.

10 Mr. Dorosin.

11 (No audible response)

12 MR. HAYWORTH: Madam President, you
13 have a quorum.

14 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: A quorum has
15 been determined, and the State Board of
16 Education will proceed now with the business
17 portion of the meeting.

18 Members, we have a draft agenda
19 before us. I would like unanimous consent to
20 move for the approval of the minutes and to
21 add it to our March 22nd public meeting. Any
22 objections?

1 (No audible response)

2 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: No objections.

3 Are there any additional corrections?

4 (No audible response)

5 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: No additions.

6 Seeing no additional changes, I would
7 entertain a motion to approve the agenda.

8 MR. JACOBSON: So moved.

9 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Is there a
10 second?

11 BOARD MEMBER: Second.

12 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Now that the
13 motion has been properly moved and seconded, I
14 will ask for the yays and nays. All in favor,
15 say aye.

16 (Chorus of ayes)

17 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All opposed?

18 (No audible response)

19 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. The
20 motion is approved.

21 Members, our colleague in Ward 5,
22 Mark Jones, has asked to participate in the

1 votes tonight by phone. This requires an
2 affirmative vote of the board. I would ask
3 for unanimous consent to allow Mr. Jones's
4 participation. Is there an objection?

5 (No audible response)

6 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Seeing none, the
7 motion is approved.

8 Good evening. My name is Karen
9 Williams, Ward 7 Representative, and President
10 of the State Board of Education. In behalf of
11 the members of the District of Columbia State
12 Board of Education, I want to welcome our
13 guests and our viewing public to our
14 Wednesday, March 15th public meeting. The
15 State Board typically holds its regularly
16 scheduled meetings on the third Wednesday of
17 every month in the Old Council Chambers, at
18 441 4th Street NW.

19 Tonight the State Board will consider
20 three important resolutions: new physical
21 education standards, new residency
22 regulations, and a resolution affirming new --

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1 oh, excuse me -- confirming the State Board's
2 board to the protection of all of our
3 students. I want to commend Vice President
4 Jack Jacobson for bringing this resolution
5 before us. In a few minutes, I will ask him
6 to speak about the resolution.

7 Tonight the State Board will give
8 final approval for the new residency
9 regulations that will ease the burden on
10 parents, but also streamline the investigatory
11 and review process. I want to thank
12 Superintendent Kang -- she's not here right
13 now -- and her team for their dedication to
14 finding the right balance in the final
15 regulations.

16 We will also vote on the approval of
17 new physical education standards. These new
18 standards will help students develop motor
19 skills, knowledge, and behaviors for a
20 lifetime of healthy of living. Physical
21 education is vital to a well-rounded
22 education, and I am glad to see the commitment

1 of Donna Anthony, Assistant Superintendent of
2 Health and Wellness, and her team to the
3 health of our students.

4 The State Board will also continue
5 its work tonight related to the Every Student
6 Success Act. We will be hearing from the
7 public, their comments on the revised
8 statewide Accountability Plan that OSSE issued
9 yesterday. The superintendent and her team
10 walked the SBOE through the changes in our
11 working assessment yesterday. I am pleased to
12 see that many of the recommendations made by
13 the public and by the State Board of Education
14 on the draft plan have been included in the
15 final draft.

16 The final plan includes greater
17 weight on growth and measures that I believe
18 will help focus our goals on every student
19 rather than just those at the top. The final
20 plan also includes specifics on how we will be
21 including metrics related to a well-rounded
22 education and school climate. The

1 superintendent and her team partnered with the
2 SBOE to hold meetings across the District last
3 month. It is clear they listened, and I want
4 to thank them for doing so.

5 In a few minutes, I will ask the
6 superintendent to walk through the final plan
7 so that everyone is clear on what it includes
8 and what it does not. There's a lot in the
9 plan you can be proud of. It may not be
10 perfect, but OSSE has included a method for
11 continued review and adjustments to ensure we
12 are getting the information we need.

13 Before we move to our resolutions, I
14 would like to invite --, like to invite Shana
15 Young to speak -- to make remarks.

16 MS. YOUNG: Good evening. Thank you.
17 My name is Shana Young. I'm the Chief of
18 Staff at OSSE. The superintendent was
19 speaking in front of counsel at a hearing, and
20 she's on her way. But we thank you for
21 allowing us to be here today. I know we have
22 a full agenda of action and comment, and we

1 thank the State Board for there work on the
2 policies here for vote tonight, and also for
3 their collaborative work on ESSA and the
4 robust conversation that you've helped us
5 facilitate across the city.

6 As you said, as the president said,
7 OSSE posted yesterday documented changes to
8 our state plan, specifically in the areas of
9 accountability. And we thank you for the
10 robust conversations in the working session
11 yesterday, and look forward to the comment
12 today of the superintendent will speak again
13 once she arrives. Thank you.

14 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.
15 Members we have a ceremonial resolution before
16 us. After a motion to consider the
17 resolution, I will ask Mr. Hayworth to read it
18 into the record before opening the floor to
19 comments. So can I have a motion to consider
20 the resolution.

21 BOARD MEMBER: So moved.

22 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Second?

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1 MS. CARTER: Second.

2 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All in favor?

3 (Chorus of ayes)

4 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All opposed?

5 (No audible response)

6 MR. HAYWORTH: Ceremonial Resolution

7 CR17-2. Protecting and Supporting All

8 District Students.

9 Whereas, the protection of citizens
10 is an essential role of government;

11 Whereas, it is the right of every
12 student to access a free public pre-
13 kindergarten through 12th-grade education, and
14 it is the responsibility of the District of
15 Columbia Government to ensure that all
16 students who reside within the District can
17 safely access a free public K-12 education;

18 Whereas, the Obama Administration
19 recognized that a school's Title IX obligation
20 to ensure nondiscrimination on the basis of
21 sex requires schools to provide transgender
22 students equal access to educational programs,

1 facilities, and activities, even in
2 circumstances in which other students,
3 parents, or community members raise objections
4 or concerns, and the desire to accommodate
5 others' discomfort cannot justify a policy
6 that singles out and disadvantages a
7 particular class of students; and

8 Whereas, 95% of the District's public
9 schools, including District of Columbia Public
10 Schools and our public charter schools, are in
11 compliance with the Youth Bullying Prevention
12 Act, which ensures that youth feel safe and
13 supported in their school environments;

14 Therefore, be it resolved that the DC
15 State Board of Education reaffirms its
16 commitment that all students in the District
17 have welcoming, diverse, and inclusive
18 schools;

19 Be it further resolved that the DC
20 State Board of Education applauds District of
21 Columbia Public Schools, the DC Public Charter
22 School Board, and our individual charter

1 schools for their support and protection of
2 all District youth;

3 Be it further resolved, that the DC
4 State Board of Education recommends that all
5 public schools and public charter schools
6 develop plans for protecting their schools,
7 regardless of their immigration status, from
8 deportation, harassment, inquiry, or other
9 investigation from federal authorities seeking
10 to undermine students' right to a public
11 education;

12 Be it further resolved, that the DC
13 State Board of Education recommends that all
14 public schools and public charter schools and
15 all District municipal buildings with six or
16 more restrooms designate at least one as an
17 "All Gender" restroom.

18 Be it further resolved that the State
19 Board of Education hereby directs its
20 Administration and Budget Committee to develop
21 a nondiscrimination and equity policy for the
22 State Board to be drafted, reviewed, and

1 adopted, and included in the State Board
2 Policy Manual as soon as practicable.

3 And Madam President, may I note that
4 Mr. Jones has joined us by phone.

5 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.
6 Thank you, Vice President Jacobson for this
7 resolution. Would you like to comment?

8 MR. JACOBSON: Yes. I have a
9 comment, and then I have two amendments, I
10 believe, that will be friendly amendments, I
11 hope.

12 The change in the Administration has
13 -- in the presidential Administration has made
14 folks uncomfortable generally, in my ward, and
15 folks have reached out to me, simply because
16 there's uncertainty. And what this resolution
17 seems to do is to reaffirm certainty within
18 our jurisdiction over what DC has control
19 over, which would include protecting all of
20 our students, particularly our transgender
21 students and our immigrant students.

22 The government has worked very hard

1 to ensure that all students have access to
2 facilities and have access to learning that is
3 uninterrupted and can ensure that a student
4 can attend student and graduate on time with
5 the skills they need to be successful adults.

6 All of our schools are either in
7 compliance or well on their way to compliance
8 with this, particularly about antibullying,
9 which I know that the Department of Human --
10 Suzanne Wells -- Suzanne -- is it Greenfield -
11 - is in the Department of Human --

12 BOARD MEMBER: Office of Human
13 Rights.

14 MR. JACOBSON: -- Office of Human
15 Rights -- has worked very hard to help schools
16 come into compliance with DC laws and
17 regulations, and we've made great strides.

18 One piece that I wanted to point out
19 in particular is DC had a trans survey
20 recently, and 70 percent of the respondents
21 reported being harassed, threatened, or denied
22 access to bathrooms. This resolution

1 encourages schools to ensure that students
2 have access to the facilities that they need
3 and require.

4 With that, I would like to suggest
5 two present amendments. One was suggested by
6 Dr. Woodruff, which is in the second whereas,
7 line 10, to simply remove the words "K-12," to
8 just say that the District can safely access a
9 free public education, and not limit it to K-
10 12. Does that -- okay with Ms. Wattenberg?
11 That will be a friendly amendment.

12 And the second, then, is authored by
13 Laura Wilson Phelan, from Ward 1, who can't be
14 here this evening. And I'd like to read that
15 resolution -- that amendment into the record:

16 Be it further resolved that the DC
17 State Board of Education recommends that all
18 public schools and public charter schools
19 support transgender students by developing and
20 adopting comprehensive plans that can be tools
21 for teachers and administrators in identifying
22 safe and therapeutic spaces and the use of

1 unbiased language. And I would count that as
2 a friendly amendment with—if Ms Wattenberg
3 would as well.

4 MS. WATTENBERG: Why me?

5 MR. JACOBSON: I think you wrote the
6 resolution. (Laughter) So if no objections,
7 then the two amendments will be incorporated.
8 And with that, I've finished my comments.

9 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

10 Would any other member like to
11 comment? Would any other member like to
12 comment on the resolution?

13 (No audible response)

14 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Members, our
15 colleague from Ward 1, Laura Wilson Phelan,
16 would like to join us on the phone. This would
17 require a vote by the board, I'm going to ask
18 for unanimous consent to allow Ms. Wilson
19 Phelan to participate. Is there an objection?

20 (No audible response)

21 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Seeing none, the
22 motion is approved.

1 Seeing no other discussion, the
2 question is approval of the ceremonial
3 resolution on the state -- on the -- of the
4 State Board in protecting the rights of all
5 students. All in favor, say aye.

6 (Chorus of ayes)

7 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Any opposed?

8 (No audible response)

9 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: The motion is
10 approved.

11 All right. Our residency
12 requirement. The current regulations related
13 to providing residency for education are
14 onerous and burdensome for parents and
15 schools. I am pleased that OSSE has tackled
16 this issue and developed a balanced revision.
17 Is there a motion on the approval of the
18 resolution?

19 BOARD MEMBER: So moved.

20 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Is there a
21 second?

22 MR. JACOBSON: Second.

1 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: It's been
2 properly moved and seconded.

3 Mr. Hayworth, would you now read the
4 resolution.

5 MR. HAYWORTH: State Board of
6 Education Resolution to Approve the
7 Promulgation of the Proposed Residency
8 Rulemaking SR17-5.

9 Whereas, District of Columbia law
10 requires State Board of Education approval of
11 rules for residency verification;

12 Whereas, to enroll a student in a
13 District of Columbia public or public charter
14 school, a parent, guardian, or other primary
15 caregiver is required to provide the school
16 with original documents to prove District
17 residency, including the Office of the State
18 Superintendent of Education's Residency
19 Verification form, supporting documentation as
20 set forth in DC Code§ 38-309, and other
21 primary caregiver documentation, if
22 applicable;

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1 Whereas, the current regulatory
2 framework for residency verification was last
3 updated in 2008 and the education landscape in
4 the District has changed since then, including
5 the dramatic expansion of pre-K programs;

6 Whereas, the current regulatory
7 framework lacks clarity, particularly around
8 the basic definition of residency and for
9 custody situations;

10 Whereas, there is an opportunity to
11 improve residency verification by reducing
12 burdensome practices while making sure seats
13 for District schools are first available to
14 District residents;

15 Whereas, the State Superintendent
16 issued an Advanced Notice of Proposed
17 Rulemaking on September 8, 2016, which
18 intended to reduce burdens, lift barriers, and
19 improve clarity for both local education
20 agencies and families in the residency
21 verification process as well as to ensure a
22 rigorous process that discourages fraud;

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1 Whereas, the State Superintendent
2 solicited feedback on the Advanced Notice of
3 Proposed Rulemaking during the public comment
4 period open from September 8, 2016, through
5 October 26, 2016, including receiving comments
6 from the public and local education agencies
7 during engagement sessions at the Office of
8 the State Superintendent on September 22,
9 October 11, and October 18, 2016, and written
10 feedback from various education stakeholders
11 across the District;

12 Whereas, the State Superintendent
13 thoroughly considered and amended the proposed
14 rule based on the comments received, and
15 therefore issued an Notice of Proposed
16 Rulemaking in the DC Register on January 13,
17 2017, for a 30-day public comment period at 64
18 DCR 2 that included the following:

19 A two-part test for residency which
20 includes establishing a physical presence in
21 the District and submission of valid and
22 proper documentation;

1 Protections for vulnerable
2 populations, including students experiencing
3 homelessness, undocumented students, adult
4 students, wards of the District, and minor
5 parents;

6 Residency determinations in various
7 formal and informal custodial situations;

8 Options of, efficient and streamlined
9 residency verification for K-12 students that
10 meets the annual submission.

11 A three-part test for when a
12 student's residency may be based on another
13 primary caregiver's residency;

14 Authority for OSSE to monitor the
15 residency verification process to offer
16 further protections;

17 Guidelines for the enrollment and
18 reenrollment of nonresident students

19 Detailed requirements around the
20 investigation of a nonresident student

21 And two venues to obtain a final
22 administrative decision on finding of

1 nonresidency;

2 Whereas, the State Superintendent
3 solicited feedback on the Notice of Proposed
4 Rulemaking during the public comment period
5 open from January 13, 2017, through
6 February 13, 2017, and received comments from
7 one stakeholder;

8 Whereas, the State Superintendent
9 adopted the final rules in substantially the
10 same form as proposed with clarifications and
11 deletions, taking into account suggestions
12 received by the one stakeholder's comments;

13 Whereas, the State Superintendent and
14 representatives of the State Board of
15 Education, having engaged in an extensive
16 period of public engagement, including
17 receiving testimony from the public and from
18 the Office of the State Superintendent of
19 Education regarding the proposed and final
20 residency rules at a public meeting held on
21 October 26, 2016, as well as at working
22 sessions held on October 5, November 2, 2016,

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1 review and actions by the State Board.

2 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you,
3 Mr. Hayworth.

4 Is there a discussion resolution?
5 Mr. Woodruff?

6 MR. WOODRUFF: I would just like to
7 thank OSSE for the work on this. It's been a
8 hot-button issue in Ward 6 and elsewhere in
9 the city for multiple years. I'd also like to
10 add that our work's not completely done. We
11 need to work with the Council to update the DC
12 Code, Section 38-309 to update the documents
13 that can be utilized for verifying residency.
14 I think the regs (phonetic) are a good,
15 positive step forward, but we still have one
16 more step to do in conjunction with the
17 Council.

18 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.
19 Any other comment? Ms. Wattenberg?

20 MS. WATTENBERG: Yeah. So I too want
21 to thank OSSE for all this and hope that the
22 tradeoff works, in an effort to ease the

1 burden on parents and assure that spots are
2 taken by the right people.

3 I want to say that when I ran for
4 office, my name, as you know, is Ruth
5 Wattenberg. So all -- my slogan was all Rs,
6 and my slogan was: Rigorous standards, Rich
7 curriculum, Right-size testing, Research,
8 research, research, and Reformed resident
9 requirements. So I'm very happy to be able to
10 vote for this today, and I'm hopeful that we
11 will also deal with the other issues as well
12 tonight. Thank you.

13 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you,
14 Ms. Wattenberg.

15 Any other comments?

16 (No audible response)

17 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Seeing none, the
18 question is approval of a resolution advising
19 the State Superintendent to promulgate new
20 residency requirements -- I'm sorry. All in
21 favor, say aye.

22 (Chorus of ayes)

1 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Any opposed?

2 (No audible response)

3 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: The motion is
4 approved.

5 Physical education standards. As I
6 mentioned in my opening remarks, OSSE has
7 proposed updates to our current physical
8 education standards. The proposed changes
9 have come to us after extensive input from
10 experts and District teachers. Tonight we
11 have a resolution approving the new standards.
12 Is there a motion on approval of the
13 resolution? A motion?

14 MS. WATTENBERG: So moved.

15 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Second?

16 BOARD MEMBER: Second.

17 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

18 The motion has been properly moved.
19 And sorry, Mr. Hayworth, but could you read
20 the resolution into the record.

21 MR. HAYWORTH: State Board of
22 Education Resolution to Approve the Physical

1 Education Standards, SR17-4.

2 Whereas, District of Columbia law
3 requires State Board of Education approval and
4 regular review of academic standards;

5 Whereas, physical education plays an
6 essential role in developing physically
7 literate students who have the knowledge,
8 skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of
9 healthful, physical activity;

10 Whereas, the current District of
11 Columbia Physical Education Standards were
12 last revised in 2008;

13 Whereas, since 2008, new national
14 standards have been developed that reflect new
15 data, best practices, and changing physical
16 activity trends;

17 Whereas, the Office of the State
18 Superintendent of Education's Division of
19 Health and Wellness aligned the proposed
20 Physical Education Standards with the new
21 National Physical Education Standards
22 developed by the Society of Health And

1 Physical Educators;

2 Whereas, the proposed Physical
3 Education Standards were developed by the
4 Office of the State Superintendent of
5 Education after a rigorous drafting process
6 that included significant stakeholder
7 involvement, including from the Healthy
8 Schools Act Commission, the District of
9 Columbia Public Schools, interested District
10 of Columbia Public Charter Schools, the
11 District of Columbia Public Charter School
12 Board, and the general public;

13 Whereas, the proposed Physical
14 Education Standards are normed against
15 national best standards and practice, and
16 therefore are informed by current data and
17 emphasize the importance of daily physical
18 activity;

19 Whereas, the District of Columbia
20 students and teachers were directly involved
21 in the review of the proposed standards;

22 Whereas, the State Board of Education

1 heard testimony on February 15, 2017,
2 regarding the proposed Physical Education
3 Standards;

4 Whereas, District of Columbia public
5 school and public charter school students
6 could be assessed on their knowledge of the
7 Proposed Physical Education Standards through
8 the health and physical education assessment;

9 Now, therefore, be it resolved, that
10 on March 15, 2017, the State Board advises
11 that the State Superintendent adopt the
12 Physical Education Standards as proposed in
13 this resolution.

14 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you,
15 Mr. Hayworth.

16 Any discussion on the resolution?

17 (No audible response)

18 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Seeing none, the
19 question is of approval of a resolution
20 advising the State Superintendent to adopt new
21 Physical Education Standards. All in favor,
22 aye.

1 (Chorus of ayes)

2 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All opposed?

3 (No audible response)

4 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: The motion has
5 been approved.

