

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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WEDNESDAY
MARCH 16, 2016

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

JACK JACOBSON, President, Ward 2
KAREN WILLIAMS, Vice-President, Ward 7
RUTH WATTENBERG, Ward 3
KAMILI ANDERSON, Ward 4 *
MARY LORD, At Large
MARK JONES, Ward 5
TIERRA JOLLY, Ward 8
LAURA WILSON PHELAN, Ward 1
JOE WEEDON, Ward 6

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

HANSEUL KANG, State Superintendent
JOHN-PAUL HAYWORTH, Executive Director

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

BRIAN CONTRERAS

*present via teleconference

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

5:35 p.m.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Good afternoon.

The time is now 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 16th, 2016, and this public meeting of the District of Columbia State Board of Education is now called to order.

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

MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Jacobson.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Present.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Williams.

VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Present.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Lord. Ms. Lord.

Ms. Wilson Phelan.

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Present.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Wattenberg. Ms.

Wattenberg. Ms. Anderson. Ms. Anderson. Mr.

Jones. Mr. Jones. Mr. Weedon.

MEMBER WEEDON: Present.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Jolly.

MEMBER JOLLY: Present.

1 MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Contreras.

2 MEMBER CONTRERAS: Present.

3 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Whittington. Ms.
4 Whittington. Mr. President, you have a quorum.

5 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, and
6 for the record, Ms. Lord and Ms. Wattenberg are
7 en route, but due to metro, they are stuck in
8 traffic. Ms. Anderson will be joining us via
9 telephone. We'll have to authorize an electronic
10 vote for her, at the appropriate time.

11 A quorum has been determined and the
12 State Board will now proceed with the business
13 portion of our meeting.

14 Members, we have a draft agenda before
15 us. Are there corrections or additions?

16 There being no further -- there being
17 no corrections or additions, I would entertain a
18 motion to approve the agenda.

19 VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: So moved.

20 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Moved by Ms.
21 Williams. Is there a second?

22 MEMBER JOLLY: Second.

1 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Second by Ms.
2 Jolly. The motion being properly moved and
3 seconded, all in favor, please say aye.

4 (Chorus of aye.)

5 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Any opposed? The
6 motion is approved.

7 Next on our agenda is approval of the
8 minutes for the March 2nd, 2016 working session.
9 Are there corrections or additions to the
10 minutes?

11 Hearing none, I would entertain a
12 motion to approve the minutes.

13 MEMBER WEEDON: So moved.

14 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Moved by Mr.
15 Weedon. Is there a second?

16 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Second.

17 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Second by Ms.
18 Wilson Phelan. The motion being properly moved
19 and seconded, I'll ask for the ayes and nays.
20 All in favor, please say aye.

21 (Chorus of aye.)

22 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Any opposed? The

1 motion is approved. Let the record reflect Ms.
2 Wattenberg is also in attendance.

3 Good evening. My name is Jack
4 Jacobson, and I am the President and Ward 2
5 representative of the State Board of Education.

6 On behalf of the Members of the
7 District of Columbia State Board of Education, I
8 want to welcome you, guests and our viewing
9 public, to our Wednesday, March 16th, 2016 public
10 meeting.

11 The State Board holds its regularly
12 scheduled meetings on the third Wednesday of
13 every month, here in the Old Council Chambers at
14 441 4th Street, Northwest.

15 The Members of the State Board of
16 Education welcome your participation and your
17 support in our efforts to improve education in
18 the Nation's Capital.

19 Tonight's agenda includes a vote on
20 regulations that would introduce credit
21 flexibility for the District's high school
22 students. These regulations are the result of

1 hard work by the State Board's high school credit
2 flexibility task force, led by my Ward 1
3 colleague, Ms. Laura Wilson Phelan. She did an
4 exemplary job.

5 We will also be hearing from the
6 Office of the Deputy Mayor of Education about
7 actions to combat truancy in the District.

8 We're hearing from the Deputy Mayor's
9 Office in response to an inquiry the State Board
10 made in January, regarding its outstanding items
11 requested by the State Board's April 2015 report
12 titled "Challenges Associated with Implementation
13 of the District of Columbia's New Compulsory
14 Attendance Laws and Recommendations for
15 Addressing Them".

16 As my colleagues on the dais know,
17 that report was written by our truancy committee,
18 led by our Ward 4 Member Kamili Anderson.

19 I'm looking forward to hearing more
20 about the state of truancy in D.C., and what has
21 led -- what has been done to better the system
22 since last year.

1 We will also hear tonight from two
2 middle school teachers, who will be giving the
3 State Board their perspective on the proposed
4 health education standards.

5 Our colleagues at OSSE have been
6 holding sessions with LEA leaders and teachers
7 since the release of the proposed standards, and
8 I am eager to get a first-hand account of how the
9 standards will impact students and teachers in
10 the classroom.

11 I also want to note that the Board and
12 the Young Women's Project will be hosting a
13 second student Town Hall on the proposed
14 standards tomorrow, March 17th from 5:00 p.m. to
15 7:00 p.m. at the Young Women's Project offices at
16 2217 14th Street, Northwest, second floor.

17 As I said last month, the State Board
18 is committed to transparency and open discussion.
19 I am glad to see that the State Board and OSSE
20 have been able to host so many opportunities for
21 comment and discussion on the new standards.

22 Last, but certainly not least, the

1 State Board will be receiving comment from three
2 experts to kick off its work, related to the new
3 Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, the
4 replacement for No Child Left Behind.

5 As many in the public know, No Child
6 Left Behind was a federal law that prescribed
7 many conditions that states needed to follow in
8 education.

9 ESSA shifts much of that authority
10 back to the states and districts in what has been
11 called one of the largest devolutions of power by
12 the federal government in decades.

13 At this point, the U.S. Department of
14 Education has not released final information
15 about who they will be implementing the new law.

16 The Department has put together a
17 "negotiated rulemaking panel", that will be
18 working over the next few months to hammer out
19 some of those details, especially on the
20 assessment piece.

21 Our panelists tonight will help the
22 State Board frame its work on ESSA, as we begin

1 our discussions with OSSE and other stakeholders.

2 I'm very much looking forward to what
3 the insider panel will bring to the State Board's
4 discussion of ESSA, as we review and ultimately
5 approve a state accountability plan under the new
6 law, in concert with our colleagues from OSSE.

7 With that, I'm actually going to turn
8 it over to our Superintendent of Education,
9 Hanseul Kang, to provide comments.

10 SUPERINTENDENT KANG: Thank you,
11 President Jacobson, and as you mentioned, this
12 evening the Board is focused on several topics
13 that reflect the innovative work happening in
14 education in the District today, the revising of
15 health standards, addressing the challenge of
16 truancy, developing pathways for credit
17 flexibility and beginning to discuss the
18 provisions of the recently re-authorized
19 elementary and secondary education act called the
20 Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA.

21 OSSE is excited that the revised
22 health standards, developed in collaboration with

1 the Board and stakeholders are expected to move
2 forward to a vote in April.

3 On ESSA, since the passage of the law
4 at the end of 2015, OSSE has been analyzing the
5 impact the law at the state local education
6 agency and school levels.

7 ESSA provides an important opportunity
8 for states to have greater authority over the
9 design of accountability systems to meet their
10 own context.

11 There will be a period of transition
12 through the next school year, and as you
13 mentioned, there is still further information to
14 come from the U.S. Department of Education,
15 including the negotiated rulemaking process and
16 further regulations, but we are already moving
17 forward to further our own understanding and are
18 excited to engage with you in this discussion.

19 We look forward to working with the
20 State Board through updates and panels at
21 upcoming meetings and other public engagement
22 with school and LEA leaders and community

1 members, to design this new system over the next
2 year.

3 OSSE will be developing this new
4 system in consultation with the Deputy Mayor for
5 Education and other stakeholders in D.C.,
6 including the State Board of Education, the
7 Public Charter School Board, the District of
8 Columbia Public Schools, Charter LEA leaders,
9 school principals and community members, to
10 ensure that it's a system that pushes our shared
11 commitment to equity forward.

12 We look forward to working with the
13 State Board through updates and panels at our
14 upcoming meetings and other public engagements,
15 to design this system over the next year.

16 I'm excited about the grounding
17 tonight's panelists will provide us as we
18 undertake this transition to ESSA, and I look
19 forward to hearing their insights, as well as
20 more about the time lines that will continue to
21 guide the transitions over the next year.

22 Second, tonight the Board will be

1 voting on rulemaking regarding credit
2 flexibility. If approved, this changes the
3 potential to support high schools in better
4 meeting the learning needs of students.

5 I would like to once again thank the
6 members of the high school credit flexibility
7 task force for their thoughtful work, and in
8 particular, Laura Wilson Phelan, for her
9 leadership, and the Board as a whole, for your
10 partnership.

11 As I shared at the working session on
12 March 2nd, OSSE received 25 comments on the
13 proposed regulations based on the task force's
14 recommendations. These comments primarily
15 related to increasing the physical education and
16 health education graduation requirements and the
17 provision related to allowing students to receive
18 a unit equivalent to a Carnegie Unit for
19 attaining a minimum score on an OSSE-approved
20 assessment.

21 Through ongoing dialogue with the
22 Board on the assessments issue, we determined

1 that further review of this issue would be
2 valuable, and have reserved this section for
3 future consideration. We are committed to
4 working with the Board and stakeholders on this
5 matter.

6 If there were to be substantive
7 changes to the language proposed, there would be
8 a second public comment period before moving
9 forward.

10 Tonight's regulations therefore, omit
11 this provision and relate to the rest of the task
12 force's recommendations. If these regulations
13 are approved, OSSE will establish a format for
14 the waiver application and the required
15 information for the application.

16 I look forward to the vote tonight.
17 LEA's and schools are interested in taking
18 advantage of this flexibility in the upcoming
19 school year, and I know that they will be excited
20 to see the great work of the task force realized
21 in these regulations. Thank you.

22 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you,

1 Superintendent Kang. The record needs to reflect
2 that Ms. Lord, our At-Large Member, has also
3 joined us.

4 We continue tonight with our public
5 witnesses. The State Board welcomes public
6 participation in activities under our authority.

7 If you are a member of the public and
8 would like to speak at a future public meeting,
9 please contact our staff at sboc@dc.gov, or by
10 calling 202-741-0888. We have five public
11 witnesses. Is Ms. Davis from the Washington
12 Teachers' Union -- is not here. Pamela Orellana?

13 MS. ORELLANA: Orellana.

14 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Please come up.
15 Orellana. Close?

16 MS. ORELLANA: Orellana.

17 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: With the D.C.
18 Center. Ms. Merilyn Holmes, Executive Director
19 of Total Sunshine, Inc.

20 Sarah Livingston, a member of the
21 public. Stanley Carroll, a student at Columbia
22 Heights Education Campus.

1 Can we get one more chair? Great.
2 We'll put that right next to Ms. Livingston, I
3 think, and why don't we start with Ms. Holmes.

4 MS. HOLMES: Sure.

5 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: And then just
6 move to your right.

7 MS. HOLMES: All right.

8 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: You'll each have
9 three minutes. Thank you so much for coming down
10 tonight.

11 MS. HOLMES: All right. Well, good
12 evening. It's nice to see everyone again.
13 Hopefully, everyone has had a great day.