6 Every Student Success Act. For over
7 a year, the State Board and OSSE have been
8 soliciting input from the public, national,
9 and local experts, students, parents,
10 teachers, and other stakeholders related to
11 the new statewide Consolidated Plan required
12 by the federal Every Student Success Act.
13 Before we hear from witnesses tonight, I want
14 to thank OSSE for their commitment to working
15 with the State Board of Education and the
16 public through this process. I also want to
17 remind residents that this work does not end
18 tonight, or even next week through a vote.
19 Your participation tonight and over the past
20 year is important, and we will encourage you
21 to keep active with us.

22 The State Board welcomes public

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1 participation in activities under our
2 authority, and every public meeting will begin
3 with testimony from public witnesses on
4 education-related matters. If you are a
5 member of the public and would like to speak
6 at a future public meeting, please contact our
7 staff at sboe@dc.gov, or by calling
8 (202) 741-0888.

9 Tonight we have modified our regular
10 practice to further enhance the public's
11 ability to participate in policies. Each of
12 our witnesses will have three minutes to
13 speak. After the entire panel speaks, each
14 Board member will have two minutes to ask any
15 questions they may have for the panel.

16 Due to the number of witnesses we
17 have, I will ask both witnesses and the Board
18 members to keep their questions and answers
19 brief. Please note that you must use your
20 microphone. The microphones are already are
21 on and if you see a green light. You will also
22 see, on your upper right-hand side of the

1 witness table, a timer. The light on the
2 timer will be green for the first 2-1/2
3 minutes, will turn yellow for the last 30
4 seconds, and then will turn red after 3
5 minutes have lapsed.

6 Our first panel will be Marla Dean,
7 Chantal Fuller, Mark Simon, Simona Gerhardt,
8 and Rebecca Davis.

9 (Cross talk)

10 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: If you have
11 copies of your testimony please give it to Ms-
12 Thank you! We will begin to my left, your
13 right, with Ms Dean.

14 (Cross talk)

15 MS. DEAN: Thank you for this
16 opportunity to testify on behalf of the panel
17 and citizens of the association on the DC plan
18 for ESSA. I am Dr. Marla Dean. I have over
19 25 years as a public school educator. I
20 served as a former high school English and
21 government teacher for 10 years, and in middle
22 high school, turn around central office

1 administrator for over 15 years.

2 Currently I serve as the executive
3 director and CEO of Bright Beginnings, a
4 nonprofit organization that operates early
5 childhood centers for children experiencing
6 homelessness, and supports their parents in
7 moving out of their homes.

8 I only give my background to
9 emphasize both my longevity and expertise in
10 K-12 education. I want to recognize the SBOE
11 for giving ten recommendations to OSSE to
12 improve their plan. This rightly acknowledges
13 that the current proposal is woefully
14 insufficient, lacks innovation, and ignores
15 the original intent of ESSA, which was to
16 allow states much more latitude in designing
17 their accountability plan.

18 Unfortunately, the current plan is
19 simply No Child Left Behind 2.0. It is devoid
20 of innovation and ignores our DC balance. The
21 District of Columbia is a progressive
22 citizenry committed to the whole child. That

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1 means that we are committed to every child
2 being, healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and
3 challenged.

4 The current culture of accountability
5 in the District has heavily relied on high-
6 stakes testing, which have done little to
7 nothing to close the achievement gap between
8 students living on both sides of the river.
9 The current DC proposed plan doubles down on
10 this mind-set of high-stakes testing -- I mean
11 testing being the primary vehicle for closing
12 gaps.

13 However, what we know, to close
14 achievement gaps, we must first address
15 opportunity gaps. A whole-child approach
16 intentionally addresses issues regarding
17 opportunity gaps. We also know that the
18 current overreliance on high-stakes testing
19 has created a deficit lens in how LEAs
20 (phonetic) and schools, teachers, and many
21 students view themselves. In fact, it has
22 dramatically impacted the way many of our

1 students see themselves. Every child is gift
2 in some area, and no child is gifted in all
3 areas. Yet today's overemphasis and reliance
4 on high-stakes testing has left some children
5 believe they are neither gifted or talented in
6 anything.

7 If we truly are committed to a
8 whole-child approach by assuring that every
9 child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported,
10 and challenged, then we must include a broader
11 set of performance indicators to truly assess
12 the effectiveness of the teacher, school, or
13 LEA. I provide three recommendations.

14 We must have a -- we have a unique
15 opportunity to reshape education for the next
16 generation. If we focus on a whole-child
17 approach by ensuring every child is healthy,
18 safe, engaged, supported, and challenged, then
19 we will close opportunity gaps which result in
20 the ending of achievement gaps. Or we can
21 practice the insanity by doubling down on
22 failed policies and practices of the past.

1 I urge you to reject OSSE's DC plan
2 for ESSA. There's no rush to implement
3 another failed Accountability Plan. Recently
4 Congress has removed accountability measures
5 for ESSA. In fact, you know as well the law
6 itself is in flux. Let's spend this time and
7 turn it into an opportunity where we can
8 reimagine educational accountability and lead
9 the nation in progressive policies that engage
10 children and families in their learning, that
11 uses a strength-based approach, and is
12 committed to equity for all.

13 Do not implement this plan, forcing
14 schools to organize themselves under its
15 mandate when you know it is a failed plan. Do
16 not support this plan by claiming to believe
17 it can be improved in future years. Schools
18 should not be left twisting in the wind. They
19 should operate under some level of certainty.

20 Simply reject the plan, send it back
21 to OSSE with a mandate to sculpt and design
22 the DC plan with our values at its center.

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1 Send a message that DC is committed to the
2 whole child, DC is committed to every child
3 being healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and
4 challenged.

5 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Ms. Fuller?

6 MS. GERHARDT: My name is Simona
7 Gerhardt. I've been teaching at Wilson High
8 School for 12 years. I've seen the District
9 go through many changes. Throughout all this
10 transition, school achievement continues to be
11 a challenge. But thankfully, we now have a
12 wonderful opportunity to change that. Here
13 are two indicators that show the need to
14 change DCPS leadership strategy.

15 Indicator number one: the
16 achievement gap. I'm quoting from the Council
17 as he states, Plan Draft: "The results from
18 PARK from 2015-2016 showed us that only about
19 one-quarter of DC students were on track for
20 college and career readiness. And there are
21 serious and persistent gaps and outcomes
22 between specific groups of students."

1 Indicator number two: teacher and
2 preschool turnover. Michael Alison Chandler
3 said to Kaya Henderson on the Washington Post:
4 "If every year you are replacing a third of
5 your staff, something is wrong."

6 My proposal to change these two
7 negative indicators is: Create an
8 accountability school plan that supports
9 Chancellor Wilson's vision. Chancellor Wilson
10 stated: "We want students to thrive. We want
11 to make sure that they are enjoying schools.
12 They should like it. For students to like it,
13 adults have to like it." He also stated:
14 "Beyond student joy and excitement around
15 school, students must be taught to think
16 critically. Standardized tests do not measure
17 critical thinking."

18 Chancellor Wilson's vision can
19 happen, and I want it to happen, but it can
20 happen only if, one, OSSE changes the deadline
21 to September 18th, to allow Chancellor Wilson
22 time to give feedback; two, if OSSE reduces

1 the weight on academic achievement, and
2 understands that academic achievement is the
3 byproduct of school environment; three, if our
4 educational leaders learn from the corporate
5 and the military world how to hold people
6 accountable based on the values, vision, and
7 mission of your organization, and also if they
8 learn how to measure an effective school
9 working environment.

10 Our students need an accountability
11 plan that supports and reflects the importance
12 of school environment, and supports Chancellor
13 Wilson's vision. Thank you.

14 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

15 MR. SIMON: Members of the State
16 Board, my name is Mark Simon, Ward parent,
17 public education advocate, and education
18 policy analyst affiliated with the Economic
19 Policy Institute. You have my written
20 comments focused on your excellent consensus
21 recommendations. I made some suggestions for
22 improvements and will be happy to respond if

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1 you have questions about that testimony. But
2 with just three minutes, I'd like to focus
3 here on OSSE's response yesterday, and whether
4 it treats your recommendations.

5 What I appreciated most about your
6 recommendations is that although they are a
7 compromise from what I and most of the dozens
8 of parents, community, and educator
9 representatives wanted, your recommendations
10 still would have brought a shift in emphasis
11 from a single-education, culture-distorting,
12 test-driven metric being the entire focus.
13 You recognized that the learning climate needs
14 to be captured with other significant
15 measures. While OSSE lowered the rate -- the
16 weight of the test from 80 percent to 70
17 percent, that reduction will not change one
18 iota the test prep emphasis in schools. It
19 will not accomplish what you and we wanted.

20 The slight shift -- a good one --
21 towards the growth metric in elementary
22 schools was inexplicably rejected for high

1 schools. While OSSE heard you about the need
2 for a beefed-up school climate and "well-
3 rounded education," in quotes, component --
4 that was your language; it was good language -
5 - they renamed it "access and opportunities,"
6 and reduced the weight from 10 percent to 5
7 percent. That leaves the lion's share of
8 school environment to be measured primarily by
9 attendance and reenrollment. Attendance
10 hardly captures anything about the quality of
11 the learning culture in the school.

12 While I felt that your
13 recommendations of a climate survey needed to
14 be expanded to include a survey of educators
15 in each school, OSSE has not committed to the
16 concept of using a climate survey at all, but
17 only to exploring the idea for two full years.
18 Once you give your approval to your plan now,
19 they are not even committing to allow you to
20 vote on whether it must be included at all in
21 Year 3.

22 OSSE's plan revisions seem to have

1 rejected your notion that time on science,
2 social studies, and other subjects not tested
3 by PARCC should be measured at all.

4 In summary, your attempt to get at
5 the richness of the learning culture in each
6 school has been rejected. They seem to have
7 heard you, but in failing to commit to having
8 any factors other than the PARCC test and
9 attendance count significantly, they have
10 rejected your underlying logic. I urge you
11 not to endorse OSSE's plan, even with their
12 revisions, but rather to insist that in order
13 to get your vote of approval, at the very
14 least, they need to take a little more time
15 and consider more seriously your and, through
16 you, our perspectives. Thank you.

17 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

18 MS. FULLER: Greetings, SBOE's
19 representatives, community members, and
20 educators. I'm speaking today on behalf of
21 the students who aren't able to advocate for
22 themselves -- the students who are nonverbal,

1 illiterate, and who have trouble completing
2 the most basic day-to-day functioning that
3 many of us take for granted. I am also
4 speaking for the students who have unmet
5 socioemotional needs.

6 I teach sixth-through-eighth-grade
7 students with autism, ADHD, and intellectual
8 disabilities. These are students who are
9 unable to take standardized assessments but
10 are still required to, based on the demands of
11 OSSE.

12 When -- I think about the proposed
13 total of 70 percent of a school's
14 accountability being standardized test scores,
15 I cannot help but think about the inequities
16 that this will encourage, which also would
17 include a culture of fraud and cheating on the
18 assessments in order to meet qualifications.

19 My students, like many students
20 around the district, do not get their most
21 basic needs met at home, and we spend the bulk
22 of the day taking care of socioemotional

1 concerns and issues, which often impede
2 learning. On any given day, we are making
3 calls to CFSA, bringing in clothes for
4 students who do not have access to clean
5 uniforms, feeding them, and advocating for
6 them when Central Office attempts to violate
7 their rights, all in an effort to make money.

8 To make matters worse, our school
9 shares a school psychologist with two other
10 schools, and our social worker is overburdened
11 with over 100 students on her caseload. And
12 those are just the ones who have been
13 identified.

14 Nevertheless, my wonderful staff and
15 I press on and become whoever we need to be,
16 in order to make sure our students can be the
17 best versions of themselves. Standardized
18 testing and penalizing schools who do not meet
19 these lofty and unfounded requirements negate
20 the work that we as special educators do
21 daily, and it shows us who OSSE is really
22 looking out for, which is their bottom line,

1 especially when the Smarter Balanced
2 Assessment is more efficient and informative
3 of student achievement. I can go on and on
4 about the conspiracy theories regarding how
5 much money Pearson is making off of our
6 students at their expense, but we'll save that
7 for another hearing.

8 I find it both unethical and immoral
9 that an assessment that has been proven to be
10 largely ineffective is given the credibility
11 to track our students and slap a number on
12 them, determining how successful they will be.
13 What's more is that we have several children
14 in our school significantly below grade level
15 who must take the PARCC, when they don't even
16 understand the materials or the assessment
17 itself.

18 OSSE just denied a student of mine
19 eligibility on the Alternate Assessment when
20 he is seven years below grade level, so he now
21 has to take the PARCC assessment. For the
22 students taking the Alternate Assessment, some

1 of them aren't even able to be assessed, but I
2 as a teacher must waste our time and insult
3 their intelligence by forcing them to complete
4 a test that they cannot access.

5 What message are we sending to our
6 children when we will invest in an assessment
7 that is incompetent but not in social workers,
8 therapists, and other resources that would
9 allow them to better perform on state
10 assessments? We must stop putting profits
11 over children, and fulfill the obligation of
12 educating them by making sure that they will
13 be productive members of society. Thank you.

14 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

15 MS. DAVIS: Good evening.

16 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Good evening.

17 MS. DAVIS: Members of the State
18 Board of Education, my name is Rebecca Davis.
19 I'm here representing the District of Columbia
20 Environmental Education Consortium. For the
21 first time, the Every Student Act includes
22 language making environmental education and

1 environmental literacy programs explicitly
2 eligible for federal funds, specifically in
3 two formula grant programs that's described in
4 Title IV of the bill: the Well-Rounded
5 Education Opportunities and the 21st Century
6 Community Learning Centers.

7 And yet, although our elected
8 officials have acknowledged the importance of
9 environmental education in various signed
10 policies, such as the Healthy Schools Act and
11 Sustainable DC Plan, there is no mention of
12 environmental education in the 117 pages of
13 the DC ESSA State Education Plan that is being
14 submitted for public comment.

15 Research indicates that students
16 engaged in environmental experience numerous
17 benefits, including greater pride and
18 ownership in their community, strength and
19 sense of empowerment to make a difference in
20 their community, better performance in
21 standardized measures of academic achievement
22 in reading, writing, math, science, and social

1 studies.

2 Moreover, environmental education
3 embodies 21st-century skills by developing the
4 learner's ability to ask questions, speculate
5 and hypothesize about the world around them,
6 connect to the places where they live, seek
7 information and develop answers to their
8 question. Learners engaged in inquiry master
9 fundamental skills of gathering and organizing
10 information, interpret and synthesize
11 information to develop and communicate
12 explanation and advanced solution.

13 The District of Columbia has
14 demonstrated a commitment to the importance of
15 environmental education by signing the
16 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement in 2014,
17 which has a number of environmental literacy
18 goals, as well as by signing the Health
19 Schools Act of 2010 and the Sustainable DC
20 Omnibus Amendment Act of 2014.

21 The DC Council also demonstrated a
22 commitment to environmental education by

1 mandating DC agencies to develop and
2 environmental literacy plan and to hire an
3 environmental education coordinator in OSSE to
4 support the obvious implementation.

5 While OSSE has some funding to build
6 its new environmental literacy program, funds
7 from ESSA could be leveraged to reach even
8 more schools to provide environmental
9 education experiences. The District of
10 Columbia Environmental Education Consortium is
11 a strong network of partners and providers
12 that share a strong commitment to
13 environmental education and support this
14 effort. Our members include many local and
15 regional providers such as Clean Air Partners,
16 the Anacostia Watershed Society, Washington
17 Youth Garden, etcetera.

18 Members of the District of Columbia
19 Environmental Education Consortium provide
20 high-quality environmental education programs
21 to District schools and support science using
22 outdoor as a place for inquiry. But to have a

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1 robust community of environmental education
2 providers, funds need to be secured. With
3 Title IV of ESSA, the District of Columbia has
4 the opportunity to substantially increase its
5 financial support of environmental education
6 through the following two formula grant
7 programs: The Well-Rounded Education
8 Opportunities and the 21st Century Community
9 Learning Centers. Thank you.

10 BOARD MEMBER: Thank you.

11 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

12 Board members, are there any
13 questions for these five?

14 (No audible response)

15 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. Weedon?

16 MR. WEEDON: Sure. I'd just like to
17 say thank you. I don't think I really have a
18 question. I am a little interested the
19 testing around the students with disabilities
20 and ensuring that we get that right. I'm not
21 sure if it's the same question, but we can go
22 in just a minute. But I do want to say thank

1 you for your time and all the input. I think
2 all of us really want to hear the diverse
3 opinions that are out there still on this
4 proposal as we move towards a vote in the next
5 week or two. Thank you.

6 MS. WATTENBERG: Thank you very much.
7 And let me say, I'm very sympathetic to the
8 point of view that this proposal does not go
9 far enough to break from the test-driven past.
10 As I said, I ran on the platform of right-
11 sized testing. And I think testing is super
12 important. Transparency is super important.
13 Accountability is super important. But that
14 doesn't mean it should be 80 percent, like the
15 last proposal, or 74 percent, which is really
16 what it is in Years 1 and 2, or 70 percent in
17 Year 3.

18 What I want to -- I want to ask
19 Simona Gerhardt -- I believe you're a parent
20 at Wilson High School, if I'm --

21 MS. GERHARDT: Oh, no. I'm a
22 teacher.

1 MS. WATTENBERG: So will you talk to
2 me about sort of the balance in terms of the -
3 - the effect of the testing, the effect that
4 you think the lack of a growth factor will
5 have at a high school like Wilson, and sort of
6 the reliance on the testing as opposed to the
7 climate and the broader issues?

8 MS. GERHARDT: Yeah. As a teacher --
9 I've been teaching Italian and French for 12
10 years -- I see how the students are impacted
11 by this culture. That's why especially at
12 Wilson we are trying to create a school
13 environment where what's important is working
14 hard, think critically, and not be so grade
15 driven. So this culture from the top down
16 that testing is so important is impacting the
17 culture at our school and is making the
18 students very passive, because what they care
19 is really just the grade and not a passion for
20 learning -- and as Chancellor Wilson said, to
21 make the students think critically.

22 So if we change the pressure from the

1 top, for us, as teachers, students will
2 benefit that and will not just talk about
3 grading, did you put my grade in. This is the
4 only conversation that recently I have with my
5 students is -- no, I -- I don't see the
6 curiosity, I don't see the passion. It's
7 just, "Did you put the grade in?"

8 MS. WATTENBERG: Thank you. My two
9 minutes are up

10 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Any other
11 questions?

12 (No audible response)

13 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you,
14 panelists. Thank you-all for coming out to
15 testify.

16 And your next panel Gary Ratner,
17 Dexter Williams, Sandra Moscoso, Sara Stone,
18 and Nadia Moritz.

19 BOARD MEMBER: Suzanne Wells.

20 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Danica? Danica?
21 Is Danica in the audience?

22 BOARD MEMBER: (--)

1 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Yeah. And Sara
2 Moore Kerai?

3 (No audible response)

4 (Cross talk)

5 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. Ratner.

6 MR. RATNER: Thank you. My name is
7 Gary Ratner. I'm the executive director of
8 Citizens for Effective Schools -- CES. CES
9 would like to commend the State Board for
10 having submitted excellent recommendations for
11 the Office of the State Superintendent of
12 Education for revising OSSE's January Draft
13 State Plan. While OSSE's March 14 summary and
14 responses move somewhat in the Board's
15 direction, OSSE's current positions disregard
16 many of the Board's recommendations. I'd like
17 to briefly address three issues.