14 I'm Marilyn Holmes. I'm the President
15 and Founder of Total Sunshine, Incorporated.
16 It's a D.C. non-profit 501(c)(3), as well as an
17 award winning television show on D.C. TV.

18 We do many things in the community and
19 have done so for the last 15 years. We've been
20 supporting our students strongly, since we
21 started, and we're looking forward to our annual
22 school grade awards ceremony. It's going to be

1 scheduled for Thursday, June 23rd, 4:00 p.m.
2 We're still working on a location, but we're
3 going to have all of the valedictorians and
4 salutatorians from our great city assembled, and
5 we're going to honor them and we're going to
6 support them with technological tools that we're
7 sure they need for college. It's going to be a
8 great day. I'll tell you, it's always a
9 pleasure.

10 This year is going to be our eighth
11 annual ceremony. All of the val's and sal's are
12 invited. They're probably doing homework right
13 now, trying to get those spots.

14 I'll tell you, let's see, public
15 schools, charter schools. It doesn't make a
16 difference whether you're in one of those, if
17 you're a valedictorian or a salutatorian, these
18 young people are eligible to come to our ceremony
19 and receive applause and support to continue
20 their further -- to further them in their
21 educational endeavors.

22 Let's see here. Everyone is invited.

1 Here is a picture. This is our 2013 class. I
2 love this picture. It's so many smiling faces.
3 Total Sunshine, we promote smiles in the
4 community, and I tell you, these young people,
5 they were smiling and just a great picture.
6 Actually, some of the people are up here on the
7 dais are in this picture.

8 Everyone is invited. We've invited
9 Chancellor Henderson. We're inviting everyone to
10 come on out. Whoever wants to clap for these
11 young people, is welcome to come. It's open to
12 the public, and we always televise it within our
13 television show, as well as on the internet and
14 social media. We always try to get these young
15 people as much recognition as possible, because
16 of course, they're doing the work, even today,
17 and they deserve all the recognition that we can
18 provide.

19 This is a part of our school grade
20 incentive program. Within that program we have
21 anti-violence, life-coping skills, seminars with
22 young people. We've done many over the years in

1 the schools.

2 We also provide them with community
3 service opportunities, as possible. Budget, if
4 we have it in the budget to do so, and of course,
5 our ceremony, it's our signature event. Every
6 year, every June, you can count on Total Sunshine
7 to support these young people, in as fantastic a
8 way as we can.

9 So, if someone wants more information
10 on our Total Sunshine school grade incentive
11 program, they can feel free to get in touch with
12 us. You can email me directly at
13 info@totalsunshine.org, or they can go directly
14 on the website totalsunshine.org, or call the
15 Sunshine line at 202-575-0462.

16 I'll tell you, initially, I thought
17 let's get together a committee, so that we can
18 have a bunch of people and all this great big old
19 -- just great big, old think-tank, to see what we
20 can do to support the Class of 2016 val's and
21 sal's, and then I thought, we been doing this for
22 eight years. We already sort of know what we

1 need to do in order to get support, and the main
2 thing that we generally need is people on the day
3 of the event, to help facilitate the event.

4 We need a -- basically, people to come
5 out and help with decorating, setting up and
6 taking down and making sure that everything rolls
7 smoothly.

8 Our team is a great team, but we
9 always need more help, and so, that's one of the
10 things I wanted to put out there. We are looking
11 for people to come out and help on the
12 decorations committee, and you all will hear from
13 me again about this. I'm going to try to keep my
14 attendance to a maximum throughout the rest of
15 the school year, and I thank you so much for this
16 opportunity. It's great.

17 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so
18 much, Ms. Holmes. We appreciate you coming down.

19 MS. HOLMES: Okay.

20 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Ms. Orellana.

21 MS. ORELLANA: Orellana.

22 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Orellana. Thank

1 you so much. You have three minutes.

2 MS. ORELLANA: Thank you. Good
3 evening. My name is Pamela Orellana, and I am
4 the advocate intern for the D.C. Center for the
5 LGBT community.

6 I'm a student at Montgomery College
7 and have lived in the D.C. metro area for 24
8 years.

9 I am here on behalf of the youth
10 working group, a coalition of over 100 concerned
11 citizens, service providers, educators and youth
12 who work to improve the well-being of lesbian,
13 gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning,
14 and allied youth in D.C.

15 Representing this population, we have
16 a vested interest in the issue at hand.

17 According to the D.C. 2012 youth risk
18 behavior survey, 15 percent of middle school and
19 15.3 percent of high school and students --
20 students identify as LGBQ.

21 With this in mind, our goal is to
22 highlight how standards might be modified or

1 expanded to better serve students who identify as
2 part of the LGBT community, and have or -- and
3 have sexual experience with members of the same
4 sex -- same or both sexes.

5 The YRB reveals that compared to
6 heterosexual youth, segments of LGB youth are
7 more likely to smoke cigarettes, abuse alcohol,
8 use marijuana, cocaine or injected-base drugs.
9 They are more likely to have sex under the
10 influence of drugs and alcohol, have more sexual
11 partners, use condoms less and be diagnosed with
12 an STI, become infected with HIV and be involved
13 in pregnancy.

14 LGB youth also have increased rates of
15 suicidal, depression, generalized anxiety
16 disorders and conduct disorders, compared to the
17 heterosexual peers.

18 Youth education in D.C. does not
19 explicitly include LGBT topics, which put LGBT
20 youth at an immediate disadvantage.

21 The D.C. Center conducted a poll over
22 200 students attending Youth Pride Day in May of

1 2014 in Dupont Circle.

2 We found that 19 percent of students
3 in health education class did not learn about
4 STI's, 24 percent did not learn about
5 contraception, and 27 percent didn't learn about
6 barrier methods, like condoms and dental dams.

7 Only half of students reported
8 learning about dating violence, one-third
9 reported learning about sexual orientation and
10 gender identity, and even fewer reported
11 experience instructions regarding positive same-
12 sex relationships.

13 Less than one in five students can
14 recall hearing positive examples of transgender
15 identity. The rest of the areas are in my
16 testimony, if you would like to read.

17 As you may know, on March 8th, the
18 Youth Working Group submitted a letter by Chris
19 Obermeyer, to OSE and State Board of Education,
20 identifying areas of the proposed standards that
21 need to be modified or extended. The rest are in
22 my testimony, if you would like to read that.

1 Thank you.

2 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so
3 much, and I really appreciate you coming down and
4 the detailed comments that were in Mr.
5 Obermeyer's letter are incredibly helpful.

6 MS. ORELLANA: Yes.

7 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: And I'll be your
8 advocate on this.

9 MS. ORELLANA: Thank you.

10 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Those issues.
11 Thank you so much. Ms. Livingston, three
12 minutes.

13 MS. LIVINGSTON: Good evening, Mr.
14 President and Members of the Board. Can you hear
15 me now?

16 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Yes, ma'am.

17 MS. LIVINGSTON: Okay, my name is
18 Sarah Livingston, and I live here in the
19 District, in the Shaw neighborhood of Ward 6, and
20 I have come tonight to share a couple of thoughts
21 having to do with the proposed rules, related to
22 high school graduation, flexibility requirements.

1 There are a number of terms associated with this
2 idea. So, it's not always just one or two words.

3 But anyway, I was pleased to learn in
4 the OSSE memo to the Board of February 26th, that
5 -- and she repeated it tonight, that perhaps, a
6 little more consideration of some of the rules,
7 specifically 2203.7 would be beneficial, and I
8 really appreciate the responsiveness in that.

9 However, I would be even more pleased,
10 if the whole issue were indefinitely tabled in
11 light of past and recent changes, and these
12 changes -- you know, if you look in D.C. history,
13 you see that in 1995, there was a decision made
14 to have charter schools, and that wasn't
15 necessarily a mistake, but it has created
16 enormous problems, physically, legally and in all
17 manner of effects on the children going to school
18 in the District.

19 So, it was done by a small group of
20 people, and not very well-known to the public,
21 and it's created problems, and the same is true
22 of mayoral control, as a reform of educational

1 governance that we've had since 2007.

2 It has also proven to be highly
3 problematic, and both of these reforms were
4 foisted onto the citizen body by a small group,
5 in a very hurried way, with minimum thought to
6 their long-term consequences, and no effort to
7 ascertain the will of the majority, not to
8 mention the fact that they have both become very
9 expensive.

10 This is happening, in my experience,
11 all over again, with this idea for organizing how
12 high school education would be provided. It's a
13 small group that wants something. It hasn't been
14 very well thought out, and most of the public
15 doesn't even know about it, and I have discussed
16 it with several people in various parts of town,
17 and they haven't heard about it, and they don't
18 even have no basis upon which to even begin to
19 understand it.

20 So, I want to -- to also point out
21 that two more recent changes have occurred, that
22 have put us in a different and much more

1 favorable decision making environment, and first,
2 since 2014 with the -- when this idea first
3 surfaced on this Board, we elected a new Mayor --

4 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Ms. Livingston,
5 could you finish your comments briefly please?

6 MS. LIVINGSTON: Yes.

7 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you.

8 MS. LIVINGSTON: We have a new Mayor.
9 She has not mentioned this topic at all. We also
10 had the evaluation, which has given us a lot of
11 data to work with, to look at our situation, and
12 then we've also got the passage of the Every
13 Student Succeeds Act, which along with having a
14 different approach to accountability, also has
15 the thrust of return of local control to
16 education.

17 So, I just want to --

18 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you.

19 MS. LIVINGSTON: -- close by saying
20 that I want to see the most thought put into this
21 particular subject there can possibly be
22 mustered. Thank you.

1 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so
2 much, Ms. Livingston. I think through the
3 dialogue tonight, you'll hear that we've put a
4 great deal of thought into this and we've done a
5 great deal of outreach, but we always strive to
6 be better and do more. So, thank you for
7 reminding us of that.

8 Mr. Carroll, three minutes, and you
9 can borrow Ms. Livingston's microphone.

10 MR. CARROLL: Okay. Hello. My name
11 is Stanley and I'm a junior at Bellmore Cultural
12 High School at Columbia Heights Education Campus,
13 and I'm here to talk to you today about proposed
14 edits to the health class centers and about my
15 own experience at health classes in D.C. public
16 schools.

17 As a young gay man in D.C., the
18 subject is one I'm very invested in. When I
19 first came out to my friends in eighth grade,
20 many of my male friends were not okay with it and
21 did not feel comfortable staying with me --
22 staying friends with me at the time.

1 This reaction, I saw as coming from a
2 place of ignorance, and now, three years later, I
3 am friends with them again, but at the time, did
4 not -- they did not want to be seen with me.

5 I see this ignorance as being directly
6 tied to the health classes at my school.

7 When I was in middle school, my health
8 classes, and especially the sex education part of
9 them, were lacking. All we learned about was sex
10 between men and women, or sex between people with
11 penises and vaginas. I only learned about
12 condoms and birth control, and didn't learn about
13 any other types of contraceptive, or other forms
14 of protection against STI's and STD's.

15 My class didn't talk about gay people
16 and didn't talk about the ways to protect
17 themselves during, if you are not having
18 heterosexual sex.

19 Health classes in my high school have
20 been more detailed. There has been discussion on
21 being gay or lesbian and what that means, and
22 briefly, our class talked about what it means to

1 be transgender. It's a problem though, that my
2 health class in middle school didn't talk about
3 sexual orientation.