18 First, although stakeholders have
19 widely urged that the weight of test scores
20 for ESSA accountability be greatly reduced,
21 and weight be given to school climate, OSSE's
22 response does not do so. Merely reducing the

1 weight for test scores from 80 percent to 70
2 percent from elementary and middle schools, as
3 OSSE proposes, would continue to incentivize
4 schools to put huge emphasis on drill-and-kill
5 test preparation and testing -- excuse me --
6 and narrowing the curriculum rather than
7 changing expectations, beliefs, and practices,
8 which low-achieving schools need to do to
9 improve. The total weight for test scores,
10 including ELL proficiency should be reduced to
11 the lowest level statutorily allowed, about 55
12 percent.

13 Second, while it's positive that OSSE
14 reaffirmed its previous commitment to conduct
15 a pilot survey of school climate for ultimate
16 accountability purposes, OSSE's response still
17 fails to provide key specifics. These
18 include: What weight will be given to the
19 school climate indicator? How will
20 stakeholders be involved in selecting and
21 evaluating the school climate pilot and
22 accountability surveys? What criteria will be

1 reduce the weight of proficiency from 40
2 percent to 30 percent, as the Board
3 recognizes, it's still too much weight for
4 proficiency and too little for growth. In
5 addition to reducing the total weight for test
6 scores, as discussed above, the ratio of
7 proficiency to growth should be reduced from 1
8 to 4, or at a minimum, as SBOE recognized, to
9 40/60, a ratio of 2 to 3. Otherwise, schools
10 serving high concentrations of disadvantaged
11 students would be unfairly penalized, and
12 those serving higher-income families unfairly
13 benefited. Thank you.

14 MS. MOORE KERAI: Thank you for the
15 opportunity to testify today. My name is Sara
16 Moore Kerai, and I'm a parent of a pre-K-3
17 child at Capital Hill Montessori at Logan
18 School. I care deeply about the quality of my
19 daughter's education and the need to
20 understand the quality of our schools based on
21 more than just a test score. I was excited
22 and hopeful at the opportunity to create a new

1 accountability system that will value test
2 scores alongside other important ways of
3 demonstrating school quality and environment.

4 I read the Draft Plan and attended an
5 OSSE Outreach Session hosted by the Capitol
6 Hill Public School Parent Organization. I was
7 pleased to hear and to see the deep interest
8 in a new accountability system that looked at
9 the whole child, shared by all of the parents
10 who were in attendance.

11 At the meeting I was concerned by
12 OSSE's seeming lack of motivation to make
13 significant changes and to allow more time to
14 think critically about these issues as a broad
15 community. Later I was pleased when the State
16 Board of Education released a list of well-
17 thought-out and meaningful recommendations for
18 changes to the Draft ESSA Plan.

19 The recommended changes are greatly
20 supported by my community, including teachers
21 and parents. The recommendations also
22 demonstrated that members of the State Board

1 actually listened to the feedback from the
2 community. That community has hoped that the
3 State Board would not approve an OSSE plan
4 that does not implement those changes in full.

5 However, only yesterday, OSSE
6 released its response to public and State
7 Board comments. This left us once again with
8 precious little time to review and understand
9 the response and its impact before today's
10 hearing. As I understand it, the plan takes
11 some meaningful steps in addressing the State
12 Board's comments as well as parent and
13 educator input, but it does not nearly go all
14 the way.

15 Is the State Board indicating that it
16 generally supports the revised plan as it is?
17 It's disappointing to me and my school
18 community that we are essentially backed into
19 a corner with no additional room for revision
20 or improvement.

21 While I appreciate OSSE's efforts to
22 respond to some of the community input, I

1 still believe we can do better. I hope you
2 will not stop with the plan. I hope that OSSE
3 will continue to work with the parent and
4 educator community every step of the way
5 through implementation. A plan is only as
6 good as its implementation, and the
7 implementation will not be effective without
8 parent and educator partnership. Thank you.

9 MS. PETROSHIUS: Hi. Thank you. I'm
10 Danica Petroschius, parent of two at Capitol
11 Hill Montessori. Viewing your meeting
12 yesterday via Periscope, it appears there is
13 State Board support for the revised ESSA Plan.
14 I'm worried this today is a fake hearing.
15 I've been astounded at the disregard for DCPS
16 parent and educator engagement in the ESSA
17 plan process, even though we support 49,000
18 students every day.

19 OSSE has touted this as great
20 engagement and held 50 meetings of 100
21 organizations throughout 2016 before the Draft
22 Plan went public. Who were those meetings

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1 with? Fifty charter schools or charter
2 organizations, 34 national education groups,
3 only 10 local educational organizations, 4
4 universities, and 4 DC government agencies
5 including DCPS. This is a very unbalanced
6 outreach plan where 84 percent of the input
7 came from charters or national organizations
8 that have no understanding of how DCPS schools
9 operate and what the needs of our students
10 are.

11 OSSE did hold one public meeting in
12 each ward in June 2016. I can't take that
13 seriously. Anyone that truly wants to engage
14 parents and teachers does not do so at the end
15 of school and summer, when communication with
16 schools and parents is difficult. Let's face
17 it: The DCPS parent and educator community
18 did not help create this draft.

19 After those 2016 meetings, parents
20 and educators did not see the draft plan until
21 January 30th this year. We had one month to
22 give input on a plan that will affect our

1 children's education for the next ten years.
2 Now, again, they're being treated as
3 expendable in this process. The revised draft
4 came out only yesterday, but yet we have to
5 testify on its merits in 24 hours.

6 Parents appreciated the State Board
7 recommendations to approve the ESSA Plan.
8 Yesterday's revised Draft Plan includes some
9 improvements, and it is clear advocacy helped.
10 But it has not -- it was not without a massive
11 effort by us to overcome the reluctance of
12 OSSE to change.

13 OSSE is not elected and so has less
14 stake in our voice. But the State Board is
15 elected and has power to say, "Wait, we can do
16 better." Please stop saying September is too
17 late. Thirty states are waiting until
18 September to submit their plan, and they too
19 will collect data in '17-'18, just like DC.

20 We could wait and build a better plan
21 with deep buy-in, but OSSE says they won't. I
22 urge you, our elected body, to vote no on the

1 plan. Based on yesterday's swift, seemingly
2 predated (phonetic) support of the tweaked
3 OSSE plan, it seems many of you have already
4 decided to stand down.

5 So tonight I am standing up for
6 parents and educators who do the daily work to
7 build excellent DCPS schools, to say we as a
8 community can do better. We should not make
9 stakeholders beg for engagement. Parents and
10 educators should not be processed out of the
11 system by backdoor deals. Superintendent Kang
12 has said over and over, "The plan is just the
13 beginning." The plan is full of policies that
14 include, "Let's look into it more," "Let's
15 phase it in," and "Let's test it out first."

16 So I ask you to make public and
17 articulate in the plan: One, your commitment
18 to full transparency and ongoing engagement;
19 two, a schedule that you will execute on
20 engagement in each phase of implementation
21 with the intention to continuously improve the
22 plan; three, a process for implementing the

1 task forces recommended by the State Board;
2 and four, a process for sharing all results of
3 the pilot and hosting engagement meetings to
4 discuss how we should use the results to
5 improve the system.

6 We hope that OSSE and the State Board
7 support our calls for more engagement, more
8 innovation, and more transparency. Our
9 students deserve it.

10 MR. WILLIAMS: Good evening. I'm
11 Dexter Williams, a resident of Ward 7 and
12 member of the Hillcrest Civic Association's
13 Education Committee. I want to thank the
14 members of the State Board of Education for
15 the opportunity to testify about OSSE's State
16 Education Plan. And I also want to
17 acknowledge the hard work that you-all have
18 done over the last several months on this
19 State Education Plan.

20 Over the last several months, OSSE
21 has conducted several community engagement
22 forums across the city. Many of us who

1 attended their Ward 7 forum left the
2 engagement forum confused about some aspects
3 of their plan and concerned about its
4 potential impact.

5 While I understand that OSSE's role
6 is to provide an overarching framework for
7 public schools to implement, I am concerned
8 that the proposal lacks clarity on key points
9 and does not fully consider the implications
10 for the community.

11 In regards to family engagement, the
12 relationship between a student's family and
13 school is critical for educational success.

14 ESSA encourages and incentivizes
15 engagement activities, and I strongly
16 recommend that the Board encourage OSSE to
17 develop a framework for rating schools based
18 on their love of engagement with families.

19 During OSSE's Ward 7 forum, many of
20 us expressed concern over the stability of
21 teachers, particularly at underperforming
22 schools. These schools have often seen high

1 staff and teaching turnover, critically
2 undermining the school's ability to improve
3 every year. These professionals are pillars
4 of the education system, and their consistent
5 presence among students is critical to
6 students' success and should be measured.

7 ###

8 In regards to high school metrics, I
9 urge the Board to encourage OSSE to include
10 college enrollment through completion as a
11 measure. While I appreciate the challenges
12 with this kind of undertaking, although there
13 are companies that provide this information
14 for many districts across the country, the
15 high school experience should give students
16 the tools that they need to succeed in all
17 aspects of higher education.

18 It's important that high schools not
19 only prepare students for the academic rigors
20 of college, but also provide them with the
21 resources that would help them complete their
22 degrees. There are some schools in the city

1 and across the country that are working toward
2 this goal, and I strongly recommend that
3 schools be required to develop systems to
4 track this information.

5 As you know, OSSE's proposal sets an
6 ambitious goal of reaching 85 percent
7 proficiency in math, science, and language for
8 all grade levels being tested, by 2039, which
9 should be applauded. However, the proposal
10 doesn't offer guidance on how schools should
11 achieve this goal. OSSE should revisit this
12 and provide schools with more direction in
13 reaching 85 percent proficiency.

14 I appreciate your consideration of my
15 concerns and look forward to working with
16 y'all in the future. Thank you.

17 MS. WELLS: My name is Suzanne Wells,
18 and I am the parent of a sixth grader at
19 Eliot-Hine Middle School. Thank you for the
20 opportunity to speak this evening on the
21 Office of the State Superintendent's School
22 Accountability Measures State Plan that has

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1 been developed to comply with the Every
2 Student Success Act.

3 The Act provides us a welcome
4 opportunity to make meaningful changes in how
5 schools are held accountable. As has been
6 said before, what gets measured gets done. So
7 how schools are measured has profound impacts
8 on what students are taught in the classroom
9 and how teachers spend their time, and then
10 how schools serving their most vulnerable
11 students are evaluated.

12 There's been considerable public
13 interest in the school accountability measures
14 precisely because they are so important. I
15 commend the State Board of Education for
16 informing our community over eight months ago
17 about the school accountability requirements
18 under ESSA, and seeking our input on what we
19 believe should be measured. I commend the
20 State Board for developing a set of
21 recommendations on OSSE's Draft Plan. And I
22 commend parents in my community for taking the

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1 time to become knowledgeable about the School
2 Accountability Measures Plan and for
3 thoughtfully developing comments on the Draft
4 Plan.

5 A little more than 24 hours ago, OSSE
6 released its summary of the comments it
7 received throughout the public comment period
8 and the decisions it made in the updated state
9 plan based on that feedback. I'm sorry to say
10 that OSSE did not begin to meaningfully
11 address the substantive comments it received
12 from the public or the State Board of
13 Education.

14 OSSE's tweaked its initial proposal
15 in minor ways -- for example, a lower weight
16 afforded to testing, from 80 to 70 testing.
17 At first glance, that might seem like a lot,
18 until you understand that virtually every
19 public commented asked that the weight
20 afforded to testing be dropped to the lowest
21 allowable by law.

22 OSSE continues to want to use

1 attendance as a proxy measure for school
2 satisfaction, and their final plan increases
3 by 1 percent the weight going towards
4 measures. While attendance is undoubtedly
5 important, it's truly hard to understand why
6 attendance, which is compulsory for students
7 between the ages of 5 to 18, can be viewed as
8 a meaningful measure of school satisfaction.
9 The public repeatedly commented that school
10 climate surveys would be better measures of
11 school satisfaction and would provide
12 actionable data upon which schools could make
13 meaningful improvements.

14 OSSE is afraid to use school climate
15 surveys, which they believe are not adequately
16 tested. But they are fearless about using
17 PARCC tests, which is an imperfect measure of
18 academic success at best.

19 The public asked that measures on a
20 well-rounded education be considered. In
21 response, OSSE put a vague, yet-to-be-
22 determined measure of access and opportunity

1 that they want to test two years down the
2 road, and under school environment, they gave
3 it a 5 percent weight, where still that 5
4 percent might also have to cover whatever is
5 decided regarding school climate surveys.

6 So what does the OSSE state plan look
7 like now for an elementary school? We've got
8 70 percent being dedicated to a test given
9 once a year that is an imperfect measure of
10 academic success, 12.5 percent going to
11 measure compulsory attendance rates, 7.5
12 percent to reenrollment, 5 percent to a yet-
13 to-be-determined well-rounded education and
14 school climate assessment, and 5 percent to an
15 ESSA-required English language learner
16 proficiency. I'd be hard pressed to say that
17 sounds like a solid path forward for making
18 educational progress for our students.

19 I suggest that the State Board of
20 Education's work on the state plan is not
21 done. I urge the State Board of Education to
22 vote no on the OSSE state plan.

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1 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you,
2 panel.

3 Do the State Board members have any
4 questions of these panelists?

5 MS. CARTER: I just had one quick
6 question.

7 Thank you, panelists, for your time.
8 It looks like all of you have done your due
9 diligence. Thank you for tuning in to our
10 working session.

11 Suzanne, my comment was just to
12 clarify. You said that -- in your testimony -
13 - virtually every public commented asked that
14 the weight afforded re testing -- to testing
15 be dropped to the lowest level by law. Can
16 you clarify which public comments? Is that
17 just the CHPSP0 for Ward 6 or --

18 MS. WELLS: I went to both the OSSE
19 Ward 6 meeting and the CHPSP0 meeting that
20 OSSE also arranged.

21 MS. CARTER: Okay. Thank you. That
22 -- I -- just wanting to know, because we have

1 seen a wide range of comments -- public
2 comments before, and against the plan. Thank
3 you.

4 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Any other
5 questions?

6 (No audible response)

7 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Ms. Wattenberg.

8 MS. WATTENBERG: Yeah. Thanks. I'll
9 just say, I went to all of the public
10 meetings, and I looked at all the comments,
11 and while it's not that there were zero who
12 asked for 80 percent or more testing, I think
13 I could count them on one hand. And I will
14 note that I did this a couple of meetings.

15 But what I want to say is, to me, one
16 of -- a number of you mentioned the climate
17 surveys -- and to me, one of the great lost
18 opportunities in that -- so I really appeal to
19 OSSE to maybe shift this -- is there was this
20 idea that came out on the State Board to have
21 these task forces, because there was a
22 definite sense that the engagement of the

1 public was inadequate. And this was really a
2 way to pull people in and get some real
3 school-level knowledge. And I just want to
4 sway, I've had some excellent conversations
5 with people from both sectors on to leaders of
6 the institutions, school leaders, and parents
7 from both charter and DCPS around the climate
8 survey issue. And there's such a lot of
9 interest in this. There are real issues
10 related to it, because lots of -- there are
11 lots of schools, and many of them have their
12 own surveys already, and they are not the
13 same. This isn't something that can just
14 simply be imposed from the top and just say,
15 "Here's the survey. We want everybody to use
16 it." That would not work.

17 But there are a lot of ways, and I
18 heard a lot of interest in creating cross-
19 conversations where people at the school level
20 could talk about these different surveys,
21 which ones worked, which ones didn't, and why,
22 and work together to figure out some common

1 way to use them that would be appropriate for
2 them perhaps to agree on a set of different
3 surveys, all of which would be okay. Or it
4 might be a way of figuring out some anchor
5 indicators across different surveys. There's
6 a lot of ways -- lot of ways to skin the cat.
7 And I'm really very sorry that that didn't
8 come out. And a number of you were some of
9 the people that I had some great conversations
10 with. So I hope we'll still get that way --
11 get there.

12 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. Weedon.

13 MR. WEEDON: So thank you. It's
14 always great to see our Ward 6 friends. I
15 hear you, and we've had many conversations
16 over the last few months on many of these
17 things. But one issue that didn't come up in
18 any of the testimonies of this panel or the
19 other one is the difference between growth and
20 implementation (phonetic). And I'd love to
21 get your thoughts on where we should land
22 there. OSSE has made some movement. And

1 again, as I did last night, I'd like to
2 commend OSSE for taking two steps. Should we
3 take more? That's the question that's on the
4 table. And we took a few steps from 80
5 percent and 70 percent, and that was taken
6 completely on proficiency, leaving growth a
7 wee bit higher. Where do you-all stand on
8 that issue?

9 MS. WELLS: I can start. I
10 definitely support considering growth. I can
11 tell you, at Eliot-Hine Middle School, there
12 are a number of students that have come in at
13 the second-grade reading level. And you know,
14 to expect that a student coming in, reading at
15 the second-grade level is going to be
16 proficient by the time they, you know, get
17 done with sixth grade is not fair. And so to
18 look at growth and see how the school can take
19 a student who's far below grade level up one
20 or two or three grade levels would make a big
21 difference.

22 MS. PETROSHIUS: I can just answer

1 quickly that the CHPSPO meetings that Suzanne
2 attested, and the many conversations in our
3 school community alone, the parent support and
4 teacher support for as much growth as possible
5 is as strong as I've seen it. Not to take
6 away all proficiency, of course, but I think
7 people want to see that robust measure in
8 there for all the reasons Suzanne said.
9 That's been my experience.

10 MS. MOORE KERAI: I agree.

11 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.
12 Thank you for coming out here tonight.

13 MS. WELLS: Thank you.

14 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Next panel is
15 Sara Stone -- all right. Erica Russell, Scott
16 Abbott, Dana Hall, Allyson Criner Brown,
17 Stephanie Beer, Nancy Smith, Sheila Carson
18 Carr, Anne Fitzpatrick, Savanna Sammis.
19 Coming up is Mr. Abbott.

20 MR. ABBOTT: Good evening, members of
21 the State Board of Education. My name is
22 Scott Abbott. I am a Ward 4 resident, Ward 6

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1 school parent, and the director of social
2 studies for DC Public Schools. I'm here to
3 testify on behalf of the many people in our
4 district and community who believe public
5 school students in DC deserve a well-rounded
6 education. I'm testifying tonight to urge the
7 State Board to reject the current ESSA plan
8 unless OSSE revises it to include the all the
9 recommendations the State Board offered last
10 week.

11 On the specific changes proposed, I'm
12 glad to see the shifts towards more emphasis
13 on growth and academics and attendance. Thank
14 you to OSSE for hearing these concerns and
15 taking them into account. I wish I could be
16 hear testifying in support of the final plan,
17 but these changes alone are not sufficient to
18 merit approval. The proposed Access and
19 Opportunities measure does not address the
20 concerns raised by those supporting a well-
21 rounded education indicator.

22 Grouping well-rounded education under

1 school environment with the school climate
2 survey misses the point. Well-rounded
3 education is about providing students with
4 academic experiences and opportunities related
5 to history, civics, science, the arts. These
6 subjects are not nice-to-have components.
7 These are rigorous academic disciplines that
8 have been ignored and denied to our students,
9 especially those in most need.

10 This is an issue of civil rights for
11 our students. If we do not guarantee our
12 schools offer even a minimum of time for
13 teaching these subjects, we will continue to
14 reinforce that ELA and math are all that
15 matter.

16 On the details of the Access and
17 Opportunities measure, it's proposed to allot
18 5 percent, not the 10 percent recommended by
19 the State Board. It's proposed to take effect
20 in Year 3, more than two years from now.
21 That's too long for our students to wait.
22 It's proposed to be created as part of a pilot

1 during Year 2, but there seems to be no
2 guarantee this indicator would definitely be
3 included in school year '19-'20. And it's
4 unclear whether the State Board would approve
5 the addition after that pilot.