4 This adds to my friend's ignorance in
5 which they stopped talking to me. It's a problem
6 that only recently, we talked about transgender
7 issues because I brought it up, and otherwise we
8 would not have talked about this.

9 Often, I find myself answering basic
10 and sometimes insulting questions about being gay
11 from my classmates. They still have a lot of
12 questions about being gay and I am the one in my
13 school that they come to for answers.

14 This should not be my responsibility
15 and I shouldn't have to deal with ignorant
16 comments. A comprehensive and LGBTQ-inclusive
17 set of health class standards will work against
18 this.

19 For this reason, I am showing support
20 the D.C. Center's letter of recommended changes
21 to your proposal and I will even encourage you to
22 push voting on this issue back into the

1 communities, to have a full say in health class
2 centers.

3 This opportunity to change these
4 standards doesn't come often. The last time they
5 were changed, in wasn't even in middle school
6 yet. It is important when working on these -- on
7 things like this, to get them right, and getting
8 things right requires a lot of careful thought
9 and a lot of input from different members of the
10 community, with different experience than yours.

11 Please incorporate D.C. Centers
12 proposed edits and please push back the vote on
13 this issue, to allow the community to weigh in on
14 the next draft of edits. Thank you for
15 listening.

16 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so much
17 for coming down. This has been a passion of mine
18 and some of my colleagues on the Board for the
19 past two years. We're going to keep working on
20 it.

21 So, thank you all for coming down, and
22 you are excused.

1 If you have copies of your testimony,
2 you can leave them with our staff or submit them
3 by email.

4 I'll now move to credit flexibility
5 and scheduled vote.

6 The District is want -- and following
7 my comments, I'm going to ask my colleagues if we
8 could authorize an electronic vote via email for
9 Ms. Anderson. We'll work on that, at the
10 appropriate time.

11 The District is one of the few
12 jurisdictions in the country with a high school
13 credit system, based solely on the Carnegie Unit.
14 Tonight, we will take a step in offering students
15 other pathways to credit, by voting on
16 regulations that provide waivers for courses
17 suited to competency-based education.

18 Competency-based courses incorporate
19 individualized learning and can provide enormous
20 benefits to students that are struggling to keep
21 up in a traditional class.

22 In the District, a majority of our

1 students are not ready to succeed. I believe
2 that the opportunity we are voting on tonight is
3 a manifest change that will benefit all students,
4 but I'm particularly interested in how schools
5 use the waiver application to provide greater
6 support to our students that need it the most.

7 The State Board asked our Ward 1
8 colleague, Laura Wilson Phelan, to lead the
9 investigation into competency-based education.
10 She skillfully put together a task force with
11 representatives from both public and public
12 charter schools, the Teacher's Union, individual
13 teachers, students and advocates, and she led a
14 robust discussion that resulted in a series of
15 recommendations that were adopted by the Board in
16 December 2015.

17 OSSE worked diligently to translate
18 those recommendations into regulations that were
19 then issued for public comment. It is my
20 understanding that over 20 individual comments
21 were received.

22 The resolution before us will provide

1 -- will approve -- would approve the final
2 regulations related to three of the four original
3 recommendations, a waiver application process,
4 altering the time line for taking Algebra I and
5 for evaluation of approved waiver courses.

6 At this point, I would ask my
7 colleagues if there is a motion to permit a vote
8 by telephone for our Ward 4 colleague, Kamili
9 Anderson, on Resolution 16-3 to approve credit
10 flexibility final regulations.

11 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: So moved.

12 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Moved by Ms.
13 Wilson Phelan. Is there a second?

14 VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Second.

15 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Motion being
16 properly moved and seconded, all in favor, please
17 say aye.

18 (Chorus of aye.)

19 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Any opposed?
20 Motion carries. Ms. Anderson will be authorized
21 to vote electronically and the Executive Director
22 will get her on the line.

1 Considering her work on this issue, I
2 would like to ask Ms. Wilson Phelan if she would
3 like to introduce the resolution and provide
4 comments.

5 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Yes, thank you.
6 I'll begin with the comments.

7 I've mentioned this before, because
8 we've discussed this now for several months, but
9 the purpose of this effort that began last
10 summer, and really extended well before my time
11 on the Board, was to -- in recognition that what
12 we are doing now across the city is -- has made
13 important improvements in our educational quality
14 and experience for our students, but it is
15 certainly not enough.

16 Even if it's better before, even if
17 it's as a result of the tireless efforts of
18 people across our education system, who are
19 reaching out to students and trying to help them
20 succeed, we have to try new things, if they are
21 promising. We are just not making change fast
22 enough, and entire populations of youth are

1 exiting our system without having been
2 sufficiently supported in their development.

3 This is what the task force, OSSE, the
4 State Board and others who have been involved in
5 the process have been trying to get to, paving
6 the way for promising approaches to be tried in
7 D.C.

8 This process has involved broad swaths
9 of the public, from members of the task force who
10 represented government, schools, work force and
11 civic groups across the city, to the comments
12 captured during the public comment period, to
13 outreach efforts at ANC's and populations working
14 closely with high school students. We have tried
15 our best to involve the public in this comment
16 period.

17 I want to personally acknowledge the
18 efforts of the Senior High School Alliance of
19 Parents, Principals and Educators, known as
20 SHAPPE, to solicit input on these regulations.

21 While we've engaged the public through
22 many of the channels that are available to us, at

1 the same time, my personal learning has been that
2 it's completely insufficient.

3 We must do more to reach out to the
4 families, especially of our at-risk students, who
5 populate well over half of the students in
6 particular, in our public schools.

7 We must engage them meaningfully in
8 co-creating solutions, to hear their ideas.

9 That's going to get us much farther than the
10 ideas many of us come up with on our own, and I
11 am personally re-committing myself to this
12 priority.

13 I've also ran through this process,
14 that some of the promising ideas being put
15 forward, that have the potential to help our
16 students who are the most at-risk, or have a risk
17 of never being tried because of the deep, deep
18 distrust of DCPS, OSSE and the Public Charter
19 School Board, among populations of parents.

20 My hope is that the leaders of these
21 institutions are seeing this too, and that they
22 will re-double their efforts to be transparent in

1 their decision making processes, and go to
2 extremes to over-share information with the
3 public.

4 I believe this is a necessary step and
5 will go a long way in building trust with our
6 collective constituents.

7 Finally, before the resolution is
8 introduced, I just want to thank my fellow Board
9 Members, who have been earnest in their efforts
10 to explore this issue, to poke important holes in
11 it and re-evaluate and re-consider what is being
12 offered here tonight, and not putting pride or
13 ego first, but really thinking about what is in
14 the best interest of students, and with that, I
15 would ask the Executive Director to read the
16 resolution into the record.

17 MR. HAYWORTH: State Board of
18 Education resolution to approve final rulemaking
19 regarding high school credit flexibility SR16-3.

20 Whereas, District of Columbia law
21 requires State Board of Education approval of
22 high school graduation requirements.

1 Whereas, the District is one of the
2 few jurisdictions in the United States, where the
3 time-based Carnegie Unit 120 hours of class or
4 contact time with an instructor during the year,
5 is the sole means for awarding course credit for
6 a traditional high school diploma.

7 Whereas, the opportunity gap remains
8 massive in the District of Columbia, illustrated
9 most recently by the 2015 Partnership for
10 Assessment of Readiness for College and Career
11 PARCC scores, which showed performance for sub-
12 groups of high school students differed by as
13 much as 78 percentage points.

14 Whereas, students who enter high
15 school, either unprepared to meet the District of
16 Columbia rigorous academic standards or already
17 having acquired the knowledge and skills to
18 demonstrate mastery, must enroll in courses
19 organized into standard Carnegie Units without an
20 option to pace their own learning.

21 Whereas, the District of Columbia is
22 the only jurisdiction in the country that

1 requires students to enroll in Algebra I by ninth
2 grade, regardless of their readiness.

3 Whereas, high schools in the District
4 of Columbia may not tailor their credit-bearing
5 course offering outside of the Carnegie Unit to
6 take advantage of logical synergies between
7 academic material that would enhance student
8 learning.

9 Whereas, research indicates that
10 academic outcomes and engagement improve when
11 high school students are able to pace their own
12 learning, choose how they acquire skills and
13 knowledge and determine how they provide evidence
14 of proficiencies.

15 Whereas, key features of competency-
16 based education include student self-pacing and
17 choice and skill and knowledge acquisition and
18 demonstration of learning.

19 Whereas, student implementation --
20 excuse me, successful implementation of
21 competency-based courses requires significant
22 thought preparation and teacher support.

1 Whereas, the State Board of Education
2 convened a cross-city task force of 25 members,
3 representing teachers, principals, traditional
4 and charter public schools, community groups, the
5 business community, the Washington Teachers'
6 Union, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for
7 Education, the Office of the State Superintendent
8 of Education and the Council of the District of
9 Columbia from August 2015 to December 2015, to
10 develop recommendations for high school credit
11 flexibility.

12 Whereas, the majority of task force
13 members agree that creating alternative pathways
14 to earning credit beyond the Carnegie Unit
15 represented an important first step toward
16 improving academic outcomes by recognizing that
17 not all students learn at the same pace, nor best
18 demonstrate understanding of content-based on a
19 120 hours in a traditional classroom setting.

20 Whereas, the task force's report makes
21 the following recommendations for earning high
22 school credit.

1 Number one, create a waiver process
2 for school wishing to pursue competency-based
3 learning.

4 Number two, allow students to receive
5 credit for demonstrated knowledge in world
6 languages and mathematics.

7 Number three, maintain Carnegie Units
8 as the default means for earning credit where
9 neither of the two above conditions apply.

10 Number four, consistent with the
11 benefits of student self-paced learning
12 associated with competency-based models, remove
13 the requirement that student enroll in Algebra I
14 by ninth grade.

15 Whereas, the State Board of Education
16 passed a resolution on December 16th, 2015,
17 advising the State Superintendent to consider the
18 high school credit flexibility task force as
19 recommended -- recommendations, as outlined in
20 its report, and to initiate rulemaking to
21 implement the recommendations.

22 Whereas, a notice of proposed

1 rulemaking was published in the D.C. Register on
2 January 22nd, 2016, that's 63 DCR 4 for a 30-day
3 public comment period.

4 Whereas, the proposed rule maintains
5 the Carnegie Unit as the default means for
6 earning credit towards graduation and creates a
7 waiver process for schools desiring to pursue
8 competency-based learning.

9 Whereas, the proposed rulemaking
10 requires students to enroll in Algebra I by tenth
11 grade, unless the school is granted further
12 flexibility to this requirement through a
13 competency-based waiver, while acknowledging that
14 a specific three course sequence is required for
15 graduation from high school.

16 Whereas, the State Board of Education
17 held working sessions on January 6th, 2016,
18 February 3rd, 2016, March 2nd, 2016 and public
19 hearings on December 16th, 2015, January 20th,
20 2016 and February 17th, 2016, to discuss the
21 proposed rulemaking and receive public testimony.

22 Whereas, the public comment period

1 officially closed on February 22nd, 2016, with
2 the State Superintendent having received numerous
3 comments from advocates and members of the
4 regulated community.