6 As Jack, Marcus, and others mentioned
7 at last night's meeting, the State Board
8 should not provide a blank check to OSSE to
9 craft this measure up with no details
10 provided, especially after last night's
11 meeting makes clear OSSE's intention to
12 provide only flexible options within the
13 measure.

14 The process for this plan has been
15 rushed and lacking the details needed for
16 transparency. On Monday, the Department of
17 Education changed the ESSA regulation guidance
18 and templates. Yesterday afternoon, OSSE
19 released proposed updates, though still not
20 the full plan. Today constituents are being
21 provided a final chance to testify on the
22 adoption of the updated plan. This window

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1 provides little opportunity for constituents
2 to informed, understand, and ask questions of
3 the revisions, and share their feedback with
4 State Board members. Clearly, this plan still
5 has problems that need to be addressed. If
6 you vote to approve the current plan, how will
7 you explain to your constituents why you
8 rushed approval of a problematic plan?

9 In conclusion, I ask the State Board
10 members to reject the current plan, unless
11 OSSE fully implements all the Board's
12 recommendations. Advocates of well-rounded
13 education indicators were thrilled to see the
14 Board recommendations released last week, and
15 excited that you heard and understood the
16 voices of the community on what this plan can
17 and must include. If OSSE is unwilling to
18 implement your very reasonable suggestions
19 before next Wednesday, you should feel
20 confident that your "no" vote is justified.

21 During last night's meeting, Joe
22 mentioned the importance of doing what is

1 right, not just what is easy. Your
2 constituents are behind you in pushing OSSE to
3 live up to that standard. Let's take a few
4 more months to get this right. Our students
5 deserve it.

6 MS. BEER: Okay. Hi. My name is
7 Stephanie Beer, and I'm a social studies
8 teacher at Cardozo Education Campus, and a
9 resident of Ward 7. At Cardozo Education
10 Campus, 42 percent of our student population
11 are English language learners, or ELLs. The
12 majority of the ELLs at Cardozo have arrived
13 within the last two years. The number of ELLs
14 at Cardozo is growing weekly as well as new
15 students continue to arrive.

16 Under the current OSSE proposal, our
17 school score would be 70 percent dependent on
18 students' PARCC scores for ELA and geometry in
19 the tenth grade. The current practice is that
20 ELL students who have been in the country for
21 under a year do not test in ELA, but everyone
22 tests in math regardless of time in country.

1 I agree that students should not have to take
2 the test if they have been in the country
3 under a year. And I argue that they should
4 also not have to test in math, because the
5 PARCC math test is language-heavy.

6 I also agree with the recommendation
7 that these students' ACCESS growth scores
8 replace their PARCC proficiency or growth. I
9 believe that we should be accountable to
10 helping these students grow in their English
11 language proficiency. However, it is against
12 all research on language acquisition to expect
13 students to perform at grade level in ELA or
14 math in only one year. It takes from five to
15 seven years for students to achieve academic
16 proficiency in English. And even then, the
17 PARCC test would still be difficult for them
18 due to the reading levels. Being proficient
19 in English on ACCESS does not mean students
20 will read at grade level.

21 Many of our ELL students have limited
22 to severely interrupted formal education,

1 which often means that they are not literate
2 in their first language. These students face
3 additional challenges to learning a second
4 language. They need extra support and extra
5 time to be proficient in English and to be
6 able to meet graduation requirements. I see
7 no recommendations on changing the weight of
8 graduation rates in the OSSE plan. I ask that
9 the State Board of Education recommendation
10 that OSSE change the graduation requirements
11 for ELL students, and especially students with
12 interrupted formal education.

13 The criteria for this should be that
14 ELLs with ACCESS levels 1 through 3 placed in
15 high schools should be exempt from the four-
16 year graduation cohort and allowed at least
17 five years to prepare for college and career
18 readiness before graduation. Placing these
19 students in a five-year graduation cohort
20 should not penalize the school score in any
21 way.

22 The current practice of encouraging

1 these students to graduate within four years
2 is doing them a severe disservice. They often
3 have to pay to take remedial classes at
4 college that are non-credit-bearing courses.
5 This means they have to spend more money, and
6 it will take them even longer to earn a
7 college degree, thus putting up even more
8 barriers for them to achieve their dreams.
9 Under the current OSSE proposal, schools like
10 Cardozo would be penalized due to our high ELL
11 and SpEd (phonetic) populations. I believe
12 that our school should be rewarded for opening
13 our doors to these students.

14 I also believe that school climate
15 and culture should play a role in a school
16 score card. However, I think more research
17 does need to be done in order to accurately
18 measure climate. I think the superficial ways
19 of looking at suspension (phonetic) numbers or
20 what is displayed on the walls of a school is
21 not a useful way to measure climate. Also, if
22 surveys are to be used, they must be available

1 in all of the home languages of the students
2 at a school, and they should be piloted to
3 make sure that translations make sense and
4 that students understand what they're being
5 asked in order to ensure accurate results.
6 Thank you for your time.

7 MS. SMITH: Nancy Smith. I'm a 49-
8 year Ward 4 resident. I've had nine kids and
9 two grandchildren in the DC system, almost
10 continuously since 1971. I have a
11 granddaughter now at Takoma and one in the PTO
12 and the LSAT there. I'm a member of the
13 Coolidge Community Working Group, Ward 4
14 Education Alliance, and SHAKE I'm not
15 representing any of those organizations, but I
16 am speaking for the insights provided by the
17 many years' involvement in DCPS.

18 I submitted written comments on the
19 original OSSE proposal and expressed a range
20 of concerns, and am please -- delighted,
21 actually -- to recognize that those concerns
22 were almost entirely addressed by the State

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1 Board's recommendations. I applaud the Board
2 for its thoughtful approach that represents a
3 more wholistic approach to assessment of
4 school quality. I'm extremely disappointed to
5 see how little of your recommendations were
6 adopted.

7 It's my extremely strong
8 recommendation that this Board not approve
9 OSSE's draft until further revisions are made
10 in alignment with your proposals. And I'm
11 particularly concerned not only about the
12 overreliance on test scores -- I prefer growth
13 to proficiency. I'm glad there's been some
14 change, but it's still -- 70 percent is
15 ridiculous. And I could not support Scott
16 Abbott's testimony more on the importance of
17 including indicators of a well-rounded
18 education. And what they're proposing is not
19 acceptable.

20 I have one issue that was not
21 addressed by the Board, and that is the
22 proposed star system that reduces a school

1 performance to a single rating based so
2 heavily on scores on a single test, even
3 under, you know, the changes that are
4 proposed. Such a system is highly misleading
5 to parents and should be replaced by a
6 dashboard that describes the strengths,
7 challenges, and unique characteristics or
8 specialties of the school. While more in-
9 depth information may certainly be available
10 with the star system, the reality is that
11 parents will quickly discount a school with a
12 small number of stars without delving into
13 that information. And as you know all too
14 well, that single score is biased toward
15 schools that serve predominantly high SES
16 students and against those that serve high
17 populations of ELL and SpEd students, or
18 students facing poverty and homelessness and
19 trauma.

20 The latter schools may be doing a
21 superb job of meeting the need so their
22 students who face serious challenges while

1 simultaneously serving its high-achieving
2 students well. But that single score will
3 never let us know because it's so weighted by
4 the kids facing so many challenges.

5 Again -- one other thing I wish could
6 be included, by the way, on climate is a
7 measure of teacher retention -- schools with
8 high churn. I think that's a problem, and I
9 think that that's more meaningful than
10 attendance of students -- oh, and reenrollment
11 of students.

12 Again, I'm delighted the Board has
13 made excellent recommendations that would
14 result in a much-improved, more flexible, and
15 more realistic accountability system. But if
16 your recommendations are not adopted by OSSE,
17 I hope you'll vote no and delay submission of
18 the plan. This is the one power the Board
19 has, and through the one power the community
20 has to shape the mechanisms of accountability
21 for our schools. I hope OSSE responds
22 favorably, but if they don't, I sincerely hope

1 you will exercise your power.

2 MS. FITZPATRICK: My name is Anne
3 Fitzpatrick. I'm a parent of two kids at
4 School-Within-School @ Goding, which is a DC
5 public school. And I'm here speaking not only
6 for myself but for a group of parents and a
7 teacher at school as well as some LSAT reps
8 and the LSAT chair. I'd like to thank you for
9 the opportunity to provide input on OSSE's
10 Accountability Plan today as well as at the
11 community meetings you cohosted across the
12 district in February.

13 We were pleased to see in your
14 recently released recommendations that you had
15 been listening. Your recommendations include
16 some key steps to address the significant
17 concerns we have with OSSE's plan, and we urge
18 you to hold your ground on them. You have a
19 vital role as the voices of our community. We
20 also urge you to tell OSSE that submitting the
21 plan in April is not reasonable or realistic.
22 It was clear at the community forums that

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1 parents and teachers do not think the draft
2 plan is at all adequate. Let's take the time
3 to put together a thoughtful plan that
4 reflects our values.

5 We want to share some specific
6 concerns from our school's perspective.
7 School-Within-School @ Goding is a pre-K-3-to-
8 5th-grade DC public school with citywide
9 enrollment. It exemplifies DCPS commitment to
10 innovative, high-quality education. The
11 school was founded in 1995 by four teachers
12 who wanted to apply the Reggio Emilia
13 education philosophy, first developed in
14 postwar Italy by a psychologist, as it has
15 evolved through continuous research on
16 education. Central to our school's approach
17 is that teachers listen to children, observe
18 them, understand their thinking, structure
19 activities in the environment to support and
20 extend their thinking, and draw from their
21 interests to plan for future learning.

22 We have found these methods to be

1 extremely effective for our students, and our
2 school is drawing families from all over the
3 city who want this progressive approach to
4 education for their own children. The success
5 of our school is due to enthusiastic teachers
6 and engaged parents dedicated to seeing our
7 children as individuals. This is the kind of
8 innovation that is jeopardized by a top-down,
9 narrowly focused, testing-driven
10 accountability system. We are deeply
11 concerned that OSSE's Draft Plan does not do
12 enough to move us away from that.

13 Tying 80 percent of a school's
14 assessment, or even 70 or 74 percent, to a
15 single test guarantees the teachers will feel
16 pressure to teach to that test. When parents
17 raised at the community meetings -- at which I
18 was at CHPSP0 as well as Ward 5 -- that about
19 this emphasis on testing, Superintendent Kang
20 and her staff repeatedly noted that half of
21 the weight, 40 percent, measures growth rather
22 than proficiency. It's unclear why we would

1 weigh proficiency so heavily when weighting
2 growth is the answer to so many concerns.
3 Regardless, whether we weight growth or
4 proficiency, it's all still based on a single
5 test. We must think carefully about the
6 incentives we create when we set up these
7 accountability standards. Accountability that
8 undermines a teacher's ability to meet student
9 needs is not worth the price. In light of
10 these concerns, we support your
11 recommendations to expand the weight of non-
12 test factors and to include a well-rounded
13 education measure.

14 I spent a few minutes on my phone
15 trying to get up to speed on the changes
16 proposed yesterday, and it is clear that they
17 don't go far enough. Your recommendations
18 were already enough of a compromise, and we
19 urge you not to adopt the plan as proposed to
20 be changed. We continue to support you as you
21 stand your ground. Thank you.

22 MS. SAMMIS: Good evening. My name

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1 is Sevanna Sammis, and I'm an instructional
2 coach at Cardozo Education Campus and a
3 resident of Ward 1. As an instructional coach
4 at Cardozo, I work predominantly with our ELLs
5 and teachers who are servicing ELL students.
6 And I've been working with ELLs for the past
7 six years, and my comment will be short about
8 testing and accountability for our school.

9 I strongly urge that OSSE use ACCESS
10 scores as a growth measure instead of PARCC,
11 especially for our beginning English language
12 learners. As Stephanie Beer testified, our
13 school is almost 50 percent ELL. And I want
14 to give you a little bit about the context of
15 how our school operates under all the testing.

16 We spent all year preparing for
17 PARCC. Students take numerous interim
18 assessments leading up to PARCC, and our
19 teachers spend countless morning special
20 development sessions analyzing PARCC questions
21 instead of preparing and addressing the real
22 needs of their students, such as writing

1 curriculum for our students with interrupted
2 education. None of our DCPS curriculum meets
3 the needs of students who have four, five, six
4 years of gaps in their education.

5 As an instructional coach, I've had
6 to change my work with teachers to focus on
7 preparing for PARCC. I'm not able to support
8 teachers or students the way I know is most
9 effective for student learning. And as a
10 school, when we get into testing PARCC, we
11 have to dedicate a great deal of resources to
12 actually minister the PARCC exam. We have no
13 laptops available in our entire building,
14 where we have 800 students. About 500 take
15 the test. At any given time, we have one to
16 200 students testing. That means no resources
17 are available for the rest of our students.
18 Our teaching schedule is completely
19 interrupted for the students and the teachers.

20 And I really urge you to consider the
21 impact of testing, especially on schools with
22 such diverse populations at Cardozo. Thank

1 you.

2 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you for
3 your testimony.

4 Are there any questions by the
5 members? Mr. Jacobson.

6 MR. JACOBSON: Thank you. I'll try
7 and be brief.

8 Mr. Abbott, I think I've asked you
9 this question before, but you keep using your
10 DCPS email address and title, but your
11 comments are your own, not DCPS's? Is that
12 correct?

13 MR. ABBOTT: I'm here speaking on my
14 own behalf, not necessarily on behalf of DCPS,
15 that's correct.

16 MR. JACOBSON: Okay. Great. Thank
17 you for clarifying that.

18 Ms. Beer?

19 MS. BEER: Yes.

20 MS. JACOBSON: You talk about the
21 importance of piloting metrics before they're
22 incorporated into a plan. But we're hearing

1 from a lot of advocates that just want us to
2 put things into a plan without piloting them.
3 Can you talk a little bit to the importance of
4 why pilots matter?

5 MS. BEER: Yeah. So our school was
6 actually part of a pilot for student surveys
7 last year that are now used as part of the
8 teacher evaluations system at DCPS and impact.
9 And we found that in piloting the surveys with
10 the ELL population -- it's a survey that's
11 taken on a computer -- the translation was
12 very terrible in Spanish. The kids didn't
13 understand the questions. And so I think that
14 DCPS took that into consideration, because ELL
15 teachers are not required to have that survey
16 as part of their evaluation. I'm not sure if
17 I agree with that, because the students could
18 be asked in another way, or they could have
19 improved the survey so that the students could
20 still have -- give feedback on their teachers.
21 But I think it's important that the pilot took
22 place to make sure that it was an accurate --

1 that it showed accurate results.

2 MR. JACOBSON: Great. It helps work
3 out kinks and make sure that the entire
4 process runs better after the pilot's
5 completed. Excellent.

6 And then, finally, in my last 20
7 seconds, Ms. Smith, I believe, noted that this
8 is our only power, only authority. What I'd
9 just say to you and the rest of the advocates
10 in the room is, your elected education
11 represents can have more authority. We need
12 you to go to Council. We need you go to the
13 mayor. We need you to advocate for us to be
14 able to have that power to do more and to
15 propose changes and not just be given a "yes"
16 or "no" option.

17 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: How do you do
18 that?

19 MR. JACOBSON: So I would encourage
20 you and everyone else in this room and
21 everyone who's watching on television to
22 engage with the DC Council, engage with the

1 mayor's office, and empower your elected
2 education representatives with power to really
3 represent you. So with that, thank you.

4 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Any other
5 comments? Ms. Wattenberg.

6 MS. WATTENBERG: Yeah. I just want
7 to -- two things -- one, acknowledge the
8 interest in the well-rounded education index,
9 which got an enormous amount of interest, and
10 also again on the interest in the climate.
11 And I want to just acknowledge that in the
12 Board's recommendation, there were 10 points
13 for climate and 10 points for well-rounded
14 education. Because as Mr. Abbott said, they
15 are not the same thing, but they're both super
16 important. And the climate proposal was 5
17 points for both of them. And as has been
18 noted, they're on decline.

19 The other point I just want to make
20 to -- I don't --

21 MS. BEER: Beer.

22 MS. WATTENBERG: -- Ms. Beer - is my

1 understanding -- it might be that Ms. Kang
2 wants to comment -- is that with regard to
3 giving the PARCC test -- because we raised
4 this -- with regard to giving the PARCC test
5 to new immigrant students, that that is a
6 federal requirement. And while, as you can
7 tell, I'm very critical of a number of things
8 in this proposal, I want to be fair and say, I
9 don't think that is the result of OSSE.

10 The same I believe to the previous
11 comment where there was a concern which a
12 number of shared greatly -- I think all of us
13 -- that the PARCC tests have to be taken by
14 students with a wide variety of disabilities
15 that make them completely useless and
16 inappropriate. That also is a federal
17 requirement, in the sense that 1 point -- we
18 can only exempt 1 percent of like -- if I'm
19 correct on that -- so I just wanted to note
20 this.

21 MS. BEER: Can I respond to that? I
22 know it wasn't directed to me.

1 That just speaks to the fact that we
2 shouldn't emphasize this test so much.

3 (Cross talk)

4 MS. WATTENBERG: I would agree with
5 you, and I think it is a really good reason to
6 emphasize more the growth and less of the
7 test. I totally agree with you on that, but
8 that is (phonetic) within the power of this
9 proposal. Thanks for nothing that.

10 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you,
11 panel. Thank you.

12 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Do you want us
13 to just leave the testimony there?

14 (Cross talk)

15 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. Badu Miah,
16 Mary Levy, Alexandra Pardo, and Jessica
17 Papalia, Andrea Tucker, Maya Martin.

18 (Cross talk)

19 MS. PARDO: Good evening. I'm
20 Alexandra Pardo of Town Square. I'm here with
21 Jessica Enes, who's the former director of
22 assessment at OSSE. And together, with

1 empower creek 12, we submitted public
2 testimony to OSSE on behalf of our schools.
3 We want to highlight for you tonight five key
4 priorities which we believe will improve the
5 alignment of the accountability system and
6 state of priorities.

7 Priority number one: Reduce the
8 unnecessarily long time lines. The Office of
9 State Superintendent's plan seeks to reach
10 commendable goals for all students and
11 subgroups. However, the time line is
12 unnecessarily long with overall stated goals
13 set for 2039 -- 22 years from today, and 7
14 years longer than any other state submitting
15 in April. We strongly encourage OSSE to build
16 a sense of urgency in our schools, work to
17 close the achievement gap and threaten
18 (phonetic) the proposed time line, creating a
19 system better aligned to expectations set by
20 other states.

21 Priority two: Create a governing
22 structure of external stakeholders to steward

1 the plan. We are concerned about the absence
2 of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the
3 development of policy and business roles as
4 the plan is refined. We recommend one,
5 removing the details not required by the
6 Department of Education from the plan; two,
7 publishing the data used to create the plan,
8 so stakeholders may better understand the
9 policy implications and predict their scores;
10 and three, codifying a governing structure of
11 external stakeholders for refinements to the
12 plan. It is critical that those held
13 accountable have a meaningful voice.

14 Priority three: Refine how growth
15 and subgroups are weighted in this plan. We
16 concur with the State Board that a successful
17 accountability system must identify
18 appropriate measures and weights based on key
19 elements of school quality. We are concerned,
20 however, that growth and subgroup weighting in
21 the plan are not aligned with those key
22 elements. OSSE's plan focuses on the

1 identification of low-achievement, low-growth
2 schools over recognition of high growth,
3 creating a bias against schools serving large
4 at-risk populations. We urge OSSE to adjust
5 how growth is incorporated in the plan, so
6 high-growth schools can achieve high ratings.
7 The framework focuses on subgroup performance,
8 but the formula masks major gaps. An extreme
9 within school gaps may result in just one-
10 point differences in overall scores. We
11 recommend that OSSE revise this approach to
12 subgroups to more strategically address this
13 issue.