5 Whereas, the proposed rule allows
6 students to receive credit for demonstrated
7 knowledge in any required course, and the State
8 Superintendent received several comments
9 regarding Sub-Section 2203.7(b) which would allow
10 students to receive a unit equivalent to a
11 Carnegie Unit for attaining a minimum score on an
12 OSSE approved assessment and accordingly, the
13 State Superintendent does not adopt Sub-Section
14 2203.7(b), as included in the notice of proposed
15 rulemaking, but rather reserves the sub-section
16 for -- to allow for further examination of this
17 issue.

18 Whereas, the State Board of Education
19 finds that the final rulemaking may assist
20 students at all levels of academic performance by
21 eliminating barriers to meeting individual
22 educational needs, and by promoting competency-

1 based learning that ensures students advance with
2 the requisite knowledge to be successful.

3 Now, therefore, be it resolved that on
4 March 16th, 2016, the State Board approves the
5 final rulemaking implementing the high school
6 credit flexibility task force's recommendations.

7 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: I would entertain
8 a motion on the resolution.

9 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: So moved.

10 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Moved by Ms.
11 Wilson Phelan. Is there a second?

12 MEMBER JOLLY: Second.

13 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Second by Ms.
14 Jolly. Now, that it's been properly moved and
15 seconded, do members have comments? You may have
16 up to five minutes. Mr. Weedon.

17 MEMBER WEEDON: First, let me state
18 that I'm a strong believer in competency-based
19 education and credit flexibility.

20 I want to thank the task force, and
21 especially my colleague from Ward 1, Laura Wilson
22 Phelan, for their work on this issue.

1 However, I've had long -- I've long
2 had concerns about the lack of accountability in
3 our public school systems, and I believe we need
4 more clear lines of accountability.

5 This proposal, the regulations as
6 currently written, I believe give both DCPS and
7 the Public Charter School Board too great of a
8 latitude in determining what counts for credit in
9 our schools.

10 Under the proposed regulations, DCPS
11 will approve waiver applications for its own
12 schools. The Public Charter School Board will
13 also be given authority to approve waivers for
14 public charter schools.

15 Given that the Public Charter Board
16 has previously approved the opening of the
17 school, that will provide competent fee-based
18 education units, this situation raises concerns
19 about the independence of the Public Charter
20 Board making these decisions.

21 My belief is that the work of the
22 State Board must create a frame work to ensure

1 transparency and accountability.

2 Our two public education sectors have
3 continually failed to coordinate activities and
4 lack accountability to the public, and as Ms.
5 Wilson Phelan mentioned in her comments, there is
6 a deep distrust in many of our communities of
7 both systems, despite much progress in our
8 schools over the last few years.

9 We need to better engage and listen to
10 those have not traditionally had a voice. It is
11 also time for us, the State Board, to assert our
12 authority and to work to ensure transparency and
13 accountability for our school systems.

14 Tonight, I begin that call. I call for
15 our city schools to work jointly, to work more
16 aggressively -- and to work more aggressively to
17 ensure transparency and to hold them to a higher
18 standard.

19 Mr. President, I move my proposed
20 amendment for consideration.

21 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Is there a
22 second?

1 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Second, for
2 discussion.

3 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Ms. Wilson Phelan
4 seconds the amendment, for discussion purposes.
5 Discussion?

6 I think, Mr. Weedon, you eloquently
7 stated your case. Mr. Jones, did you have a
8 comment? No, and I tend to agree with you. I
9 appreciate you bringing this resolution forward.

10 Any additional discussion? Ms. Lord.

11 MEMBER LORD: I just want to echo what
12 my colleagues have said.

13 The issue of transparency and
14 accountability has come up in just about every
15 conversation, the access to data, and as somebody
16 who has worked on the competency-based learning
17 portion more years than I care to recall, I think
18 it's essential that we have a way of measuring
19 the effectiveness of the policies that we put in
20 place, so that we know that they're having the
21 intended effect.

22 So, I just want to say I'm very

1 supportive of this amendment. I, in fact, had an
2 amendment of my own ready to queue up about the
3 accountability and need to measure our success.

4 Thank you.

5 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Ms. Wilson
6 Phelan.

7 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Great. I just
8 want to say, while I appreciate the sentiment in
9 this amendment, I don't think it's an appropriate
10 amendment and I don't see it as a friendly
11 amendment, and I will share why.

12 The first is that the language that
13 actually was put into the regulation was very
14 carefully constructed to ensure a balance of
15 accountability and authority where they
16 appropriately lie within our law, and I think
17 this goes above and beyond that, and I will
18 particularly speak to the authorities associated
19 with the Public Charter School Board, whereas all
20 of us know, they have the authority to charter
21 public charter schools in our city, and as part
22 of that chartering process, they approve the

1 approaches to teaching associated with all of
2 those schools, including their curriculum.

3 By asking that OSSE oversee the Public
4 Charter School Board's decisions associated with
5 curriculum and teaching approach, that goes above
6 and beyond my understanding of what the law
7 allows.

8 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Mr. Weedon.

9 MEMBER WEEDON: Yes, well, I disagree
10 with that interpretation. I don't want to cause
11 the work of the task force to be undone, and I'll
12 withdraw my amendment.

13 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Mr. Weedon would
14 like to withdraw the amendment. Is that
15 acceptable to the second?

16 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: yes.

17 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you. Thank
18 you. We will make sure that your comments and
19 the amendment are included in our official
20 records.

21 Any additional -- Ms. Wattenberg from
22 Ward 3.

1 MEMBER WATTENBERG: Hi. Thank you.
2 I have a multi-part amendment here, which I'm
3 going to explain and then I will motivate it.

4 So, what I'd like for people to do is
5 to look at the resolution titled "Evaluating and
6 Monitoring the Progress and Effectiveness of
7 Competency-Based Learning," the resolution that I
8 have submitted.

9 I'm not going to submit this
10 resolution, rather, I'm going to submit parts of
11 it as amendments to the main resolution, so that
12 we can get at some of the issues around
13 evaluating and monitoring, but doing it in a way
14 that is consistent with the task force, and the
15 desire of the Board, to move this forward.

16 So, take a look at that resolution.
17 You want to go to line 32, and replace the word
18 'recommended' with the word 'stated'.

19 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Point of
20 information. I think you mean to say replace
21 'recommended' with 'report stated', so that it
22 meets --

1 MEMBER WATTENBERG: Correct.

2 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: -- the task
3 force report stated.

4 MEMBER WATTENBERG: Correct, thank
5 you. Okay, then I want to take lines 32 through
6 45 from this resolution, and lines -- on line --
7 on page two of the resolution, lines 10 through
8 20, and I want to insert them on page three of
9 the main motion, under line five, so that they
10 would become the new line six.

11 In effect, what I'm doing --

12 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Point of
13 inquiry, Ruth.

14 MEMBER WATTENBERG: Yes.

15 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Would you
16 consider inserting lines 32 to 45 above line one
17 on page two?

18 MEMBER WATTENBERG: Above line one --

19 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: I think that
20 makes more sense.

21 MEMBER WATTENBERG: -- on page --

22 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: And then insert

1 --

2 MEMBER WATTENBERG: That's fine. I
3 mean, that's fine.

4 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: -- 10 to 21 --

5 MEMBER WATTENBERG: At the end?

6 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Yes.

7 MEMBER WATTENBERG: That's fine.

8 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: So, this would
9 insert lines 32 to 45 above line one on page two,
10 and then the remaining lines, which are 10
11 through 21 on her page two, above --

12 MEMBER WATTENBERG: So, and in effect,
13 what I'm doing, just to be clear, is taking from
14 my resolution, the bottom three whereas's on the
15 first page, and inserting them into the main
16 resolution.

17 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Would you, for
18 our viewing public, either briefly summarize or
19 read those provisions?

20 MEMBER WATTENBERG: Yes. Okay, so,
21 the first insert is as follows.

22 Whereas, the task force report stated

1 that in the waiver, educational institutions must
2 describe for which course or series of courses
3 the waiver applies, the method for determining
4 competency within those courses, and the level of
5 performance or achievement that will constitute
6 mastery of state standards for each course or
7 series of courses that will not be using Carnegie
8 Units.

9 Whereas, the task force recommended
10 that, "DCPS and PCSB shall submit evidence of the
11 progress and quality of implementation on each
12 waiver to OSSE annually," and that this,
13 "Evidence shall be posted publically and be
14 reported annually to the State Board of
15 Education."

16 Whereas, task force members, "Express
17 support for appropriate review of the progress
18 and implementation of waivers, and expect that
19 OSSE will analyze, evaluate and transparently
20 share with the public, the information it
21 collects from DCPS and PCSB, to assess whether
22 CBL is improving outcomes for students."

1 The second set of inserts goes like
2 this.

3 Now, therefore be it resolved, that
4 the State Board of Education calls on OSSE,
5 consistent with the task force report, to
6 establish a rigorous application and application
7 process, including development and provision of
8 public relevant rubrics, that will ensure that
9 waivers are awarded only to programs that have
10 reasonable plans for helping students to reach
11 D.C. academic standards, and credible competency-
12 based assessments that assure that students earn
13 credit based on genuine mastery of D.C.
14 standards.

15 Be it further resolved, that the State
16 Board calls on OSSE to establish a process
17 consistent with the task force report, through
18 which both OSSE and the SBOE can effectively
19 monitor the effectiveness of waiver recipients in
20 implementing their waivers and raising student's
21 achievement of D.C. standards.

22 So, I'll be brief in my motivation and

1 simply say that as we've heard in the comments
2 thus far, and as we've heard as many of us have
3 gone to community meetings to discuss this and as
4 has been discussed in a number of State Board
5 meetings, we do think that it's critical, that as
6 we move forward with this exciting reform of
7 competency-based learning, that we do so in a way
8 that's really going to gather the kind of
9 information necessary, so that everybody who is
10 involved will know what is working well, what is
11 not working and everybody can make sure that as
12 this moves forward, the best possible practices
13 are being used and those that aren't used, we
14 know it and they can be -- and they can be
15 discarded.

16 That is what is necessary if we really
17 want education to move forward and if we want
18 this to be a successful reform, and that is the
19 hope of the people on the task force, the people
20 on the Board, and we know the people at OSSE who
21 will be administering this.

22 The sentiments that I've read, and

1 I've included in the amendments, are all from the
2 task force report. The nature of the
3 regulations, however of course, is to be much
4 more spare, and we wanted to make sure that we
5 brought into the resolution, these concerns and
6 stated clearly, what we hope will happen during
7 the implementation. So moved.

8 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Is there a
9 second? Before the second, our Executive
10 Director has a point of clarification.

11 MR. HAYWORTH: Thank you, Mr.
12 President. Ms. Wattenberg, on the whereas
13 clauses, you were changing the task force,
14 recommended to the task force report stated,
15 correct?

16 MEMBER WATTENBERG: Stated.

17 MR. HAYWORTH: And that's in both the
18 first two whereas's, say recommended? I just
19 want to make sure it's just --

20 MEMBER WATTENBERG: No, I think it's
21 just in the first one. It is just in the first
22 one. It's not in the second one.

1 MR. HAYWORTH: So, the second one
2 should still read --

3 MEMBER WATTENBERG: Yes.

4 MR. HAYWORTH: -- recommended?

5 MEMBER WATTENBERG: Yes.

6 MR. HAYWORTH: Okay, thank you.

7 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you. Ms.
8 Wattenberg has made a motion. Is there a second?

9 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Second by Ms.
10 Wilson Phelan. Is there discussion.