14 Priority four: Revise ELL metrics to
15 align with research and programmatic
16 offerings. Research shows that language
17 acquisition is not linear, and varies based on
18 proficiency and grade level. The current plan
19 is built on the assumption of linear growth,
20 rejected by WIDA. We recommend that OSSE
21 align its plan with WIDA's research and
22 recommendations for measuring growth. Two, DC

1 has many wonderful language immersion
2 programs. The goal of immersion is for
3 students to be bilingual upon program
4 completion, and thus, the rate of language
5 acquisition is different. We urge OSSE to
6 consider unintended adverse impact of unique
7 high-value programs such as immersion
8 programs.

9 Priority five: Inclusion of early
10 college access programs. High schools are the
11 final steps for preparing students for
12 colleges and careers. It is essential that
13 their measures focus on college and career
14 readiness. Therefore, we recommend, one,
15 including dual-enrollment participation
16 measure. Research indicates that exposure to
17 early college coursework is among the most
18 effective strategies to increase college
19 readiness. Yet dual enrollment is absent from
20 the plan, although OSSE recognizes that over
21 300 students in our high schools participate
22 in dual enrollment. Two, broadening the

1 definition of college and career to include
2 dual enrollment. OSSE's plan disadvantages
3 high schools with limited APIB programs and
4 dictates unfunded mandates. These programs
5 are expenses, and schools without them are
6 adversely impacted. We ask OSSE to define how
7 costs associated with the APIB mandate will be
8 mitigated, or to include the dual-enrollment
9 options.

10 We commend efforts by OSSE in its
11 first draft. We believe that a final plan
12 that considers these concerns will create a
13 national model for accountability that drives
14 rapid improvement and guarantees educational
15 equality for all. But we don't believe we
16 need to wait 22 years for that.

17 MS. LEVY: Good evening. I'm Mary
18 Levy. For those of you who don't know me,
19 I've studied the DC Public Schools for the
20 last 25 years. I collect data. I've also
21 participated in every major reform effort in
22 DC Public Schools, including directing a

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1 couple of plans. And I've had a great deal of
2 opportunity to become disillusioned with
3 accountability schemes.

4 On the basis of months of study and
5 public and expert comment, this Board recently
6 prepared ten consensus recommendations for the
7 improvement of the ESSA Draft State Plan that
8 OSSE issued on January the 31st. I mean, I
9 found those recommendations to be well thought
10 out, to be well grounded in expert knowledge
11 and research, and happily, to be reflective of
12 what parents and community have been asking
13 throughout the process.

14 Unfortunately, the very minor changes
15 proposed in yesterday's summary responses to
16 public engagement come nowhere near meeting
17 the Board's recommendations. I think that the
18 heart of the problem is overreliance on
19 testing, by which I mean on a pair of tests --
20 ELA and math -- and underuse of other
21 important measures of educational quality.
22 And I think this creates an accountability

1 system that is actually counterproductive to
2 other measures -- I mean -- I'm sorry -- to
3 effective education.

4 You've heard some of the reasons for
5 this tonight. You've heard it in other
6 meetings, and I put them in, in earlier
7 submission. I've repeated them below. I'm
8 not going to go through them now, but I would
9 like to add -- listening to what people have
10 said before -- that teacher turnover of one-
11 third of the faculty at high-risk schools
12 makes it virtually impossible for them to get
13 the kind of stars that we wish they did.

14 The plan, as it now stands, simply
15 maintains the flaws of No Child Left Behind:
16 limited range of metrics and punitive
17 pass/fail measures. And I think part of the
18 problem there is that it's all punitive. And
19 yet we have never addressed collectively the
20 major disparities in opportunity for students.
21 That really needs to be part of it -- needs to
22 be more than just part of this plan -- but we

1 need to do it.

2 So I hope you will act as we want
3 good educators to do and stand by the
4 standards that you set in the recommendations.
5 It's what we elected you to do, and we're
6 counting on you to do it. Thank you.

7 MS. MARTIN: Good evening, State
8 Board of Education members and State
9 Superintendent Kang. My name is Maya Martin,
10 and I'm a Ward 6 resident as of a week ago.
11 I'm also the founder and executive director of
12 PAVE, Parents Amplifying Voices in Education,
13 whose mission is to empower, connect, and
14 train charter parent leaders to give families
15 in DC a voice and a choice in the vision for
16 education in our city.

17 At PAVE, we believe that parents are
18 partners and leaders in developing a diversity
19 of safe, nurturing, and great schools for
20 every child and every ward in the community,
21 and that for too long parents have been
22 informed of our education policy decisions

1 after they've already been made instead of
2 being invited to the table to help make them.

3 On Thursday, March 9th, the Senate
4 voted 50 to 49 to block the accountability
5 rules for the Every Student Succeeds Act --
6 ESSA -- created by the Obama Administration.
7 According to education policy and analysts,
8 without the rules, states will now have to
9 look to the text of ESSA alone to determine
10 what types of accountability measures are
11 allowed under the law.

12 Contrary to what is being said, the
13 regulations actually gave state education
14 agencies additional flexibility that was not
15 founded in the earlier version of ESSA. It is
16 extremely unfortunate that Congress has taken
17 this step, especially given that the
18 Congressional Review Act will keep the
19 Department of Education from making
20 regulations like the ones that they just voted
21 to repeal.

22 I am concerned that some opponents of

1 accountability will use this opportunity to
2 try and take control over DC's state education
3 plan, just as they have insinuated a desire to
4 control other things, like vouchers and
5 legalized marijuana that should be our
6 autonomy as a state and as voters. It's
7 extremely unfortunate as well that Congress
8 has taken this step, but I want to encourage
9 the DC State Board to approve the new plan's
10 weight for student growth and achievement,
11 which advances equity by being open about how
12 students are performing across all demographic
13 groups.

14 I've been highly impressed as a
15 resident and as an education leader with the
16 thoughtfulness with which State Board members
17 have taken their role in reviewing the plan,
18 and OSSE has taken in creating and revising
19 the plan, as you are all doing critical work
20 to invest towards approving a quality rating
21 system for all public schools on March 22nd.

22 DC's state education plan includes

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1 the type of thinking that is lauded and
2 supported by many civil rights groups, who
3 believe states should create ratings that are,
4 in large part, focused on academic growth and
5 sufficiency. And the plan was initially
6 drafted with the Obama Administration's focus
7 on transparency, state autonomy, and
8 accountability in mind, things that I think we
9 can all agree are important values in a state
10 with taxation without representation.

11 As the executive director of PAVE, my
12 staff and I frequently encounter parents who
13 are frustrated by the inability to determine
14 how their children's charter school is
15 performing in comparison to all the other
16 district public schools across the city.
17 They're excited about the prospect of a new
18 uniform accountability system, and they want
19 to make sure that their children attend
20 schools where academics are at the forefront
21 of the decision making. The current plan
22 allows for just that, with the largest share,

1 40 percent of the measure, focused on growth,
2 with 30 percent for elementary and middle
3 school focused on proficiency, and with 25
4 percent focus on the school environment.

5 I understand concerns that some
6 parents have expressed about the potential of
7 overtesting and pressures teachers face when
8 they work with students who are well behind
9 academically. However, the parents and
10 community leaders that we work with that sit
11 on our board of directors, and that we talk to
12 on a daily basis, want us to be honest about
13 how our students are actually performing.

14 I have high ambitions for what
15 students can achieve with the right amount of
16 support, caring teachers, and a well-designed
17 curriculum. And as a fifth-generation
18 Washingtonian whose grandparents attended
19 Dunbar High School when it was known as one of
20 the best high schools in the country, at a
21 time when DC did not expect black children and
22 youth to perform at such high levels, and I

1 know that our DC schools and our DC kids can
2 all achieve and succeed. Thank you for all of
3 your hard work in getting a plan that
4 incorporates the voices of all of our parents
5 and that keeps us focused on the power and
6 promise of the public education of our kids.
7 All children deserves to go to great schools,
8 and we support DC's accountability framework
9 and make sure that we hold everyone
10 accountable for great schools made up of a
11 positive school culture and climate and high
12 academic growth and achievement.

13 MS. TUCKER: Good evening, members of
14 the State Board of Education, and thank you
15 for allowing me to testify here today. My
16 name is Andrea Tucker. I'm a native of
17 Washington, DC, a Ward 8 resident, and a
18 parent of three at JO Wilson Elementary
19 School, a title one school in Ward 6. I am
20 also the PTA president, a member of the LSAT,
21 and a proud graduate of JO Wilson Elementary
22 School. I want to first thank you for your

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1 ten recommendations on how to improve the
2 accountability plan. Your recommendations
3 reflected many of our -- my concerns and those
4 of other parents I heard at the community
5 meeting last month, where OSSE presented on
6 the plan and took questions.

7 Prior to the meeting, I thought that
8 the plan would represent a new way of thinking
9 in DC. I thought it would be an opportunity
10 to look at our unique city and create an
11 accountability plan that would work for our
12 schools and for our children. That was not
13 what I heard then. Instead, I heard about an
14 accountability plan that rates schools almost
15 entirely on reading and math scores. Making
16 sure students have access to arts and science
17 and social studies and technology is important
18 to having a well-rounded education. It is
19 something we should encourage in every school
20 across the city. So I was glad to see your
21 recommendations on the need to evaluate to
22 evaluate our schools based on our well-rounded

1 education and not focused so narrowly.

2 We know that all schools are equal in
3 their course markers -- are equal in their
4 course markers now, and this plan should be
5 one way to push the system towards equity, not
6 create wider divisions in quality. If all
7 schools are judged by not just reading and
8 math but other subjects, wouldn't that be one
9 way to encourage all schools to offer them?

10 I hope that you will make these
11 changes towards a well-rounded education view
12 now and not wait and revisit it and the need
13 for it later. My concern is that once the
14 plan goes through the approval process, we may
15 not have a chance to revisit it. I have not
16 sign the final plan to know whether or not --
17 or how much has been included in there. As a
18 proud DCPS alumni and a current parent with
19 children in DCPS, I have been a witness to
20 what makes a great school. While test scores
21 are one factor I use to judge a school, it is
22 definitely not the only one. I also care a

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1 lot about the culture and climate of the
2 school. It's important that kids are safe,
3 and the environment in the school is conducive
4 to learning. I was glad to see your
5 recommendations address culture and climate
6 and understanding the quality of the school.
7 I am hopeful that is now a part of the plan
8 and not one to put off for the future.

9 I also care about holding teachers
10 and staff accountable for children's learning
11 or lack thereof. No child should go to middle
12 or high school reading on the second-grade
13 level. I do not believe that the State Board
14 of Education should approve this plan without
15 having OSSE make these changes first and
16 allowing the public to have one more
17 opportunity to review it. We have done our
18 part by attending the meetings and reading the
19 plan. OSSE has not done its part in sharing
20 about changes in a timely manner, so I have
21 not time to understand any of the changes.

22 I would close by saying that the

1 community meeting I attended in Ward 6 was a
2 large gathering of parents who were diverse in
3 every way. But we are united in our
4 questions, concerns, and goals. That was very
5 reassuring to know that we are all pushing in
6 the same direction for our children, and I
7 hope city leaders are listening and will make
8 necessary changes. Thank you for your time
9 and inviting public testimony -- I'm sorry --
10 testimony on this issue.

11 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you,
12 panelists, for coming out and testifying.

13 Does the Board have any questions?
14 Mr. Weedon.

15 MR. WEEDON: So I want to return to a
16 question I asked earlier of this panel as
17 well. Where do you-all stand on the issue of
18 proficiency versus growth? I heard that a lot
19 and that was touched upon, but I'd love to
20 hear a little bit more.

21 MS. PAPAIA: So we think both
22 measures are important. But I think one thing

1 that's, I think, lost a little bit in this
2 conversation is that growth can be a
3 methodology and not a distinct measure.
4 Everything can be measured in achievement and
5 growth if you look at things year-over-year.
6 For example, if you look at attendance, you
7 can look at how a school performs on
8 attendance in one year, and their in-seat
9 attendance rate. You can also look at how
10 that moves attendance year-over-year. So you
11 can look at every measure as both an
12 achievement and a growth measure. And so I
13 think, as part of our public comments, we'd
14 love to see more domains incorporate growth,
15 in addition, as a methodology.

16 MS. LEVY: Okay. I think growth is
17 much more important, and particularly, when
18 you think about the second year at schools.
19 They get -- they take their students as they
20 get them. And if all you -- you put too much
21 on proficiency. And I think that was well
22 illustrated by talking about the students who

1 arrive from other countries, with interrupted
2 educations. Why should you punish the school
3 and the teachers because they may be in the
4 ninth grade and reading, if at all, at a
5 second-grade level.

6 MS. PARDO: I think the only other
7 thing I would add is it's really important --
8 as I said in my testimony. So WIDA, which is
9 the consortium that DC works with to measure
10 ELL students, has methods of measuring growth
11 that are based on skill scores. The current
12 plan, as proposed, wants to use proficiency
13 levels, which WIDA actually says you cannot
14 use to measure growth. And so we'd really
15 urge OSSE to go back to the WIDA research on
16 how to measure growth for ELL students and use
17 that proposed methodology rather than
18 proficiency levels.

19 MS. LEVY: I didn't realize that OSSE
20 had been talking about using proficiency
21 levels as opposed to just proficiency. I
22 mean --

1 MS. PARDO: For ELLs only.

2 MS. LEVY: Well -- oh, for ELL.

3 Okay. Because scaled scores tell us much,
4 much more.

5 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. Jacobson.

6 MR. JACOBSON: Thank you.

7 Ms. Martin, I was hoping that you
8 might talk a little bit more of why academics
9 needs to be at the forefront according to
10 PAVE?

11 MS. MARTIN: Yeah. I mean, I think -
12 - so one of the things that we've had a lot of
13 conversations with parents about is that in
14 terms of their qualitative understanding of
15 school performance, they get a lot of that
16 from other parents. So they do a lot of their
17 homework in their -- going on school tours,
18 going on school visits, talking to parents --
19 some parents get it from website, like DC
20 Urban Moms and Dads. Some parents are getting
21 it from the My School DC website or from, you
22 know, conversations that they're having with

1 different stakeholders. But parents have
2 communicated that, like look, we get that
3 information from other families, and we
4 understand some of those qualitative measures.

5 What is much harder for families to
6 understand are the quantitative measures that
7 right now are not consistent across the
8 sectors. And so parents bring up that like
9 when they look at a DCPS school, they're
10 seeing something different from when they're
11 looking at a public charter school. And
12 that's really hard for parents to understand
13 the differences between those two systems.
14 And so I think what parents would like to see
15 is what are the academic measures that we can
16 use and we can make transparent across both of
17 the school systems and our entire education
18 system. So I think that's one of the things
19 that parents have talked about.

20 And to go back to Joe's question
21 about growth, I think that this plan has 40
22 percent being growth and 30 percent being

1 proficiency. And that is something that I
2 think reflects the concerns that parents have
3 made about making sure that it's reflecting
4 the progress and the growth that students are
5 making year-over-year. And so I think parents
6 want to also put that at the forefront, which
7 I appreciate that this plan has been able to
8 do.

9 MR. JACOBSON: Great. And then in my
10 last 30 seconds, another question for you:
11 Does PAVE object to any qualitative measures
12 that are included in OSSE's plan?

13 MS. MARTIN: So I mean, I think one
14 of the -- like we don't object to the
15 attendance or the reenrollment rate. I think
16 that's partially because we've been working
17 with the PCSB performance management framework
18 that parents understand and that they've been
19 using to help them inform decisions. I think
20 the other part about the climate is not
21 something we object to, but it's also
22 something that hasn't been totally ironed out

1 yet. So it's not something that we object to
2 -- the parents object to at all. It's just
3 something that we've love to see more
4 information about what that will wind up
5 looking like.

6 MR. JACOBSON: Thank you and the
7 entire pannel.

8 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Ms. Wattenberg.

9 MS. TUCKER: Excuse me. Can I have a
10 chance to respond to Mr. Weedon's question?

11 Okay. Mr. Weedon, as far as growth,
12 I would like to say that not -- just as all
13 children don't learn the same, all children
14 don't test the same. So you can't really get
15 the true essence of who a child is by taking a
16 test, because so many different factors can
17 come into play that day they take a test. So
18 you can't say whether they are truly
19 proficient in that subject or not by just one
20 test.

21 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

22 Ms. Woodruff.

1 MS. WOODRUFF: I just one question.

2 I actually wanted to ask Ms. Martin a
3 question that goes to growth. You spoke of
4 that -- of growth, and I want to -- I would
5 just like to know, does it -- do the parents
6 you speak to have children? Do any of the
7 parents have children that are in high school?

8 MS. MARTIN: So most of our families
9 have kids that are in middle -- elementary and
10 middle school, and a lot have students that
11 are in middle school, and fewer have students
12 that are in high school. We do have some who
13 are at -- like Thurgood Marshall and some of
14 the high school -- charter high schools, but
15 most have children that are in elementary and
16 middle school.

17 MS. WOODRUFF: So in terms of growth
18 for high school, you haven't heard of any
19 communication about that one?

20 MS. MARTIN: Yeah. I mean, and that
21 one's a little bit harder, simply because the
22 high school testing is very, very different

1 from the elementary middle school testing. So
2 that one is harder to kind of step out in
3 terms of what grade levels are tested and
4 when.

5 MS. WOODRUFF: All right. And so I
6 would like to ask anyone on the panel that has
7 some experience with growth if you could speak
8 to it for high school.

9 MS. PARDO: Sure. So in my former
10 role, I was the executive director of Thurgood
11 Marshall for nine years, which is a high
12 school, a charter high school in the district.
13 And so for high schools, I think growth is
14 critically important, because as you've heard
15 tonight, students come into high school
16 throughout the district many, many years
17 behind -- not all students, but some of our
18 students. And so having a measure that
19 recognizes when I get you in ninth grade and
20 you are in the fifth grade, how much have I
21 moved you by tenth grade, is critical.

22 But simultaneously, I think OSSE

1 should be commended, because the other part
2 we're not telling you about is how do you
3 measure growth for SAT or ACT, and they're
4 including none in our high school measures
5 because students also grow on other college-
6 bound metrics. And so having both a measure
7 that is going to look at high school growth
8 from ninth to tenth grade or eighth grade, and
9 then looking at that PSAT which is down the
10 pipe, I think, is essential for schools
11 because that is the last time. When a student
12 is not on grade level in fifth grade and
13 eighth grade, you get to move them on. But
14 high schools is that stop gap. If we don't do
15 it right in high schools, we fail those
16 students. There's not a second opportunity
17 after that.

18 MS. WOODRUFF: Thank you.

19 MS. WATTENBERG: To Ms. --

20 MS. PARDO: Alexandra Pardo.

21 MS. WATTENBERG: Alexandra Pardo. So
22 I want --

1 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Turn your mic
2 on.

3 MS. WATTENBERG: I want to go back to
4 something yet that you raised about the growth
5 issue, where you talked about -- I don't know
6 if it was a concern or a question or an issue
7 related to how the current plan addresses high
8 growth for schools and whether or not the
9 current plan would adequately recognize them.
10 So I just wanted to hear what you had to say
11 about that.