11 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: I accept this
12 as a friendly amendment.

13 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: It is accepted as
14 friendly. Additional discussion or amendments?
15 Ms. Lord.

16 MEMBER LORD: I have just a quick
17 question. So, all of those five paragraphs will
18 be inserted at the top of page two?

19 MEMBER WATTENBERG: No. Thanks to
20 Laura's stylistic amendment to the amendment, the
21 whereas's will go at the top of page two, and the
22 resolves will go before the resolves.

1 MEMBER LORD: Okay, I just want to
2 make that clear.

3 So, I have a proposed amendment, that
4 I think will be clarifying and succinct, but I
5 want to precede that by just acknowledging the
6 leadership of my colleague from Ward 1, Laura
7 Wilson Phelan, for bringing us to this point on
8 the task force, for diving so deep, and it
9 represents real consensus, first of five, four to
10 get it. You get total five from me.

11 I also want to underscore that this is
12 not our first bite of the apple. Years ago, I
13 was on a National Association of State Boards of
14 Education study group, about how do you educate
15 the learner of the 21st century, and the New
16 Hampshire State Board member who started
17 competency-based education in that state was a
18 member of that study group.

19 So, we were able to bring that into
20 our discussions here. Subsequent to that, my
21 colleague Mr. Jacobson went to Maine, to see
22 their state's competency-based system.

1 We have had lots of informative
2 discussion with NASBE, including a stipend to do
3 this competency-based work, and we got to the
4 point of almost voting on a competency-based
5 proposal at the end of December 2014.

6 So, I just want to make sure everyone
7 understands, this is a very considered, very deep
8 effort and it is gaining traction, not just here,
9 but in states around the country, from whom we
10 have been able to learn.

11 So, we are not reinventing the wheel
12 and we are not making mistakes, and I think the
13 amendment that was just proposed by my colleague
14 really cuts to the quick of the accountability
15 and the transparency with which this has to move
16 forward, in order for it to work, and so, in
17 order for us to know that it's going to work.

18 So, to get to my amendment. There is
19 a -- on page two, line 37, I would propose that
20 we strike the clause beginning on line 41, which
21 is, the comment period, the Superintendent having
22 received numerous comments from advocates and

1 members of the regulated community, to whereas,
2 the proposed rule was adjusted by the Office of
3 the State Superintendent of Education, to reflect
4 numerous comments received before the February
5 22nd, 2016 -- before February 22nd, 2016,
6 including reserving for further examination, Sub-
7 Section 2203.7(b) in the notice of proposed
8 rulemaking, that established an option for
9 students to receive course credit by obtaining a
10 minimum score on an approved assessment.

11 That was -- I did not think that
12 characterizing the public comments was accurate
13 or necessary, and the result of those comments
14 was to have a clause reserved, the one that
15 caused the most comments.

16 So, I wanted to make the linkage
17 between public comments and action on those
18 public comments.

19 So, this proposal would replace lines
20 37 through 46.

21 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Is there a
22 second? Is that -- is that your full amendment?

1 MEMBER LORD: That's my full
2 amendment.

3 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Is there a
4 second?

5 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Second.

6 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Second by Ms.
7 Wilson Phelan. Discussion?

8 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: I accept this
9 as a friendly amendment.

10 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: It's accepted as
11 friendly.

12 MEMBER LORD: Thank you for that.

13 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Any additional
14 amendments or discussion?

15 MEMBER LORD: I have just one --

16 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Ms. Lord.

17 MEMBER LORD: -- technical amendment.

18 On page one, the third whereas, line 16, it says
19 currently, "The performance for sub-groups of
20 high school students differed by as much as 78
21 percentage points."

22 I went back and did some math, and I

1 would like to suggest that we -- which showed
2 performance for sub-groups of students, not high
3 school students, but students, differed by as
4 much as -- let me check my math one more time, 72
5 percentage points.

6 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Is there a
7 second?

8 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Second.

9 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Any discussion?

10 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: It's accepted
11 as friendly.

12 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Accepted as
13 friendly. Is there any additional comment or
14 amendments?

15 If not, Ms. Jolly from Ward 8.

16 MEMBER JOLLY: Sure. In my engagement
17 in my community, there was a bit of
18 misunderstanding, initially about why we were
19 approving a regulation that would push back the
20 requirement for Algebra I, to have to take place
21 in ninth grade versus tenth grade.

22 So, I just wanted to go on the public

1 record for an explanation of that.

2 As it stands, to graduate from D.C.
3 public schools, a student has to complete four
4 years of math classes. However, only three of
5 those courses are specifically named and come in
6 a specific sequence.

7 So, there was some worry that not
8 requiring Algebra I until -- the idea that
9 requiring Algebra I in tenth grade year might
10 cause students to graduate late, I just wanted
11 to, on television, make it very clear that we're
12 not changing the actual requirements. We're
13 merely making it possible for that fourth unnamed
14 math credit to be taken in the ninth grade year,
15 as a remedial math course, so that when students
16 are finally required to take Algebra I, by the
17 time they reach their tenth grade year, they're
18 far more prepared. That's all. Thank you.

19 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
20 Jolly, for that clarification.

21 Any additional comment? If not, I
22 would move to the vote.

1 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Second.

2 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: We are dialing in
3 Ms. Anderson, and then our Executive Director
4 will call the roll.

5 MR. HAYWORTH: Hi, Ms. Anderson. Hold
6 on one second. I'm going to put you on speaker.

7 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: And this is the
8 motion to approve the resolution as amended.

9 MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Jacobson.

10 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Aye.

11 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Williams.

12 VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Yes.

13 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Lord.

14 MEMBER LORD: Aye.

15 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Wilson Phelan.

16 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Yes.

17 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Wattenberg.

18 (No audible response.)

19 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Anderson.

20 MEMBER ANDERSON: Aye.

21 MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Jones.

22 MEMBER JONES: Aye.

1 MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Weedon.

2 MEMBER WEEDON: Aye.

3 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Jolly.

4 MEMBER JOLLY: Aye.

5 MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Contreras.

6 MEMBER CONTRERAS: Aye.

7 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Whittington. Ms.
8 Whittington.

9 (No audible response.)

10 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: With that, the
11 aye's are nine and our student representative
12 also voted aye. The nays are zero. The motion
13 is approved.

14 Thank you again, Ms. Wilson Phelan,
15 for your Yeoman's on this initiative, and we will
16 continue to work as a Board, with our friends at
17 OSSE and at our individuals LEA's, on
18 implementation of this new opportunity.

19 MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Just point of
20 information. I need to excuse myself for the
21 rest of the meeting, for a family emergency.
22 Thank you.

1 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
2 Wilson Phelan. Ms. Wattenberg for a brief
3 comment.

4 MEMBER WATTENBERG: Yes, for brief
5 comment. First, I want to apologize, it took me
6 over an hour to get here from my house today,
7 given the traffic, and as a result, I was a
8 little scattered in pulling everything together.

9 Among the things I meant to do at the
10 beginning were first of all, to thank Laura, who
11 really did put in an incredible amount of work to
12 make this work, and my thanks and appreciation to
13 everybody on the task force, for the way they
14 plunged into it.

15 I also really want to thank very much,
16 our Superintendent for hearing the enormous
17 amount of concern that was out there on the
18 assessing out provision, and I really -- I know
19 that it was something that was important, and I
20 really appreciate that you heard and that you
21 were able to pull that back.

22 So, on behalf of myself and others,

1 thank you very much, and I have one question on
2 that, which is just -- it's my understanding that
3 it's pulled back and it will not come back before
4 us any time soon, and that it when -- or when it
5 comes back to us, it would only be in the context
6 of a broader review of high school graduation
7 requirements, is that correct?

8 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: We are going to
9 be looking at the -- comprehensive review. The
10 Superintendent has agreed with us, that we're
11 going to review the graduation requirements, and
12 this could be a part of that conversation, but it
13 won't necessarily be.

14 MEMBER WATTENBERG: But it won't come
15 up separate from that in any --

16 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: The rulemaking
17 process in D.C. would allow it to come up
18 separately, but we don't expect that.

19 MEMBER WATTENBERG: Okay, is there a
20 possibility of getting some confirmation on that,
21 just so that all the people can know that it's
22 put aside for now, and they can worry about other

1 things related to improving schools.

2 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: We'll work with
3 the Superintendent to get a firm statement on
4 that.

5 MEMBER WATTENBERG: Okay, terrific.
6 Thank you very much. Much appreciated.

7 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so
8 much, Ms. Wattenberg.

9 We're going to move to health
10 education standards. My favorite. I'm very
11 happy to call to the stand, two outstanding
12 educators in the D.C. public school system.

13 Lisa Aleshire, a teacher at Hart
14 Middle School, and Ms. Aleshire, are you here?
15 No? Rayshonna Hill, a teacher at Brookland
16 Middle School.

17 While you make your way to the podium,
18 or the witness table, I want to speak briefly
19 about the hard work that has gone into the health
20 education standards that were proposed by OSSE.

21 These standards are truly a labor of
22 love for me. The data is clear, we are failing

1 our students by not providing the best and most
2 accurate information related to their health,
3 that we can.

4 I am excited at the possibility of
5 revamping these standards, to help educate
6 student -- to help students become healthy,
7 productive citizens. Ms. Hill?

8 MS. HILL: Yes.

9 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Would you like to
10 begin? You'll have five minutes and then we'll do
11 a brief question and answer with you.

12 MS. HILL: Okay, great.

13 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so
14 much.

15 MS. HILL: Good evening, everyone.
16 Thank you for having me. This is pretty
17 exciting, to be able to speak about my department
18 and represent D.C. Public Schools. So, thank you
19 for having me.

20 MEMBER LORD: Could you move closer to
21 the microphone?

22 MS. HILL: Sure.

1 MEMBER LORD: Thank you.

2 MS. HILL: Thank you for having me.

3 My name is Rayshonna Hill. I'm a teacher at
4 Brookland Middle School in District of Columbia.

5 My vision for students is to ensure
6 that students are provided with the knowledge and
7 skills necessary to confront health related
8 issues and make a smooth transition from puberty
9 into adolescence.

10 So, one, I want to again, thank you
11 for allowing me to discuss the proposed health
12 standards today.

13 I've taught in middle school health
14 and physical education for D.C. public schools
15 for the past five years. The proposed standards
16 are updated and relevant to students' lives
17 today.

18 During my time in DCPS, I've seen
19 health education shift and become more skills-
20 focused, and I think that is very important,
21 because students need to be equipped with the
22 skills necessary to just tackle life.

1 The proposed health standards reflect
2 this shift.

3 With the changes, students will no
4 longer focus on memorizing, just memorizing and
5 knowing factual information, but they will learn
6 to think critically and practice, to do something
7 with the content they're learning in class.

8 Instead of teaching students facts
9 only, they will be taught how to access and
10 evaluate information for themselves, as well as
11 advocate for themselves in the communities. A
12 lot of times, you don't know where to get certain
13 information from, when you're taught certain
14 facts and information, but allowing these
15 students the opportunity to learn where to access
16 this information, whether it's an outside
17 resource, an internet resource, that is very
18 important.

19 It also gives them the opportunity to
20 again, advocate for themselves in the communities
21 and learn how to make good health decisions.