12 MS. PAPALIA: Yeah. I'll just
13 actually talk about that. Sure. So we did a
14 little bit of modeling. And where our concern
15 is, is that when we look at -- modeled out
16 using the framework details that were
17 available to us -- we look at a huge-gap
18 school, a no-gap school, and two schools that
19 are very homogenous, and we see that -- you
20 know, all students -- you get a score for all
21 students. Then you get a score for each
22 subgroup of students based on the subgroups

1 that are in your school.

2 When we did that modeling out, we
3 found that a huge-gap school, based on the
4 fake data that we put in there -- if all
5 students had one score, and there was a giant
6 gap between two subgroups, they would only
7 score two points lower in their overall school
8 score than a score with -- than a school with
9 no gap or two different homogenous schools,
10 regardless of how those schools performed --
11 or how students in those schools performed.
12 So we're really concerned that that gap -- a
13 no-school gap versus a huge-school gap could
14 really so poorly.

15 MS. WATTENBERG: So that's one issue
16 is that the way that the subgroups are
17 calculated --

18 MS. PAPALIA: Uh-huh (affirmative).

19 MS. WATTENBERG: -- could mean that a
20 high-gap school does not get flagged.

21 MS. PAPALIA: Correct.

22 MS. WATTENBERG: And what about the

1 school that is low scoring and high growth?
2 Is that something else that you would
3 addressed?

4 MS. PAPALIA: Absolutely. I
5 apologize. A low- -- a high-growth school
6 would have to score almost perfect on every
7 other metric in order to get a high-star
8 rating. On every other metric, they would
9 have to score almost perfectly.

10 MS. WATTENBERG: If they were low, or
11 if they had low scoring proficiency --

12 MS. PAPALIA: Uh-huh (affirmative).

13 MS. WATTENBERG: -- they'd have to
14 score almost perfect in everything else to get
15 a high-star rating.

16 MS. PAPALIA: Correct.

17 MS. WATTENBERG: Thank you. And
18 you're modeling -- you said that was based --
19 did I hear you say fake numbers or real
20 numbers or --

21 MS. PAPALIA: It's based on the rules
22 in the plan, but it's based on data that is

1 publicly available, sample data -- you know,
2 if all students score 75 percent.

3 MS. WATTENBERG: So I guess my time
4 is up. Has someone got data available for us
5 to look at?

6 MS. PAPALIA: We have historical
7 school data, but in terms of --

8 MS. WATTENBERG: Or not the data, the
9 modeling, because that's where that we could
10 touch base --.

11 MS. PAPALIA: I mean, we'd be happy
12 to share that with you.

13 MS. WATTENBERG: Thank you.

14 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you,
15 panelists. Thank you very much for
16 testifying. Amber Schlick, Erich Martel,
17 Cathy Reilly, Emily Gasoi, and Emily Mechner.

18 MS. SCHLICK: Yeah? Hello. My name
19 is Amber Schlick, and I'm the strategy and
20 policy manager for E.L. Haynes Public Charter
21 School. On March 3rd, we submitted public
22 comments to OSSE in response to the Draft

1 State Plan posted in late January. We gave
2 specific feedback on several metrics outlined
3 in the plan, which I will share with the State
4 Board today. We appreciate the opportunity to
5 provide comments on the proposed DC state plan
6 under the Every Student Succeeds Act, and
7 OSSE's effort to engage LEAs in the
8 development of the new state accountability
9 framework. The following comments are based
10 on Section 4, Accountabilities for an
11 Improvement for Schools of the Draft State
12 Plan.

13 Generally, we recommend OSSE review
14 the entire Section 4 of the plain to focus on
15 explaining the main ideas of the
16 accountability system rather than specific
17 metrics and targets. The plan should preserve
18 OSSE's flexibility to partner with LEAs --
19 excuse me -- to establish final metrics and
20 business rules. We especially want to bring
21 your attention to the following areas:

22 Floors and targets. The current

1 floors and targets included in the plan are
2 too specific at this point in the process, and
3 OSSE needs to conduct more modeling and
4 facilitate additional feedback sessions before
5 establishing final floors and targets.
6 Additionally, OSSE should consider creating a
7 minimum range for metrics where the 10th and
8 90th aren't too close together.

9 For example, on the performance
10 management framework, the Public Charter
11 School Board's established a minimum range for
12 in-seat attendance because the 10th and 90th
13 percentiles are less than 10 percentage points
14 apart. Without a minimum range, the point
15 fluctuation with even an immaterial change in
16 attendance would be large.

17 Growth to proficiency. The
18 description of growth-to-proficiency metrics
19 should be revised to focus on the goals,
20 including growth to proficiency as a metric
21 instead of already specifying the actual
22 growth targets. IA (phonetic) students who

1 start in levels 1, 2, and 3 must grow at least
2 one-third of the gap each year. For example,
3 OSSE could revise the language at the end of
4 page 42 by saying, "To complement median --
5 the median growth percentile and address some
6 of these limitations, OSSE will also include a
7 measure of growth to proficiency in the
8 accountability framework. Growth to
9 proficiency is the percent of students who
10 need a scale score growth target. We will
11 continue to research absolute growth targets
12 and will establish targets before the 2017-18
13 school year."

14 ACT, SAT, DC 50th percentile
15 threshold. We support that OSSE is
16 intentionally including a metric that will
17 show progress schools are making with students
18 who have not yet met the college-ready-by
19 chart on the SAT. However, given the
20 uncertainty of how the SAT and ACT metrics
21 will be calculated in the new accountability
22 framework, we strongly recommend OSSE remove

1 the 50th percentile threshold and revise the
2 description of this measure to say, "ACT, SAT,
3 intermediate benchmark metric."

4 Alternative graduation rate. The
5 audience appreciates OSSE's effort to ensure
6 that schools who graduate students beyond four
7 and five years receive credit within the
8 accountability framework. However, our
9 concern is that the current metric may not
10 accomplish this goal. As it stands, schools
11 at the high four-year graduation rate will
12 still have a high alternative graduation rate.
13 They will therefore raise the targets in the
14 framework and make it difficult for schools
15 with low four-year graduation rates to earn
16 points, even if they graduate significant
17 numbers of students who complete their degrees
18 in five years or more.

19 For each of the above metrics, we
20 recommend OSSE look at the detail outlined in
21 this section and establish a technical working
22 group to solidify the details before the 2017-

1 '18 school year. Thank you for the
2 opportunity to testify.

3 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you so
4 much.

5 Mr. Martel.

6 MR. MARTEL: Thank you. My name is
7 Erich Martel. I'm a retired DCPS high school
8 teacher. You can only fairly and validly
9 evaluate individuals. You cannot evaluate a
10 collective entity such as a school staff. Two
11 or three whole-school averages derived from
12 tests, climate scores, or graduation rates are
13 inherently unethical and invalid. Student
14 tests that have no consequences for students,
15 which are -- but are used to evaluate teachers
16 and staff, and even excess staff in closed
17 schools are unreliable. They don't describe
18 the strengths and the needs of the teaching
19 staff.

20 These so-called school accountability
21 criteria infantilize students and disempower
22 teachers. Students are informed that they are

1 not responsible for their learning, their test
2 results, their attendance, their behavior, and
3 their school's atmosphere; only their school's
4 teachers and staff are. And it seems like
5 many of the schools in the city have not been
6 visited by people who write these rules. And
7 I realize that these are -- many of them come
8 from the US Department of Education and from
9 OSSE and that this body does not have a lot of
10 authority. And everyone, as Mr. Jacobson
11 said, needs to try to get more authority so
12 that -- but nonetheless, you do have the power
13 of the pulpit.

14 A good example of this was what
15 happened at Wilson High School last year where
16 students acted in their own self-interest and
17 did not -- some of them skipped the PARCC
18 test; some of them deliberately went through
19 it very quickly. So they could do what?
20 Study for something that meant something: AP
21 exams.

22 All right. So what are the

1 recommendations? I would -- I'm suggesting
2 that you add is that in all publicly funded DC
3 schools, students who receive Level-1 scores
4 on the PARCC ELA and PARCC mathematics test be
5 retained in grade. How many were there last
6 year? Quite a few. And -- well, I'm just
7 talking about Level 1. Level 2 is also a
8 failing level. 1,300 high school students on
9 the geometry exam got Level 1; 6,300 -- 6,300
10 on the math exam, Grades 3 through 8, and
11 7,200 3-through- students on the ELA portion
12 of the test.

13 Let's see. And to get an idea of the
14 unethical aspect of this, just imagine if
15 teachers were told that they could only give a
16 single grade to all the students in their
17 classes. Consider what the impact of that
18 would be. Yet we can give single grades to an
19 entire school staff, as if everybody had the
20 same effect on students' performance without
21 the students being held responsible for any
22 aspect of it. Or not just the students. What

1 about evaluating the effectiveness of the
2 various mandates that teachers are required to
3 follow? All the time spent on meetings? Or
4 even the questions on how effective Common
5 Core is.

6 And I'll just finish by saying that
7 the DCMR says that there are only so many --
8 that after ten unexcused absences, there needs
9 to be a whole series of procedures that are
10 followed other than to have the student's
11 grade lowered. You should find out from the
12 State Superintendent whether or not any -- if
13 she has any records of the many students --
14 there were 862 students who had over 21
15 unexcused absences in the 2016 graduation
16 class.

17 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

18 Ms. Reilly.

19 MS. REILLY: Thank you. My name is
20 Cathy Reilly, and I'm the director of the
21 Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals,
22 and Educators, and a Ward 4 resident, and part

1 of Ward 4 Education Alliance. Thank you for
2 this opportunity.

3 This is a quote from the final
4 regulations of the FFA: "The bipartisan law
5 in the EFFA regulations gives states and
6 districts the opportunity to move beyond No
7 Child Left Behind, rely upon a limited range
8 of metrics and punitive pass/fail labels for
9 schools, and use their planning and
10 accountability process to reimagine and
11 redefine what a high-quality education should
12 mean for their students. To that end, the
13 final regulations use multiple measures of
14 school success, reinforcing that all students
15 deserve a high-quality and well-rounded
16 education that will prepare them for success."

17 This is the vision we are working
18 from. Whatever is approved will be
19 operational across both specters and become
20 the common metric. We do not view this as
21 primarily an instrument to facilitate school
22 choice. Our read on what parents and citizens

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1 would like is a high-quality for all students
2 at all of our schools. The recommendations by
3 the Board and the feedback from the community
4 meetings affirm this. What is measured is
5 what is prioritized and taught.

6 This is an opportunity. You, as the
7 Board of Education, have given OSSE a road map
8 to a much better definition of a high-quality
9 education. It is our best hope that you will
10 use your authority, as our representatives, to
11 ensure that your road map is followed. It was
12 reasonable and well thought out.

13 For the high school, while
14 adjustments for improvement in attendance and
15 expansion to 9 percent for the alternative
16 graduation rate are welcome, the failure to
17 include a growth metric or school climate
18 survey is still a big problem. We don't want
19 you to just include it without a pilot if the
20 two years was too long. OSSE has said that
21 they share this concern; however, they are not
22 committed to it in the policy.

1 I see students who may not be getting
2 a 3 on the AP or PARCC still getting an
3 education that is moving them forward. I see
4 them as Winston students argue a court case at
5 the district court or Ballou students be
6 accomplished members a band. The whole
7 purpose of ESSA was to allow school districts
8 to show this and encourage these pursuits as
9 part of a quality education.

10 While the aim is to continue
11 improving test performance and attendance and
12 grad rates, this is not the sole focus of the
13 professionals in our high schools, nor should
14 it be. My concern is that I don't see school
15 quality adequately reflected yet, and I see
16 schools that are working with young people
17 that come in with significant challenges,
18 unfairly evaluated. The five-start rating
19 system contributes to the inequality embedded
20 in the current draft.

21 So even with the best intentions of
22 OSSE, your recommendations have to be better

1 reflected in the policy you vote on. We just
2 see too much turnover and change and too many
3 broken promises to not need it in the policy
4 before you vote. So I went on to say what --
5 you know, what's not right yet for the
6 elementary and middle schools. And I just
7 want to say in closing, our passion on this
8 comes from a belief that the work you do here
9 is very important, and it will have a large
10 impact on the education of our young people.
11 A poor blunt instrument actually does harm.
12 So by March 22nd, you still have time to make
13 changes. And if not, I think you should vote
14 it down and go back to editing. We believe
15 you can get it right. Thank you.

16 MS. GASOI: Good evening, and thank
17 you for this opportunity to testify. My name
18 is Emily Gasoi. I'm a Ward 1 resident. I'm a
19 parent of a pre-K-4 student in DC, and I'm a
20 educator of -- I've played many roles,
21 including being a classic teacher for almost
22 ten years. I've been a new-teacher mentor

1 here in DC. And first of all, I just want to
2 echo a lot of what I've heard tonight,
3 including to commend the State Board of
4 Education for including what I heard at the
5 two forums that I attended, reflected in the
6 recommendations.

7 I want to focus on two really good
8 points. One is, again, echoing what I've
9 already heard, which is that the emphasis on
10 student test scores, that reducing it from 80
11 to 70 percent really doesn't do anything to
12 address the many, many concerns that we've
13 heard, the wide range of concerns. And I'm
14 not going to repeat them because they've been
15 already talked about both at the forums and
16 here.

17 But at both forums I attended, the
18 primary obstacles that I heard OSSE
19 representatives cite was that the thing that
20 was preventing them from considering
21 alternatives to standardized testing were the
22 lack of adequate stretches in knowledge about

1 how to collect alternate data. And I think
2 this is a really serious issue, and it's not
3 something that can be addressed quickly. And
4 so what it made me realize is that there's
5 really no way for OSSE to truly address the
6 concerns they've been hearing in the short
7 amount of time that they are giving themselves
8 to put this plan into place.

9 So my second point is related to
10 this, which is that I strongly urge all of you
11 to vote "no," unless OSSE agrees to take the
12 time necessary to, for instance, do the
13 research it would require. And I know one of
14 the recommendations was to have a team that
15 would advise -- give advice about, you know,
16 how to go forward. I think this should
17 actually be expanded into either a semi or a
18 permanent team that would offer research --

19 So I therefore urge you to recommend
20 that the date of completion for the plan be
21 deferred at least until September. But
22 really, if possible, I recommend putting off

1 implementation of the plan for at least a year
2 in order to put the level of research,
3 thought, creative energy, and effort that a
4 meaningful revision of this plan truly
5 requires. At the very least, I suggest that
6 OSSE include an amendment to the current plan
7 that would include a gradual reduction of the
8 weight tests have and the introduction of
9 alternative assessments over the next several
10 years. I would also recommend that the task
11 force proposed become a permanent research and
12 development team that would help create and
13 sustain the necessary support for alternative
14 assessment systems. Thank you.

15 MS. MECHNER: Hello. Good evening.
16 My name is Emily Mechner. I'm a Ward 1
17 resident, DC parent of three kids in
18 elementary and middle school, and LSAT member,
19 and I'm also an economist. I urge the SBOE to
20 reject the Superintendent's proposal, which I
21 believe was doomed by his failure at the
22 outset to coherently define the purpose of the

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1 measurement he was setting out to create.

2 The State Board's suggested
3 revisions, while slightly diminishing
4 overreliance on test scores, nonetheless -- I
5 apologize -- perpetuate the muddled overall
6 approach that OSSE began with, and will
7 satisfy nobody and serve no goal well. The
8 purpose of school assessment is to provide a
9 tool for evaluating the success of education
10 agencies and achieving educational outcomes.
11 How well does the school serve the educational
12 needs of its students?

13 Measurement is powerful. It guides
14 educational practice and strategy by providing
15 incentives for education professionals to
16 channel their energies for the greatest impact
17 on what is measured. As such, it is very
18 important to align your measurement tool with
19 the goals you intend. But once you start
20 measuring and generating data, people will
21 take the information you give them and try to
22 bend it to their own needs. Once you put out

1 ratings, people will try to read into those
2 ratings what they want to know. For example:
3 What's the best school to choose for my child?
4 That is a very different question.

5 It is a question so different, in
6 fact, that it is impossible to construct a
7 single univariate measure that answers both
8 questions. In key respects, the two have
9 opposite implications for what you want to
10 measure. For any parent confronting the
11 question of school choice, interesting things
12 to know are: What kind of kids and families
13 go to this school? Will my child fit in?
14 Will the school leaders understand my child's
15 needs? Will the teachers be attuned to my
16 child's challenges?

17 It's easy to understand why parents
18 would care about measures of the level of test
19 scores like proficiency rates. They will
20 similarly want information about demographics.
21 Fair-minded people who are interested in
22 constructing a rating to answer this kind of

1 school assessment question will disagree over
2 how much weight to put on test scores versus
3 socioemotional, intangibles, curriculum,
4 diversity. Indeed, the right weights may
5 differ from one child to another. The best
6 approach is to provide undigested information
7 about interesting school characteristics, and
8 let people apply their own weights in the
9 matter of evaluation.

10 However, the question from the point
11 of view of the educators and what they spend
12 their scarce time, effort, and money on is
13 quite different. Public schools take the
14 students they get, regardless of demographic
15 characteristics, with whatever challenges and
16 resources they bring, and must do their best
17 to promote the academic, socioemotional,
18 artistic, and moral growth of all, from
19 wherever they begin, to the next level. They
20 should be rewarded for being effective at
21 this. Why any weight at all should be given
22 to test score levels as opposed to growth is

1 unfair. Why should a school get credit for
2 the skills the child walks in the door with?
3 The interest of the state is in evaluating the
4 ability of a school to educate its students --
5 to produce growth.

6 Again, fair-minded people will
7 recognize that there is more -- I and many
8 people here argue a lot more -- to measuring
9 educational achievement than PARCC test
10 scores, and that there is some subtlety in
11 finding the right way to aggregate individual
12 growth results into a simple score or rating.
13 These are the key questions one must address
14 in formulating a fair and useful measure of
15 school performance. But it is incoherent to
16 try to split the difference between measuring
17 educational performance on the one hand and
18 school characteristics on the other hand by
19 combining elements of the two. The resulting
20 ratings would be less useful than any of its
21 components.

22 The effort that's been made thus far

1 by all involved has not been wasted. To align
2 the measure of school effectiveness with its
3 purpose, focus on measuring student growth.
4 Use test score growth in the areas of
5 educational achievement that can be measured
6 with standardized tests, and continue
7 developing valid and reliable instruments to
8 measure growth in areas that defy test-based
9 quantification. Be very thoughtful about how
10 you aggregate, and what those choices imply
11 about which children's achievements matters
12 more than who else's. For example,
13 overweighting the growth of those who cross an
14 arbitrary proficiency threshold, as OSSE's
15 original proposal does, should not survive
16 scrutiny.

17 Separately, think about the most
18 informative way to provide families making
19 their school choice decisions with the
20 information they want. But do not conflate
21 this objective with the other. And do not
22 allow the primary goal of school performance

1 evaluation, required by federal law, to be
2 subverted by other purposes. Thank you very
3 much.

4 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

5 Are there any questions from the
6 Board members? Mr. Jacobson.

7 MR. JACOBSON: Ms. Mechner?

8 MS. MECHNER: Yes.

9 MR. JACOBSON: Is that correct?

10 MS. MECHNER: Yes. Thank you.

11 MR. JACOBSON: Excellent. You talk
12 about growth. Is there a way to understand
13 how a student has grown without assessing the
14 student?

15 MS. MECHNER: I do mean to make
16 assessments and then measure the growth of
17 their performance on that assessment, whatever
18 it may be.

19 MR. JACOBSON: So you agree that
20 there needs to be assessment to understand a
21 student's growth?

22 MS. MECHNER: Absolutely.

1 MR. JACOBSON: Great. On the
2 proficiency point, I'm wondering if we could
3 talk about that for a second.

4 MS. MECHNER: Sure.

5 MR. JACOBSON: My understanding, from
6 my own experiences in college and employment
7 is that my employer expects me to be
8 proficient at a certain level to be able to
9 get a job and maintain that job. Or to get
10 into grad school and things like that, I have
11 to reach a certain threshold, which is a
12 proficiency level. Why would that not be
13 important for students to be at a certain
14 proficiency level?

15 MS. MECHNER: Well, it is. That's
16 what grades are for. Kids have transcripts.
17 But we're talking about something different,
18 which is to evaluate the school's performance
19 in helping students achieve -- not just
20 proficiency, but for kids who are already
21 proficient, to help them achieve beyond.

22 So when I disparage this

1 overweighting the kids who pass from below
2 proficient to just above proficient, so
3 passing that threshold, what that means is
4 that you have a kid who's -- say your
5 threshold is 50th percentile, right? -- you
6 have a kid who starts at the 49th percentile,
7 and they gain ten points -- ding, you pass 50.
8 You start -- consider a second child, who
9 starts out measured at 51 percentile, right?
10 So they're already proficient, and then they
11 gain ten points. What you're saying is these
12 two ten-percentage-point gains from somebody
13 who started out really close to the middle are
14 not really the same; one of them is much more
15 important than the other. I think that's a
16 real mistake.

17 MR. JACOBSON: Thank you for sharing
18 those thoughts and that experience. Very
19 helpful. Thank you, Ms. Mechner.

20 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: If there are no
21 more questions, thank you, panel for coming
22 out today.

1 MS. WATTENBERG: I have one. They
2 are out here, and I'm going to ask the
3 questions. So a couple of you mentioned the
4 idea that maybe it's plausible that we can't
5 have well polite metrics immediately, but that
6 one thing that could make a big difference
7 would be if the proposal included a very
8 serious process and time line and commitment
9 for how we would get to some new places -- for
10 example, how would we do high school growth,
11 or how could we measure school climate and for
12 how much, and how could we measure well-
13 rounded, and for how much. I'm just wondering
14 if there was anything more than anybody wants
15 to say on that.

16 MS. REILLY: I think the E.L. Haynes
17 proposal for a technical working group on a
18 piece of it, and the task force proposals of
19 the board, I think they have to be embedded in
20 order to actually happened, and that -- that
21 your proposal -- Emily -- on the -- it -- more
22 thought into how we divide these things.

1 And -- but I think what we had
2 concern with was the two years before it was
3 even implemented, so that there's no -- we
4 understand there has to be a pilot, and it has
5 to be well done -- but two years is too long.
6 And the process wasn't outlined. So that was
7 where the concerns were. Nobody wants to do
8 something in a hurry that's wrong. But we
9 have to take the time to get this right. So I
10 think you have waiting until September on it,
11 and you have a much shorter time line for the
12 technical working group or the task forces to
13 work, and then for the implementation to take
14 place.

15 MR. MARTEL: I think there also just
16 has to be a goal of knowing why students are
17 doing well, why other students are doing
18 poorly, and this should be shared with you --
19 I don't know if you receive that information -
20 - and with the public, rather than this goal
21 of collective evaluation of schools, close
22 them or, you know, impose some punitive

1 measures on them, and then as if that's going
2 to solve anything.

3 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. Any
4 more questions?

5 (No audible response)

6 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you again,
7 panel. Thank you for staying so late to
8 testify.

9 The next panel is Erin Thesing,
10 Jessica Papalia, Sarah Livingston, Elizabeth
11 Davis, An Almquist.

12 Is Nancy Huvendick here?

13 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: (cross talk)

14 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Karla Reid-Witt.

15 (Cross talk)

16 MR. HAYWORTH: We'll call you again.

17 (Cross talk)

18 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Sorry. Ms. --

19 MS. REID-WITT: Oh, I'm first. I'm
20 sorry.

21 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: No problem.

22 MS. REID-WITT: Hi. My name is Karla

1 Reid-Witt. I fully support all of the State
2 Board's recommendations regarding DC's ESSA
3 Accountability Plan. I have three kids. The
4 first and the last are eight years apart. My
5 youngest is not a ninth grader, my middle
6 child is a twelfth grader, my oldest is 22
7 years old. All three attended the same middle
8 school. Within the eight years between my
9 oldest entering middle school and my youngest
10 entering middle school, public education
11 completely changed. I blame overemphasis on
12 testing for this great downfall.

13 When my oldest entered public school,
14 I knew the school system was struggling, but I
15 thought, "We can pull this off." As I look
16 back, I liken public education to the Titanic.
17 When my oldest came along, he knew the ship
18 was struggling, but we were still afloat.
19 When my middle child came through middle
20 school, the boat was at 45 degrees. And when
21 my youngest hit middle school, we were fully
22 vertical; she was hanging on to the rails with

1 her legs dangling.

2 I don't think the downfall is
3 teachers. In fact, I know it isn't. I don't
4 think it's principals or school district
5 leaders. I think the downfall is behavior.
6 Behavior driven by an accountability system
7 based almost entirely on test scores. When
8 you design an accountability system, in effect
9 you create an adult behavior plan. Teachers,
10 principals, system leaders, and even parents
11 are trapped into behaving in ways which
12 optimize numerical outcomes favored by the
13 accountability system, whether or not they
14 feel their decisions are in the best interests
15 of students.

16 The current plan does not contemplate
17 this. Nor does it contemplate diversity
18 within racial, ethnic, geographic, disability,
19 or income groups. For example, the current
20 plan includes different growth rates goals
21 based on race. Let's pretend it's school year
22 2017-'18, and I am the school district leader.

1 According to the current version of the plan,
2 the percentage of black students who must
3 score Level 4 or higher in ELA is 25.2
4 percent. And the number of white students who
5 must score Level 4 or higher is 79.8 percent.
6 Black students in my school will easily meet
7 the 25.2 threshold goal. In fact, I could
8 push them far beyond that goal. However, a
9 number of my white students are struggling.
10 I'm worried that they won't meet the 79.8
11 percent white student goal. Where do you
12 think I'll focus my resources. How do you
13 think I'll behave?

14 We need a new plan. I would like
15 OSSE to wait to submit the plan until we can
16 get it right. We need to design a child-
17 centered plan focused on maximization of adult
18 behavior, not for the purpose of improving
19 test scores but rather for the purpose of
20 achieving good life outcomes for all students.

21 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

22 MS. LIVINGSTON: Hi. I'm going to

1 just let you know that my name is Sarah
2 Livingston. I'm a citizen of DC, and I live
3 in Ward 6. And I do want to quickly thank
4 everyone who's been involved in formulating
5 DC's State Accountability Plan, for the
6 enormous amount of work that's gone into it.
7 And I appreciate OSSE's responses to several
8 public comments, and I support the Board's ten
9 recommendations to improving the plan.

10 Regrettably, though, it appears to me
11 that we have come to yet another impasse
12 between the will of the people, as represented
13 by the elected board, and the will of the
14 unelected OSSE. Judging by how impasses have
15 been resolved in the past, such as on high
16 school credit flexibility last year, I am
17 deeply concerned that the current impasse will
18 be resolved by OSSE as it was before, by
19 overriding the will of the people and DC's
20 plan winding up not being one that is by and
21 for the people.

22 I believe these impasses and their

1 resolutions in favor of OSSE are rooted in the
2 relationship between the two State education
3 entities that was created in the Public
4 Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007,
5 whereby the elected body was made subordinate
6 to the appointed State Superintendent rather
7 than the other way around. In the states, the
8 state board of education, whether elected or
9 appointed by the governor, is a decision-
10 making body on state policy, and the state
11 superintendent, whether elected or appointed,
12 is subordinate to it, serving as the
13 implementer and administrator of the board's
14 decisions.

15 Fortunately, the writers of the
16 Constitution for the State of Washington, DC,
17 recognized that having an elected State Board
18 with only the power to advise the State
19 Superintendent does not conform to the
20 authority and structure of a State government,
21 and they made a correction in Article 2, Part
22 3, Section 3. That provision gives the Board

1 the responsibility of advising the government
2 on matters of State educational policy, and it
3 would make DC's State education governance,
4 structure, and process much more democratic.

5 The will of the people, as expressed
6 in their vote for Board members, and the
7 Board's representation of the people's voice,
8 would flow directly forward to the governor
9 rather than backward into an appointed office
10 that has the power to override and negate it.
11 We do not have to wait for Congress to admit
12 DC as a state to have the benefit of this
13 provision. We can have it now by calling on
14 the Council to amend the Para (phonetic) so
15 that the Board has the responsibility for
16 advising the mayor.

17 To that end, I testified to the
18 Committee on Government Operations week before
19 last that Para should be amended to allow this
20 provision of the State Constitution to be
21 implemented now. I encourage everyone who
22 feels cheated by having a vote for

1 representatives that means next to nothing,
2 and who feels that it is highly hypocritical
3 for DC to demand statehood as the surest way
4 to gain full democratic rights while its own
5 laws insult and prevent full democratic self-
6 determination on education matters to also
7 speak up. The provision is by no means a
8 cure-all for everything that ails democratic
9 governing of education in DC, but it is a step
10 in the direction of restoring meaning to the
11 vote that millions of Americans have died to
12 protect or to obtain, for the Board to play a
13 more State-like role in education governance,
14 for the mayor to have the benefit of the
15 people's voice and ongoing right through the
16 Board, and for the conditions that lead to
17 impasses like the one we're facing now to
18 finally be cleared out from our government's
19 operations, leaving it both more democratic
20 and efficient.

21 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

22 MS. DAVIS: Thank you. Good evening.

1 I'm Elizabeth Davis, a Ward 5 resident and
2 president of the Washington Teacher's Union.
3 And of course, I have axed my testimony by
4 about one-half, because I've heard everything
5 that I wanted to say, said here, and I'm
6 excited about it.

7 One of the things that our members
8 encouraged me to speak to was, of course, the
9 great weight that this plan has given to
10 testing. And of course, if states choose
11 robust services (phonetic), they have school
12 climate as their school quality indicator --
13 something that we have not talked enough about
14 -- they can shift schools' attention from
15 raising test scores to making changes that
16 improve school climate, teaching, and student
17 learning.

18 In addition, such a climate survey
19 would provide invaluable information to
20 parents about the environment and learning
21 conditions of each school, to help them choose
22 the best school for the children. DC

1 educators and parents are excited about the
2 opportunities ESSA offers our school district
3 to select school climate measures to enhance
4 school accountability, school improvement, and
5 parent choice. However OSSE's school
6 accountability proposal to give standardized
7 test scores 80 percent of an elementary
8 school's overall rating, with there remaining
9 20 percent primarily on attendance and
10 reenrollment rates, give zero weight to
11 comprehensive school climate measures that are
12 known to help schools improve -- by so doing,
13 OSSE's draft gives zero percent weight to
14 comprehensive school climate measures.

15 Under the current OSSE accountability
16 proposal, there is no credit for growth in our
17 schools in this proposal, and this is a
18 serious problem for educators. Parents and
19 teachers have urged OSSE and the State Board
20 of Ed. to reduce the weight of test scores to
21 the lowest percent legally allowed -- around
22 55 percent for elementary grades and less for

1 high schools. Giving equal weight and rating
2 to proficiency and growth unfairly favors
3 schools in high-income areas, where the vast
4 majority of students have family and economic
5 advantages and are proficient. Moreover, it
6 unfairly penalizes schools in low-income
7 areas, where the vast majority of students are
8 often disadvantaged in their low proficiency.

9 OSSE's proposal needs to be revised
10 to give more weight to the test score
11 indicators to growth and to proficiency -- for
12 example, giving 40 percent of total weight to
13 growth and 10 percent to proficiency. Parents
14 and the 4,800 teachers -- those who work
15 closest with students on a daily basis --
16 understand that reducing measurements for
17 school quality has had a negative impact on
18 learning environments. It has grossly failed
19 to close the achievement or opportunity gap,
20 and it has contributed largely to the growing
21 educational disparities in our school
22 district.

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1 What we hold schools accountable to
2 is what gets prioritized in our students' day-
3 to-day life. If 80 percent of a school's
4 accountability measure is based on test
5 scores, than that is what the vast majority of
6 the time will be spent on. When we measure
7 academic performance solely on proficiency,
8 we're negating the important work that schools
9 are doing with students who enter
10 significantly below grade level.

11 ESSA implementation and consequences
12 have effects on our students' overall
13 educational experience. When high-stakes
14 accountability measures are tied to student
15 performance without adequate school support,
16 schools that serve our highest-needs students
17 will have trouble maintaining staff and
18 resources. ESSA regulations allow OSSE to
19 submit an accountability plan by either
20 April 3rd or September 18th, yet OSSE is
21 trying to submit the plan by April 3rd. This
22 rushed schedule undermines the ability of

1 educational stakeholders to collaborative on
2 developing robust school accountability
3 measures that can help schools improve, and
4 would severely restrict the new chancellor's
5 capacity to close the achievement gap.

6 By August 2017 the task force, that
7 we have encouraged in a current letter to the
8 State Board members, basically would serve as
9 a pilot, which could be conducted in the fall,
10 which would allow time for revision to the
11 plan and also time to administer an
12 accountability to spring of 2018. The way
13 OSSE would be able to publicly report the
14 results for ratings before the beginning of
15 the 2018-'19 school year, as required by
16 Department of Ed., would be also satisfied.
17 This task force would advise what best weights
18 to give to the school climate and other
19 indicators of success in OSSE's January 30th
20 Draft State Plan.

21 In summary, OSSE should heavily
22 reduce the weight of test scores in school

1 ratings, replace to reduce with weight for
2 robust school climate measures within test
3 scores, shift much more weight to growth and
4 deficiency. Defer submitting an
5 accountability proposal to DOE until
6 September 18th, and create an advisory task
7 force representing all key stakeholders --
8 DCPS, the union teachers, charter school
9 stakeholders, and others -- to collaborate
10 with OSSE on advising its accountability plan.

11 If we fail to take advantage of every
12 opportunity ESSA offers to fix our schools,
13 then we've basically failed our children. The
14 4,800 members of the Washington Teachers'
15 Union -- again, those I respect most in terms
16 of having a thought about what improves
17 achievement, what counts for school success --
18 the teachers that are now working with our
19 kids on a daily basis urge you to send this
20 plan back for revision, and until they have --
21 the community's had an opportunity to advise,
22 revise, and also have input from other

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1 stakeholders that have not had a chance to
2 weigh in. Thank you. And I am available to
3 answer any questions any of you may have.

4 MS. THESIS: Good evening. My name
5 is Erin Thesing. I am a Ward 1 resident and
6 also a fifth-grade teacher at Lowry Elementary
7 School. I also will try to trim things based
8 on hearing repeats tonight. But I come from
9 having a range of diverse schools, including a
10 no-excuses turnaround charter school, a
11 project-based learning charter school, and now
12 a traditional DCPS elementary school. And I
13 think my experience along the way has really
14 allowed me to meet people from across the
15 spectrum and -- teachers, parents, school
16 leaders, community members -- I think we all
17 agree that, you know, we're all coming here
18 wanting good schools for our students.

19 For me, though, that's why I'm asking
20 you to vote "no" on the OSSE -- the proposed
21 State Accountability Plan. When PARCC scores
22 are the primary metric of school success, less

1 time is reserved for useful assessment and
2 meaningful learning experiences. Instead,
3 test prep occupies classroom and planning
4 time. Where once teachers gathered to study
5 student writing and math problem-solving to
6 craft teaching points together, we now are
7 dedicating meetings every week for -- over how
8 we can move students a few percentage points
9 on the PARCC and reviewing the most recent
10 predictive standardized test data.

11 Our students feel it even acutely.
12 This year during predictive assessments,
13 computers shut down midtest. Essays that were
14 painstakingly typed finger by finger --
15 suddenly deleted. Last year my second-grade
16 class trackpads and laptops proved difficult
17 to use by seven-year-old fingers that tried to
18 drag-and-drop a ruler to measure an apple on
19 the screen. And then our children cried, and
20 some even banged their heads against desk,
21 saying hurtful things about themselves. All
22 of this for a test that provides only, really,

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1 a small snapshot of what our children can do.

2 Teachers know that good teaching
3 requires useful assessments that show us what
4 our children can do and what we need to teach
5 next. When I taught second grade, I created
6 an assessment in which I observed my second
7 graders use actual rulers and meter sticks,
8 not one they had to drag across a computer
9 screen, to measure the distance of a real toy
10 car, and to discuss their mathematical process
11 and thinking. This revealed their process,
12 not just their answer. And I could see when
13 they left a gap between the ruler when
14 interrating it, or look at the wrong side and
15 report it centimeters instead of inches, and I
16 knew exactly what to teach next.

17 This year my fifth-graders read
18 research studies and newspaper and journal
19 articles to research the benefits and
20 consequences of serving chocolate milk in our
21 school's cafeterias, and they formed
22 arguments, developed thesis statements, found

1 evidence to support their reasons, and
2 acknowledged and rebutted counterarguments.
3 They then organized this information to
4 present panel presentations, much like we're
5 having here tonight, to our school
6 administrators, the PTA, cafeteria staff, and
7 central office nutrition administration team -
8 - buttoning up their school uniform shirts to
9 the top collar and confidently making their
10 case.

11 These are the same students who, a
12 week before, cried during standardized
13 testing, and being that they walked away from
14 this assessment, patting each other on the
15 back, saying, "I had no idea we could do that.
16 We sounded so smart!" And they did. Using a
17 rubric, I then evaluated their work against
18 the Common Core Standards, and knew exactly
19 what to do next to strengthen their argument
20 writing.

21 Creating rigorous assessments like
22 these that ask students to synthesize skills

1 is the first step in our planning process as
2 teachers. When we backwards-plan, we ask:
3 How will we know if our students can do this?
4 And then, what skills do we need to teach so
5 they can do it? But when a computer-based
6 test like the PARCC is the final assessment,
7 we're going to try to ask to teach the skills
8 for that teach.

9 School accountability measures need
10 to make room for assessments that provide
11 useful information for parents and teachers to
12 know how to best support their children. A
13 PARCC score alone does not do this. Relying
14 on PARCC as our primary measure of school
15 success is the convent choice. Creating
16 useful and comprehensive assessments that
17 truly measures a student's growth and
18 achievement is challenging work, but that's
19 essential to good teaching and good schools.

20 I urge you to vote no to the proposed
21 plan because it places too much weight on
22 standardized testing, and it will leave little

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1 room for teachers to create useful assessments
2 that will actually guide student learning.
3 Thank you.

4 MS. PAPALIA: Hi. My name is Jessie
5 Papalia. I'm a resident of Ward 1 and a
6 third-grade teacher at Capitol City Public
7 Charter School in Ward 4. I want to start out
8 by saying thank you to the State Board for
9 listening and responding to our -- to public
10 feedback on ESSA. And I'm here to request as
11 well that you vote "no" on the OSSE proposal
12 unless the weight of testing in schools is
13 reduced.

14 I think one thing we can all agree on
15 is our end goal is a high-quality education
16 for every student in DC. Everyone -- OSSE,
17 State Board, teachers -- envelope agrees on
18 that -- family members. To your question is:
19 How much do PARCC scores reveal about the
20 quality of education that the school is
21 providing? How much does technological access
22 and capability get tests by the PARCC? I

1 teach the earliest grade that is tested by the
2 PARCC, and they're for the youngest students
3 who are assessed using standardized testing.