22 Doing this will develop deeper

1 understanding on how to apply the content to
2 their lives. When students learn how to apply
3 the content to their own lives, they will improve
4 the outcomes of themselves, and hopefully their
5 families and friends, and just people around them
6 in general.

7 In DCPS, we have several updated
8 health resources which has helped me tremendously
9 tackle the standards that I teach in class. They
10 focus on teaching students skills that have been
11 provided by some of our health curriculum
12 specialists and department.

13 To effectively teach the standards,
14 teachers will need access to evidence-based
15 resources, and curriculum to support the focuses
16 on how to teach health skills.

17 This will require -- this will require
18 allowing time for teachers to take a deeper dive
19 into the standards with actual hands-on training.

20 Teachers will need to see how to teach
21 both content and the skills that are addressed in
22 these new standards. The training should show

1 how to actually address the standards and how to
2 integrate those things into our health and P.E.
3 courses. That way, we are ensuring that students
4 get the full knowledge necessary.

5 I am excited about this shift to
6 skills focused health standards, because this
7 will help us truly impact our students in how
8 they attack everyday life.

9 Thank you for your time and listening,
10 and that's it.

11 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so much
12 for taking time out of your evening to come down
13 here.

14 MS. HILL: No problem.

15 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: And speak with
16 us. Do Board Members have any questions? We'll
17 do five minute rounds. Mr. Jones, we'll start
18 with.

19 MEMBER JONES: Thank you. Ms. Hill,
20 welcome.

21 MS. HILL: Thank you.

22 MEMBER JONES: And share with me, how

1 you're doing at your school, at Brookland.

2 MS. HILL: How I'm doing?

3 MEMBER JONES: Yes.

4 MS. HILL: I'm doing --

5 MEMBER JONES: And tell me about your
6 students and how this will impact your students.

7 MS. HILL: I'm doing pretty well. I'm
8 transitioning to this new school, brand new
9 school, brand new environment. I'm coming from a
10 school where I was highly effective. So, to
11 bring my skills over there, I've been doing
12 pretty well in the classroom, addressing issues
13 that my students are facing every day.

14 So, I like to look at the standards
15 and take those things that my kids need, and find
16 ways to help them access information that can
17 help them in everyday life.

18 For instance, a lot of my children in
19 middle school, which parents will be surprised, a
20 lot of them are either beginning to engage in
21 sexual activity or just exploring it.

22 So, to provide them with different

1 resources to help them make the best choice
2 possible for their lives, or just give them
3 information, so that they can, you know, advocate
4 for them, whether it's about -- speaking about
5 STD and getting them information to free testing,
6 or just telling them about how to handle
7 relationships within their environment, that's
8 what I've been doing.

9 So, that's one area that I feel like
10 I've been helping students in, because this --
11 this adolescent puberty shift is pretty big
12 nowadays, especially with social media, and
13 different things like that.

14 So, helping them access properly
15 certain information is kind of what I've been
16 doing to help at Brookland in one area.

17 MEMBER JONES: And if you had to grade
18 yourself -- never mind, don't grade yourself.

19 But tell me more about your students
20 and their encounters.

21 MS. HILL: It's a pretty -- it's an
22 area of mostly black students at the school.

1 They'll come in from different areas of the city.

2 A lot of them -- we have a population
3 -- we have a good number on -- that just made --
4 we do honor roll assembly. We have a few
5 students that made honor roll.

6 We have had some struggles at the
7 school dealing with different bullying and things
8 like that, but the school has been coming up.

9 We have a lot of support coming from
10 outside that's helping, and things like that.

11 MEMBER JONES: Okay, if you could ask
12 for help, in your area, that would help your
13 students at your school, whether it was me or any
14 other Board Member, and I'll tell you why I'm
15 asking this, what would you ask for?

16 MS. HILL: Right now, I'd ask for, you
17 know, just resources to help my students with
18 some more, like character development.

19 MEMBER JONES: What kind of resources?
20 Try to be as specific as possible.

21 MS. HILL: Different programs, maybe
22 different mentoring programs that can help the

1 students to see more -- not just what they see
2 around them every day, but give them access to
3 things that they may not be exposed to, to help
4 them hopefully live a more healthier, successful
5 life, because that's what I feel like in those
6 areas.

7 Some of those areas, students are
8 lacking in seeing positive character around them
9 in certain areas.

10 So, to have different mentoring
11 programs that can help them, I think that will --
12 outside of just everything being academic, I
13 think that will help a lot.

14 MEMBER JONES: Okay, your school is in
15 my ward, and I want to assist your school. As a
16 matter of fact, I have a meeting with the
17 principal soon.

18 But I must share with you, there is
19 not a day literally, that goes by, that we don't
20 get bad reports on what's going on over there,
21 and I ask you that because I sincerely want to
22 help.

1 Quite often, we put blinders on and
2 say things are fine. Guess what? Things are not
3 fine over there. I live very close to the
4 school, and I encounter the students almost on a
5 daily basis, myself.

6 So, I've -- there is evidence that the
7 complaints are legitimate, and quite often, our
8 teachers and administrators, and I hope central
9 office is hearing this, are reluctant to reach
10 out for help because they think it's going to
11 create a problem or they want to follow the
12 company line.

13 We all know middle schoolers are --
14 it's a tough period in their lives, and I'd like
15 for us not to turn a blind eye, because I've
16 witnessed it. It's a tough time, and I want to
17 be of assistance. So, I'll reach out to you.

18 MS. HILL: We'll be looking forward to
19 that.

20 MEMBER JONES: And you teach physical
21 education?

22 MS. HILL: Health and physical

1 education, yes.

2 MEMBER JONES: Health and physical
3 education?

4 MS. HILL: Yes.

5 MEMBER JONES: Nice gymnasium, isn't
6 it?

7 MS. HILL: Yes, very nice. Very nice
8 facilities over there.

9 MEMBER JONES: Yes, I advocated for
10 that gymnasium. DGS did not want to put a full
11 gymnasium in that school. As a matter of fact,
12 they don't want to put them in any middle
13 schools, but that's inappropriate.

14 If we're talking about preparing our
15 students for the next phase in life, and even if
16 they're playing athletics, you can't put them in
17 a three-fifth gymnasium and expect them to be
18 prepared when they get to high school,
19 physically, first of all.

20 Secondly, it also gives the phys ed
21 teachers enough room to carry out their tasks for
22 their students.

1 So, but it's a beautiful school. I
2 believe everyone there is committed, but give it
3 some thought, because there are a lot of
4 businesses and community people that want to
5 provide assistance.

6 MS. HILL: Right.

7 MEMBER JONES: And were you the coach
8 of the volleyball team?

9 MS. HILL: Yes, I was.

10 MEMBER JONES: Congratulations.

11 MS. HILL: Thank you.

12 MEMBER JONES: I know you guys had a
13 successful year.

14 MS. HILL: Yes, we did.

15 MEMBER JONES: But the next time, if
16 you need some help, I'm available, because I
17 understand the students could not visit -- see
18 some of the games after school because of a lack
19 of --

20 MS. HILL: Security.

21 MEMBER JONES: -- security. I'll pay
22 for the security.

1 MS. HILL: Well, that's -- I'll
2 definitely be in touch.

3 MEMBER JONES: And I'm saying this
4 publically because again, I know Central Office
5 is sometimes, "Oh, no, we can't do that."
6 Central Office, I am volunteering, and other
7 businesses will, as well.

8 MS. HILL: I hope they're listening.

9 MEMBER JONES: Thank you for coming
10 down.

11 MS. HILL: Thank you. Thank you, and
12 I'll definitely be in touch with you, for your
13 help.

14 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr.
15 Jones, and for your generosity of spirit. Ms.
16 Jolly, from Ward 8.

17 MEMBER JOLLY: Ms. Hill, thank you so
18 much for coming down. I'm right here.

19 So, I'm also a teacher. I spent one
20 year teaching seventh grade, which is how I know
21 that you are doing the Lord's work. Thank you
22 very kindly. That's a tough year, and back now

1 to ninth grade, that's my home.

2 So, from that perspective, what I'm
3 curious about, with these proposed changes, how
4 will the changes in the standards affect your
5 instruction practices, or are these changes that
6 are happening things that you're already doing
7 and including in your work?

8 MS. HILL: Right. The things outside
9 -- so, I'll go -- I think when I began, it was a
10 little bit different because I was new.

11 So, going through different training
12 and stuff, I was able to incorporate, because of
13 our curriculum specialist and things like that,
14 some of these skills based changes into my
15 curriculum already.

16 So, whereas, I would have programs --
17 well, I'm teaching lessons on healthy
18 relationships and interactions. I'm able to
19 bring in resources from like, the Rape Prevention
20 Program, into my classroom, to teach kids skills
21 and give them more information, to basically
22 piggyback off of what I am teaching the students.

1 Again, you know, I've never been to a
2 situation like that. So, to have, you know,
3 people coming in that can talk and then give more
4 resources, that has helped.

5 So, again, that's that access of
6 information, and then allowing students to now be
7 able to advocate for themselves. If they feel
8 like they can't talk to me, they can't talk to
9 their parents, they may be able to call these
10 resourceful information people, to gain help if
11 that's what they need, or just get more
12 information, because their friend may need it.

13 So, again, that's how I've been
14 helping access it, again. So, a lot of programs
15 and a lot of things that I've come into contact
16 with, I've been able to incorporate and allow
17 help teach those skills. So, whether it be
18 refusal skills, whether it be skills on how to
19 just say no, how to be -- to stand apart and make
20 -- you know, stand out for being -- doing
21 something positive, instead of doing something
22 negative.

1 We go over those things. So, instead
2 of it just being like a role playing, where you
3 guys come up with scenarios, I'm telling them,
4 you know, how they can respond to certain
5 situations. So, that when they get into it, it's
6 not like a shock, like I don't know what to do.

7 So, those are the skills that these
8 students need to be equipped with, to make better
9 choices, just you know, for their life, and just
10 be prepared for everyday life, which we've all
11 been through.

12 Again, I'm sure if we go back to our
13 middle school and high school years, it's a lot
14 of things we'll do differently now. Why? Either
15 because we experienced it, we went through it or
16 we just learned about it, and now, we'll make
17 different decisions.

18 So, I mean, as much as we can, I think
19 it's important to incorporate those things, and
20 that's what I try to do, and it just gives
21 different feel, instead of just trying to learn
22 facts and figures, you know, about something.

1 So, I think that's pretty much more --
2 very more important, to just be prepared to
3 tackle those every day solutions.

4 MEMBER JOLLY: Just to follow up,
5 because I want to make sure that as we do
6 transition into these, and it sounds like you're
7 already doing that.

8 Is there any kind of PD, professional
9 development that could help us support you, or
10 that could help the system support you, so that
11 you can be an even more effective teacher, when
12 it comes to implementing these new standards
13 fully?

14 MS. HILL: Yes, whether it be
15 different programs, again, just thinking about
16 what the standards are tackling, so, if it's an
17 emotional health. We had students with
18 depression and things like that.

19 So, whether it's resources that we
20 can, you know, have them access or send them out
21 to, after learning about these things and what
22 the signs and symptoms may be, things like that,

1 I think will definitely help.

2 Then just getting teachers
3 professional development and -- because I mean,
4 that's some things that we've been going through
5 in DCPS. We sit through the actual programming
6 that different programs will give, and it gives
7 us just sometimes -- I can speak for myself, it's
8 like an eye-opener, wow, I wouldn't have ever
9 thought about that, or I would not have never
10 tackled this lesson in this way, and it's just
11 another add-on to the things that we teach.