4 For my students, the PARCC tests many
5 things. The PARCC tests how quickly a student
6 can type. It tests whether an eight-year-old
7 has the stamina to complete more than a dozen
8 complexly worded multistep math problems in 60
9 minutes. It also tests whether a student
10 knows how to use a touch pad, similar to
11 Erin's experience to drag-and-drop items.
12 PARCC does not just test whether a student has
13 mastered a standard. We have so many
14 assessments that we do all of the time. We
15 have school-based assessments.

16 We have assessments used from really
17 rigorous curriculum, like EngageNY. We have
18 assessments that are constantly being used,
19 but they are not the PARCC. And yet when we
20 look at PARCC scores, they're not aligning
21 consistently. This is something teachers have
22 found again and again, and I think the

1 question really is: Is PARCC an accurate
2 measure of what a student knows? We know that
3 if we base 80 percent evaluation of a score on
4 inaccurate data, we're going to have a serious
5 issue. If we base effectiveness of teachers -
6 - if we base it on inaccurate data, we will
7 lose great teachers, and we already are.

8 So I think my question for today
9 really is about: Do we know how accurate this
10 data really is? And we -- and basing 80
11 percent of our school evaluation on something
12 that perhaps is not aligning to what teachers
13 are seeing every single day is a real concern
14 for educators. And this is what I've heard
15 from dozens of educators across the board.

16 I am a part of a group of educators
17 and community members in Ward 1, several of
18 whom are here today, and we've been meeting to
19 discuss this issue. I would like to invite
20 any Board member who would like the experience
21 of taking a PARCC practice test and discussing
22 it with us to join us for our next meeting on

1 April 4th. We feel the experience of taking
2 the test itself will help us, as well as
3 anyone who join us, to become better-informed
4 citizens on this issue.

5 Finally, in closing, I just want to
6 say DC really must be a -- and can be, and
7 should be, a model for this country in
8 choosing what is right and not what is easy.
9 It is easy and quick to look solely at
10 standardized testing to evaluate a school. It
11 is much harder and more time consuming to
12 create a more accurate evaluation system that
13 assesses the many factors that create a high-
14 quality school. We really must ask ourself if
15 the PARCC does that, or at least contributes
16 80 percent of that evaluation. We owe it to
17 the kids of this city to accurately evaluate
18 their school, so we can ensure all students
19 receive a high-quality education. Thank you.

20 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Again, thank
21 you, panel, for testifying.

22 Are there any questions from our

1 board members?

2 MR. WEEDON: I'd be remiss if I
3 didn't ask Ms. Thesing a couple of questions
4 my son found out you were in one of our last--
5 oh-- She ran with me to the Capitol and back,
6 and she pushed me so hard. So I'm going to
7 push you a little bit. First you talked a
8 little bit about the amount of time that you
9 spend in test prep. How much of your day or
10 the students -- or the students in a day are
11 on test prep?

12 MS. THESIS: Well, I think I would
13 probably --

14 MS. WEEDON: And I know it varies a
15 little bit, but --

16 MS. THESIS: Sure. I think depending
17 on what -- the time of year, what we're doing
18 -- schools are giving -- and I can only speak
19 from my experience from working in two DC
20 schools -- but many of the schools were using
21 predictive assessments throughout the year to
22 see how our students would perform on PARCC.

1 And DCPS -- many DCPS schools uses the ANAT
2 (phonetic). Other schools use MAP. And it --
3 I can't even -- I'm just -- I'm like blanking
4 out even more, because I only teach ELA, but
5 they're even more than they're using during
6 math as well. We're getting those assessment
7 at least like almost every six weeks.

8 And so what we're doing is students
9 are sitting down and taking a standardized
10 test in math, in ELA, you know, during these
11 cycles. And then, after the cycle, we are
12 looking at the data, assessing the data,
13 having planning meetings to plan intervention
14 groups, planning -- reteach tests -- excuse me
15 -- reteach lessons based on the ANAT data.
16 Most recently the one I gave wasn't aligned to
17 the unit we had just finished. And so the
18 ANAT assessment that I gave was something I
19 was teaching in -- six weeks later. And so
20 the assessment was something we hadn't even --
21 was content we hadn't taught yet. And then
22 I'm planning reteach lessons on an assessment

1 for content that hasn't been taught yet.

2 And so time is going into looking at
3 a data for those predictive assessments a lot.
4 And then this week I'm starting my writing
5 PARCC test prep for the assessment in May.

6 MR. WEEDON: All right. And the
7 reason I want to ask is that we're in this
8 debate about how do we get to the outcome as
9 we want in policy versus practice. And I
10 think what I've heard time and time from
11 teachers is -- and we heard it today -- what's
12 measured is what we do.

13 MS. THESIS: Uh-huh (affirmative).

14 MR. WEEDON: So when you measure with
15 the test date, we put a lot of time towards
16 this date, at the neglect of the other things
17 that I truly believe pulsates the work. And
18 we can -- about taking the test. It's
19 important. The PARCC test is important to
20 produce kids who are efficient. I'm over my
21 time, but then one of my colleagues granted a
22 little bit of extra time. I'd love to get

1 your thoughts on how we can have project-based
2 learning that is disaggregated (sic) --
3 disaggregatable (sic) across demographics? And
4 how would you ensure standards across the city
5 so that something like that could truly be
6 used in an accountability system. I'm not
7 necessarily convinced it can be.

8 MS. DAVIS: It has been, and they're
9 all standards that are aligned with project-
10 based learning. They're applied learning
11 standards. And of course, it requires
12 multiple ways of measuring achievement. And
13 of course, we have -- you've heard here
14 repeatedly that students learn in multiple
15 ways, but we are assessing what they learn in
16 one way. So there are school districts that
17 have successfully used standards and
18 evaluation tools. Portfolio Exhibition is one
19 example, but there are many that have been
20 successfully used by school districts in other
21 parts of the country. Seattle, Washington, is
22 one that comes to mind that's been doing it

1 for years. It's just a matter of having the
2 will to decide that we have more than one way
3 of measuring students' success.

4 MS. THESIS: And if I may, at the
5 school I taught at previously, we used
6 Portfolio-based assessments for our students
7 for the entire school year that students at
8 conferences at the end of the year. We also
9 used teacher-created rubrics and school-based
10 rubric for assessing all that. And the math
11 experience that I described was something that
12 a committee of teachers worked on for over
13 three years developing those assessments to
14 align with Common Core when we adopted the
15 Common Core Standards, to create tasks that
16 were Common Core-aligned and were -- we had a
17 group of teachers from pre-K through eighth
18 grade working on just the elementary
19 assessments to create that. But that was then
20 -- you know, then our schools were assessments
21 that weren't excepted under OSSE to be
22 considered, since that's when we had to then

1 adopt assessments like the math in order to
2 have a standardized assessment that was
3 acceptable under federal law.

4 MS. WATTENBERG: So one change from
5 the previous OSSE draft to this one is that
6 the weight on testing did drop from 80 percent
7 to, in effect, 74 percent in Years 1 and 2,
8 and then down to 70 percent in Year 3. In
9 Years 1 and 2, all of the points that are
10 taken away from testing are put towards
11 attendance and reenrollment, and the final
12 year - that is true, that 5 points, arithmetic
13 is right.

14 One of the arguments that we heard
15 all the way through this process and tonight
16 was that one reason for dropping the weight on
17 testing is to drop the weight on testing, for
18 all the reasons that people discussed. The
19 other reason to drop the weight is to make
20 room for a much richer, more appropriate,
21 accurate assessments metrics. And so my
22 question is really to anybody.

1 To what extent do you think the
2 increased weight on attendance and
3 reenrollment is a useful way of measuring
4 school climate, which I know we're all
5 interested in? And also whether or not it --
6 well, whether we'd be -- whether it would have
7 incentive the schools in a good direction,
8 which is another purpose of our school
9 accountability system. Anybody want to --?

10 MS. DAVIS: Sure. And I do
11 appreciate the -- having the reduction in the
12 weight given the test. However, giving that
13 to attendance and enrollment, I do not
14 consider that the answer. I think that there
15 are some other indicators that have not even
16 been discussed yet that we need to explore.
17 The plan needs to look at some of the other
18 climate indicators that have been used that
19 not only indicate achievement, but it also
20 lends itself to helping schools determine
21 where students are weak, where any part of a
22 school's academic is weak -- need assistance.

1 As we recommended to Superintendent
2 Kang and to the mayor -- a school climate
3 indicator that would dig much deeper than the
4 superficial ones that's some of the ones that
5 I reviewed that are basically Likert scales
6 that don't give you a lot of information below
7 the surface. But we have recommended a
8 climate indicator that would allow students,
9 parents, teachers, administrators, community,
10 support staff to weigh in on. And it actually
11 -- in analyzing the data that is collected
12 from such indicators, it actually will help
13 schools to determine what areas they need to
14 improve in.

15 But it will also identify other areas
16 where students show achievements that we don't
17 consider or measure. Another -- actually
18 several people spoke ahead of me that talked
19 about the importance of recognizing successes
20 that teachers have made with students and that
21 students make who are not proficiency, and how
22 in the past, because our focus has been on the

1 test score and proficiency, that we basically
2 have ignored successes of students and
3 teachers and schools, which has led to a lot
4 of frustration -- high teacher turnover, low
5 morale. And student frustration, because it
6 basically says to students and schools, that
7 even though you've moved on the scale, we
8 don't care. It doesn't mean anything. It's
9 not worth anything, unless you're proficient.

10 And some of -- one of you asked
11 earlier about proficiency versus growth.
12 Proficiency is unrealistic if we are looking
13 at some of those issues that students come to
14 school with -- issues around poverty, because
15 poverty does matter. And we can't ignore
16 that. School climate indicators that dig
17 deeper than just what we're accustomed to
18 seeing is important, and we need to explore
19 what some of those are. Taking a look at
20 other measures of success other than a PARCC
21 test on a computer that most schools don't
22 even have, which has basically frustrated

1 students. Some of them are actually
2 protesting by simply not caring. They
3 purposely just come and bubble in any answer.

4 So there are so many obstacles that
5 get in the way of learning -- the focus on
6 testing and less focus on instruction. I
7 taught for 40 years. And so I think if
8 teachers are allowed more time to teach the
9 content in ways that students learn, we will
10 see the successes that we're looking for.

11 MS. REID-WITT: I think that both
12 those measures disproportionately impact
13 schools with high churn -- things that the
14 teachers and the principals have no control
15 over. In my testimony I talked about
16 behavior. I think that we have developed a
17 school choice system that impacts parent
18 behavior. And parents move schools -- I mean
19 move kids around a lot more than they used to.
20 And I don't think -- you know, reenrollment's
21 a good idea. When I first read reenrollment,
22 I was thinking in terms of schools which sort

1 of harass kids out -- like you should take
2 care of the kids so they come back. But
3 because we have so much school choice, and
4 because our parents don't invest in our
5 schools because of that, even kids that are
6 doing well where, you know, you don't have
7 issues of mobility, people are moving kids
8 from school to school. And so I don't think
9 you should charge schools for that.

10 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

11 Mr. Jacobson:

12 MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam
13 President. I'm going to take a little license
14 here. And while I appreciate everyone's
15 testimony -- I've listened to it very
16 carefully -- Ms. Livingston, you're such a
17 terrific advocate for yourself and for this
18 Board, and I can't thank you enough. Even
19 though we disagree, found you very agreeable,
20 so thank you for being a part of this process.
21 And thank you all the witnesses.

22 I wanted to -- very quickly in the

1 next 90 seconds or so. We talk about churn
2 and teacher turnover. Is teacher retention an
3 important accountability measure to see that
4 as school is successful and accountable? And
5 if each of you could just do a quick "yes" or
6 "no." I know this could be a really --
7 there's a lot of meat on this bone.

8 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes, there is.

9 MR. JACOBSON: If possible, I'd love
10 to start on my left and just have everyone
11 take ten seconds.

12 MS. REID-WITT: Okay. My testimony,
13 I talked about the difference over the last
14 eight years between when my oldest entered the
15 middle school and my youngest didn't. They
16 happened to have attended a school that had
17 historically had teachers that had been there
18 a long time. And the performance of the
19 school was degraded tremendously when they
20 lost all the veteran teachers and then could
21 not sustain the new teachers.

22 MR. JACOBSON: Thank you.

1 Ms. Livingston?

2 MS. LIVINGSTON: Yes.

3 MR. JACOBSON: Thank you.

4 Ms. Davis?

5 MS. DAVIS: Yes. The instability
6 that this -- is created by teacher turnover,
7 it wreaks havoc on students, especially a lot
8 of the students that come to schools that are
9 fragile and come from unstable communities.
10 Instability in schools is something that
11 absolutely does not work well for them.

12 MR. JACOBSON: Thank you.

13 Ms. Thesing?

14 MS. THESING: Yes. I -- just to say
15 that trusting relationships are at the center,
16 I think, of a strong culture, and retaining
17 both teachers and students, and that requires
18 people being there.

19 MR. JACOBSON: Thank you.

20 Ms. Papalia?

21 MS. PAPALIA: Yes, definitely. And I
22 think one of the things that isn't talked

1 about as much is when -- new teachers -- we
2 talk a lot about how hard of a time it is to
3 be a first-year teacher and how hard that is.
4 But when there's so many new teachers, the
5 teachers who are not new have the bulk of the
6 work on them. So not only does it put
7 pressure on the new teachers who don't have a
8 full idea of a mastery of their profession
9 yet, but it also puts so much pressure on the
10 people who have been there. And that creates
11 turnover both among veteran and short-term
12 teachers in school, really creating a toxic
13 environment for retention.

14 MR. JACOBSON: Thank you-all all so
15 much for coming and for being brief. Thank
16 you.

17 (Cross talk)

18 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All right. Sara
19 Stone, Erica Russell, Dana Hall, Allyson
20 Brown, Sheila Carr, An Almquist, Nancy
21 Huvendick.

22 (Cross talk)

1 MS. BROWN: Greetings, State Board of
2 Education members and State Superintendent.
3 My name is Allyson Criner Brown. I'm the
4 associate director of Teaching for Change, a
5 DC-based nonprofit whose mission is building
6 social justice starting in the classroom. I'm
7 also a resident of Ward 7, a voter, and a
8 parent of an incoming pre-K-3 student.

9 So Teaching for Change, for the past
10 75 years, has been working here in Washington,
11 DC. Our work involves directly supporting and
12 engaging with educators, parents, and schools
13 in all eight wards. Additionally, our staff
14 represents parents and voters in Wards 1, 3,
15 4, 5, 7, and 8, as advocates for education who
16 -- for equity in education, who recognize the
17 damage that high-stakes standardized testing
18 has inflicted on teaching and student
19 learning, both locally and nationally.

20 And as a member of the Coalition for
21 DC Public Schools and Communities, I'm going
22 to comment on the State Board's

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1 recommendations for the improvement of
2 accountability, and OSSE's revised
3 Accountability Plan released March 14th --
4 noteworthy that it was one day ago.

5 So I'm going to sort of frame this by
6 commenting on several strengths of the State
7 Board recommendations which, really, we
8 applaud, and just showed an incredible amount
9 of listening to the community and the concerns
10 that have been echoed across all eight wards.
11 And then particularly those are not addressed
12 in our present, and the revised accountability
13 plan.

14 First, we echo one of the State
15 Board's comments that, quote, we are not
16 satisfied with defining the measures of school
17 accountability based on the measures that
18 happen to exist now in the current plan. The
19 shift from 80 percent dependence on PARCC
20 scores to 70 percent for elementary and middle
21 schools still places far too much emphasis on
22 a single high-stakes standardized test that

1 only assess English, language arts, and math.
2 At the high school level, the academic
3 achievement measures are also narrowed and
4 weighted too much.

5 We do support the call to expand the
6 weight of nontest factors in K-8, at least
7 with -- if not immediately, at least within
8 two to three years.

9 Second, we deem the school
10 environment measures inadequate and too
11 heavily focused on attendance, which can be
12 impacted by many factors outside of the
13 school's control and is not necessarily
14 indicative of the learning environment in the
15 school. The weight of attendance is too high,
16 and the access and opportunity -- or i.e., the
17 well-rounded education weight is too low.

18 The troubling absence of subjects
19 outside of ELA and math and academic
20 achievement and growth means that the school
21 environment measures must incorporate these
22 and other critical components of a well-

1 rounded education. This must be addressed at
2 all levels. Commitment toward a well-rounded
3 education must be at the forefront of our
4 discussions and decisions about how to nurture
5 college, career-ready, and civic-minded young
6 people in the District of Columbia.

7 We cannot overstate that the revised
8 weight of 70 percent PARCC, MAP, and ELA
9 scores, even with the slightly favoring of
10 growth over proficiency, leaves inadequate
11 room for a well-rounded education.

12 Regarding the star rating system, we
13 reject OSSE's conclusion to utilize one
14 overall rating with a supplemented school
15 report card. We are supposed to be moving
16 away from the paradigm of good and bad
17 schools, but the star rating will continue us
18 on that track. As a parent who recently and
19 painstakingly went through the school lottery
20 process and a dozen open houses, I can tell
21 you the single score does a true disservice to
22 many schools and families. The current

1 singular rankings that may seem to offer
2 clarity on the OSSE, DCPS, and My School DC
3 websites, in fact, do not. The ranking simply
4 serves as an initial screening to many
5 parents. Please respect that parents,
6 students, and community members are capable of
7 processing multiple ratings, or dashboards,
8 and want that information up front.

9 We support, with some reservation,
10 mainly for the need for clarity, the State
11 Board's suggestion to replace PARCC scores
12 with ACCESS growth for ELL students. The
13 matter should be revisited by one or more of
14 the task forces suggested by the State Board
15 with heavy input from ELL educators. We also
16 believe that insofar as possible under federal
17 law, students with severe cognitive impediment
18 should not be required to take the PARCC test.

19 Finally, with the absence of interim
20 measures for desirable accountability
21 indicators that are not yet available --
22 namely, comprehensive school environment

1 assessments, high school growth measures, and
2 an index of indicators of well-rounded
3 education -- it is imperative that -- and you-
4 all will have copies. I emailed the print
5 copies of this.

6 So one, in the final ESSA
7 Accountability Plan, OSSE incorporates the
8 State Board's recommendations to establish a
9 task force to explore these measures not yet
10 available. Two, OSSE establishes an
11 additional task force to study the
12 implementation and effects of testing in DC
13 schools, as suggested by the State Board,
14 including impacts on and options for ELL
15 students. And three, OSSE establishes clear
16 and public deadlines for reports on progress
17 towards not-yet-available measures, drafts
18 being made available, and adequate time for
19 public input. Finally, days for pilot and/or
20 initial implementation.

21 My last comment, I will modify a line
22 from the State Board's recommendations. If

1 simulations indicate that the rating of
2 individual schools does not change by virtue
3 of this new accountability plan, it
4 nonetheless makes sense to make sure that
5 every school will be held accountable to
6 providing each student in the district with a
7 well-rounded education. Thank you for the
8 opportunity to testify.

9 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

10 Any questions from board members?

11 (No audible response)

12 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. Williams?

13 MR. WILLIAMS: (No audible response)

14 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Ms. Carter?

15 MS. CARTER: No.

16 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Ms. Wattenberg?

17 MS. WATTENBERG: I was just going to
18 say thank you very, very much.

19 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr Jacobson?

20 Thank you very much for your time
21 today. Seeing no further questions for this
22 panel, you are excused.

1 And seeing no further witnesses, I
2 want to thank all of our visitors today for
3 their input and for their patience during this
4 lengthy hearing. Entertain a motion for
5 adjournment.

6 BOARD MEMBER: So moved.

7 BOARD MEMBER: Second.

8 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: The meeting is
9 adjourned.

10 MEETING ADJOURNED

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