12 MEMBER JOLLY: So, I guess that's what
13 I was asking, because I too, have suffered
14 through some miserable PD's in the past.

15 So, I am wondering then what an ideal
16 PD for these new health education standards would
17 look like, in addition to giving you the
18 programming support that you've asked for, and in
19 addition to giving you the evidence based
20 resources and curriculum that you mentioned in
21 your testimony.

22 MS. HILL: I think just -- not just --

1 I think just giving -- having sessions where you
2 can go through what you want to put your students
3 through, would be very important, because again,
4 you can tell me that this project is out here,
5 and you know, I may not see the importance of it.

6 But actually going through it, seeing
7 how it can be accessible to kids and how they
8 would, you know, understand the information, that
9 has helped me a lot and made me say, I want to
10 teach this in this way, not that I need that
11 program to teach it, but now, I'm seeing how they
12 do it and how they can, you know, gain an
13 interest. It helps me incorporate those things,
14 because again, that program may not work at my
15 school or the next school, but something I can
16 take from it, that I know will help my students,
17 because I know my students.

18 So, just going through different
19 things like that, I think is a big help, because
20 that's -- you know, what helps us get to our
21 students, because I take everything from, you
22 know, off paper and say, yes, this is going to

1 work for my kids, but I can take parts of it and
2 say, "Hey, this might work and this might work,"
3 for my particular population and things like
4 that. So, I think more training like that.

5 MEMBER JOLLY: Thank you so much, not
6 only for your testimony, but for your work with
7 kids.

8 MS. HILL: No problems.

9 MEMBER JOLLY: Your students in DCPS
10 are very lucky to have you.

11 MS. HILL: Thank you.

12 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Additional
13 questions from Board Members? Ms. Lord, our at-
14 large member.

15 MEMBER LORD: Thank you very much.
16 Thank you very much for being here. It's
17 wonderful to be able to hear from an educator and
18 sort of get that voice, fresh voice from the
19 field.

20 Just a real basic question. What does
21 the health curriculum or how many minutes a week
22 do you spend doing health? Is it a half-year

1 thing? Is it one course for the whole year, and
2 just help me understand just how many minutes in
3 a week, you're interacting with your students.

4 MS. HILL: Right. So, I see my
5 students five days a week, for the advisory and
6 then, you know, we rotate. So, I'm going to say
7 it's three-quarters of P.E. about they're
8 getting, and then -- about two-quarters of P.E.
9 and then a quarter of -- two-quarters of health.

10 So, it's split kind of half and half
11 with my students.

12 MEMBER LORD: So, you're basically
13 giving them at 360 degree health, physical
14 education --

15 MS. HILL: Because sometimes I
16 incorporate it into P.E. It doesn't have to like
17 -- we don't have to health day, P.E.

18 I can incorporate everything into one,
19 which is a lot of times, sometimes a big help,
20 because those skills just -- it touches every
21 area. So, yes.

22 MEMBER LORD: And do you interact or

1 integrate your lessons with say, the science
2 teacher or the literacy English language arts
3 teacher?

4 MS. HILL: So, I have to support just
5 different school's initiatives. So, in doing
6 that, sometimes I'm, you know, incorporating with
7 a lot of different other subject areas.

8 MEMBER LORD: So, essentially health
9 is not being taught at your school as a
10 completely separate entity from living and
11 learning, which is a very exciting concept for
12 those of us who had, you know, the talk in one
13 lesson in biology. Yes, right.

14 So, a number of things have -- or
15 issues have come before this Board from students,
16 from teachers, about the need for example, skills
17 on how to deal with gun violence, skills on how
18 to resist peer pressure. Nutrition was another
19 issue that kind of simmered on how to develop
20 healthy eating habits.

21 I was wondering if you could just give
22 me some insights onto how these new standards

1 would address those things, or how perhaps, you
2 address them in your teaching, that might be
3 informed -- that might inform the standards or
4 even change them.

5 MS. HILL: I see you mentioned
6 nutrition, so I'm just going to just jump into on
7 that.

8 I can remember back when we were
9 growing -- well, maybe I was growing up, you
10 know, you have the different food pyramids and
11 things like that.

12 So, yes, you can understand, you know,
13 what those things mean, but if you don't really
14 know how to make a meal based off those
15 nutritional facts and nutritional standards, it's
16 kind of like, you learned that for what?

17 So, being able to put students through
18 making a meal, you know, just basic breakfast,
19 lunch and dinner, using the different nutritional
20 facts and things like that, I feel like that is
21 important, letting them know, you know, what that
22 can mean to them, and you know, so that's one way

1 that I know I've incorporated different things
2 doing -- into my classroom.

3 So, that's like, teaching skills, as
4 opposed to just teaching the information. So,
5 now, they can say, "I can make a, you know, a
6 nice healthy breakfast, lunch and dinner," you
7 know, and things like that in class.

8 MEMBER LORD: So, it sounds a little
9 bit like home ec or cooking, which is really kind
10 of cool.

11 What about gun violence or
12 interpersonal violence? That tended to be in our
13 last go-around with the health standards, more of
14 something that was alluded to, mostly at the high
15 school level, but we heard from a fifth grader
16 not so long ago, about how he really needed some
17 help figuring out how to handle himself, or you
18 know, deal with those sorts of violence
19 situations.

20 MS. HILL: Well, I think just teaching
21 students how, you know, to stay -- not put
22 themselves in those type of situations and things

1 like that.

2 So, if they know, in their
3 environment, you got to teach just to make better
4 -- better choices, when it comes to things like
5 that. So, that's really all I can say about
6 that.

7 MEMBER LORD: Are there any parts of
8 the standards, if you could change one thing,
9 that you would change it, add more or subtract
10 something?

11 MS. HILL: So, I'm liking -- I'm
12 liking the advocacy and the -- you know,
13 accessing more information within the standards,
14 that I just want us to take a good look into,
15 because I think that's one of the things that's
16 very important, is we have standards, but
17 sometimes we -- once we address them, we don't
18 have the -- we don't give students the way, you
19 know, to use it.

20 I guess I'm going back to that skills
21 thing. So, giving them the, you know, resources
22 to access that information that they need, you

1 know, I'm fine with that, and I'm fine with the
2 new way that they adopted it, as I read over them
3 and highlighted different things that were
4 important to me, in my class and my students.

5 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so
6 much. I have one really brief question, and
7 actually, the folks from the D.C. Center, who
8 were here earlier, touched upon this in their
9 detailed letter to us.

10 Some of the skills and information
11 taught at the middle school level isn't
12 necessarily retained at the high school level.
13 Can you talk a little bit about what you do,
14 tactics you use to try and make sure that
15 students really understand?

16 There are some things that we've left
17 out of the high school standard, because they're
18 covered in middle school, things like actual
19 intercourse and what it is, appropriate condom
20 use and other STD prevention measures, that are
21 taught really strongly in middle school, so we
22 skip them in high school, and it is because there

1 is just not enough time? Do you have really good
2 tactics that you use as a teacher? How can we
3 improve this, so that information is retained
4 throughout?

5 MS. HILL: Right. Yes, I think those
6 things need to just kind of follow through. I
7 think it's important for students to start
8 accessing that at the middle school level,
9 because they may or may not be engaging in those
10 type of activities, but they will be coming.

11 So, I think it's very important to
12 look at those areas in middle school heavily,
13 that way when you get to high school, now it's
14 just a reinforcement of what you might be going
15 through or now, when you come in contact with it,
16 you have a better idea of how to tackle it.

17 So, you may not even -- in middle
18 school, you may not be having sexual intercourse
19 or anything at that point. So, when you get the
20 information it's, you know, kind of like, oh,
21 icky, but in high school now, you're getting
22 interested.

1 So, again, it's not, oh, you learned
2 it already. It's should still, you know, roll
3 into let's touch on it again, because now, it's
4 different on how you might interact with the
5 information that you receive, at that time.

6 So, in middle school, you may receive
7 it one way, because it -- you're not going
8 through it, but in high school, you may receive
9 it a different way, because you're going through
10 it and now, you're like, you know, need more
11 information and it just -- the way it is, it's
12 just more different.

13 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Right, because
14 you just get it -- generally get a theoretical
15 view in middle school, and then perhaps --

16 MS. HILL: For some, it's not
17 theoretical.

18 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Right, right.

19 MS. HILL: For some, it's -- but for
20 some, it is. So, I mean, the shift is -- I think
21 it's going younger and younger. So, I think --
22 you know.

1 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Terrific, and
2 then at the high school level, would you
3 recommend that individual high school teachers
4 reiterate and reinforce or do you think that the
5 standards should actually be reiterated at the
6 high school level, for those skills, particularly
7 human growth and development skills learned at
8 middle school?

9 MS. HILL: I believe that they should
10 be reiterated --

11 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Okay.

12 MS. HILL: -- all together, that way,
13 you know, it's just continuous. So, it's not
14 that -- you can still learn it again.

15 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Terrific.

16 MS. HILL: I think I'm saying that
17 right.

18 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: You are.

19 Absolutely, and with that, we're going to let you
20 go, unless any colleagues have additional
21 questions.

22 Thank you so very much for bringing

1 a teacher's perspective. We really appreciate
2 your input onto these standards and we really --
3 I personally really appreciate you just coming
4 down here tonight.

5 MS. HILL: Thank you. Thank you for
6 having me again, and Mr. Jones, I'll be reaching
7 out to you. Thank you.

8 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so
9 much, Ms. Hill. We're now moving to the Every
10 Student Succeeds Act Accountability Measures, and
11 a similarly distinguished panel of witnesses.

12 Tonight, we are joined by three
13 national experts in education policy for
14 discussion on the Every Student Succeeds Act.

15 Peter Zamora, and as I call your name,
16 feel free to come down and take a seat.

17 Peter Zamora is director of federal
18 relations at the Council of Chief State School
19 Officers, which I believe our Superintendent
20 works with very closely.

21 Bethany Little is a principal at
22 Education Council, and Scott Sargrad, I hope I

1 got that pretty close, is the managing director
2 of K-12 Education Policy at the Center for
3 American Progress.

4 Thank you all for joining us. We'll
5 begin on my right, your left, and you'll each
6 have five minutes, and then I think there will be
7 quite a few questions from the Board.

8 MR. ZAMORA: Perfect.

9 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you.

10 MR. ZAMORA: Thank you very much,
11 President Jacobson and thank you to the Board,
12 for inviting us here to testify today.

13 I'm Peter Zamora, the Director of
14 Federal Relations at the Council of Chief State
15 School Officers. We are a national non-profit
16 organization, representing states superintendents
17 of education.

18 So, we have a lot of interest in
19 states, as you can imagine, around the elementary
20 and secondary education act re-authorization
21 ESSA, I think we'll call it here for short.

22 So, CCSSO is strongly supportive of

1 the re-authorization, because it preserves many
2 of the key elements of No Child Left Behind,
3 while also moving passed many of the flaws of
4 that law.

5 So, it preserves, you know, the
6 requirement that states have standards, that they
7 assess annually, that they have accountability
8 systems and that states dis-aggregate results by
9 race, ethnicity, income, language.

10 So, those were some really key
11 elements that helped to move states and districts
12 under No Child Left Behind, but we found many of
13 the structures to be sort of restrictive, as we
14 looked to move around school improvement and
15 teacher support and evaluation.

16 So, the new Act really strikes an
17 appropriate balance between federal and state
18 roles, and as such, we were strongly supportive.

19 I will, I think, go over some of the
20 high levels, sort of overview of some of the big
21 topics and certainly welcome any questions that
22 folks might have.

1 So, on accountability, and this is a
2 substantial departure from what we saw under No
3 Child Left Behind or even under ESEA flexibility
4 waivers.

5 So, each state has to have an
6 accountability system that meaningfully
7 differentiates between schools, but it looks very
8 different than what we've seen under prior
9 versions.

10 So, still requires academic
11 proficiency. Still requires graduation rates for
12 high schools, but it also requires English
13 language proficiencies, as an element of the
14 statewide accountability system.

15 So, this is not an element that we've
16 seen states include in the past, and it's an
17 element where there is going to be some
18 complexity as states work through their new
19 systems.

20 The next two are even more of a
21 departure, I think from current law, where it's
22 requiring states to include growth or another

1 statewide academic indicator.

2 So, and then the one beyond that,
3 another state-set indicator of school quality or
4 student success.

5 So, the statutes have a long list of,
6 you know, potential opportunities, such as access
7 to AP or IB courses, you know, student
8 engagement, teacher engagement, surveys, but
9 there is substantial flexibility at the state
10 level, in terms of which to select and how to
11 weight them vis a vis the others.

12 Then finally, state accountability
13 systems have to continue to require assessment
14 participation, so it's a 95 percent assessment
15 participation rate, both at the school and the
16 sub-group level, but it doesn't necessarily
17 inherently by itself, drive schools into
18 improvement, but it does allow for -- it is a
19 requirement of the accountability system.

20 Then that feeds into a school
21 improvement system that's very different than No
22 Child Left Behind, or ESEA waivers.

1 So, the school improvement grant, four
2 models, those go away under the new Act, and
3 evidence -- evidence-based interventions are now
4 required.

5 But substantial flexibility, in terms
6 of how to do that. So, there are two categories
7 of schools that are required. There is sort of a
8 lowest performing category, which is
9 comprehensive support and improvement, and that's
10 the lowest performing five percent of Title 1
11 schools on the state accountability index that we
12 just discussed.

13 Then it's also high schools that have
14 below 67 percent graduation rate. So, in other
15 words, they're graduating you know, fewer than
16 two-thirds of their students, and then also there
17 is a targeted support and improvement category,
18 which is schools that have consistently under-
19 performing sub-groups, as defined by the state,
20 and that if they don't improve after a state-
21 determined period of time, that they have to
22 receive comprehensive supports and improvements.

1 Teacher evaluation and equity. So,
2 the Act does not require specific educator
3 evaluation measures or methods, but it does
4 require that there is an equity component in the
5 distribution of teachers.

6 So, State Title 1 plans have to
7 demonstrate how the state will ensure that low-
8 income and minority children enrolled in Title 1
9 schools are not served at disproportionate rates
10 by ineffective, out of field and inexperienced
11 teachers, but it's, there should be some state
12 flexibility in how to define and interpret that.

13 It authorizes funds that can be used
14 for state evaluation systems, but substantially
15 expands the allowable activities at the state
16 level, in terms of which activities you want to
17 use.

18 So, state evaluation is one of those
19 potential elements, but it's no longer required,
20 although it does authorize the Teacher Incentive
21 Fund, which is a competitive grant program, that
22 supports innovative educator evaluation systems.

1 Then quickly, I see my time is
2 wrapping up, but you know, it does also, you
3 know, create many opportunities for states to
4 advance teacher supports, and to sort of better
5 align teacher evaluation supports.

6 So, there is an allowable use of funds
7 for the state share of Title 2 funds that could
8 include teacher and school leader academies. So,
9 these are, you know, potentially alternative
10 route opportunities for states to actually move
11 outside of higher education systems to credential
12 teachers.

13 There is also a new three percent set-
14 aside that's permissive at the state level, that
15 if a state wants to move a state oriented teacher
16 -- or principal preparation and support program,
17 there is a new allow-ability there.

18 There is also allowed activities
19 around reforming state certification and
20 licensure systems, develop, as we had just
21 discussed, you know, new teacher evaluation
22 systems and many other priorities.

1 But as President Jacobson noted, I
2 think earlier in the meeting today, you know, the
3 law is not fully implementable yet, because there
4 is a regulatory process that's happening right
5 now, at the Department of Education, there is a
6 negotiated rulemaking that starts this coming
7 week, and then there will be proposed ESL
8 regulations that will be published for public
9 comment later this spring, and we expect those to
10 be finalized by the end of this year.

11 So, as we look at state time lines,
12 you know, we are urging folks to do what you're
13 doing now, which is, you know, become aware of
14 what's in the law, sort of think about engaging
15 stakeholders and how to move forward, you know,
16 even though we can't write a full state plan now,
17 it's appropriate to start thinking about it.

18 In August of this year, the waivers
19 expire. Then there is a transition period, as we
20 look at the next school year 2016/2017, as we
21 move towards full implementation in school year
22 2017/2018.

1 So, we are urging states to be
2 thoughtful around how they use this transition
3 process, to engage with stakeholders and to move
4 forward with solid state plans in 2017 and 2018.

5 So, I think with that, thank you very
6 much. I welcome your questions.

7 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr.
8 Zamora. We'll have plenty. Ms. Little, you have
9 five minutes.

10 MS. LITTLE: Thank you for the
11 opportunity to be here and speak with you this
12 evening. As was mentioned, I work at an
13 organization called the Education Counsel. I'm a
14 typical creature of Washington, D.C., having been
15 in and out of the federal government, with some
16 stints in the White House Domestic Policy Council
17 and in the United States Senate on the Education
18 Committee, also with advocacy organizations like
19 Children's Defense Fund, Alliance for Excellent
20 Education and most importantly, I have two
21 children in our school system here, one in our --
22 our local neighborhood DCPS and one in our -- in

1 a charter school.

2 So, I have a great investment in the
3 work here today, and appreciate the chance to
4 talk.

5 Passage of any new federal law creates
6 opportunities for shifts in change, and it's
7 important to contemplate those shifts in the
8 context of what that federal law sets out to do.

9 This one in particular is more about
10 the fixing of NCLB, the No Child Left Behind Act,
11 than it is about a next vision and movement for
12 education.

13 To that end, it maintains the basic
14 architecture of the No Child Left Behind Act,
15 with standards, assessments, accountability.

16 The biggest shift, as you heard from
17 my colleague Peter is that it moves more
18 authority regarding the design of some of those
19 systems, from the federal level, back to states
20 and districts, and most importantly perhaps, it
21 anchors the Federal law in what is a shift that
22 has already been made by the states, to the

1 expectation of college and career readiness for
2 all students.

3 I have to give kudos to this Board and
4 to our city, for having moved us ahead of the
5 curve, towards the adoptions of college and
6 career ready standards, and I would urge that in
7 this moment of discussions and decisions, we keep
8 that at the North Star, and align what we're
9 doing to it, as an important continuing vision
10 for what we want for all of our students here in
11 D.C.

12 Because there is not a particular
13 vision, except for this devolution piece around
14 ESEA, it's important that the states themselves
15 move towards their implementation, they are
16 clear and coherent about their own theory of
17 action regarding the design and use of standards,
18 assessments and accountability systems.

19 What do you intend to drive and
20 support with the adoption and the design of these
21 systems?

22 In particular, while ESSA creates an

1 important opportunity for every state to revisit
2 its accountability system, including in the area,
3 as Peter mentioned, like which measures to
4 include, how to weight them, what goals to set
5 for student achievement, it's ideal to see this
6 as a moment about data-driven continuous
7 improvement, not as a matter of designing from
8 first impression, approaching this moment of
9 ESSA, what should we do in accountability, is
10 probably not your best entry point.

11 It's critical to think about what have
12 we learned from our existing accountability
13 system? What do the data tell us about whether
14 it's driving what we need it to drive, and what
15 might we shift as a result of that?

16 While there are a lot of decision
17 points the state might consider in revisiting the
18 accountability system, the values that underline
19 the design of an accountability system are
20 probably most important to keep top of mind in
21 this moment, so I'm going to spend a moment
22 talking about what some of those values are, that

1 really matter in the design of accountability
2 systems.

3 The first is word of -- phrase I've
4 used before, the development of a clear theory of
5 action, a share theory of action that allows all
6 stakeholders to understand and play their part in
7 the accountability system is crucial, so that
8 everybody understands what are we attempting to
9 drive and how is the accountability system
10 driving it?

11 The second piece of that is around the
12 importance of clarity and transparency. It is
13 critical for all stakeholders to be able to
14 easily understand what they are being held
15 accountable for, and what the system is telling
16 them, as a result of that accountability.

17 Losing those values of clarity and
18 transparency come at a high cost in the design of
19 accountability systems.

20 The third value I would indicate is
21 around alignment. All indicators in the system
22 should be aligned to the North Star, in this

1 case, of achieving college and career readiness
2 for all students, and in particular, the issue of
3 equity and how are we using the accountability
4 system to advance most quickly, students who have
5 the least access to opportunity, towards that
6 college and career readiness?

7 We don't want a system that's
8 unaligned, sends mixed signals, drives in
9 conflicting directions.

10 The fourth point I'd make is around
11 data. Data is -- the use of data is central in
12 accountability, but it's really worth
13 differentiating, which data are needed for what
14 purpose and to inform whom?

15 There is a temptation in this moment
16 to take all possible indicators and all possible
17 data points and say, if we care about them, they
18 should be in the accountability system. But it's
19 really important not to rush to those conclusions
20 and to think really, what do we need that data to
21 tell us?

22 Is it important for the decision about

1 differentiation among schools, understanding what
2 the performance of schools is, or is it more
3 important to tell us about the needs analysis and
4 the interventions for those schools, or is it
5 more important to tell us something about how to
6 inform parents and the community about those
7 schools?

8 Those are all different uses of data
9 that exist within the large contemplation of that
10 accountability system, but folks often rush to
11 what tells us low performance.

12 I see I'm out of time. I'm going to
13 say one last thing, which is that stability is
14 also an important value in an accountability
15 system.

16 Accountability systems are actually
17 slow to take hold and to begin to drive change.
18 They're somewhat blunt instruments in what we
19 have to undertake in this work, and so, it is
20 important that while change should be made when
21 necessary, it should be as part of a deliberate
22 response to data driven continuous improvement,

1 not made lightly or frequently.

2 My last point I would say is, just a
3 reminder, this law is fundamentally about
4 advancing equity, and in this moment, it is
5 critical that as you contemplate the
6 implementation of the law, you keep that equity
7 piece first and foremost in your mind. Thank you
8 for the opportunity. I look forward to answering
9 questions.

10 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
11 Little. Mr. Sargrad, five minutes.

12 MR. SARGRAD: Thank you. Thank you,
13 President Jacobson, and Vice President Williams,
14 and Members of the State Board, for the
15 opportunity to testify today.

16 My name is Scott Sargrad and I am the
17 Managing Director for K-12 Education Policy at
18 the Center for American Progress, here in
19 Washington, D.C., and CAP, the Center for
20 American Progress, is an independent, non-
21 partisan policy institute that is dedicated to
22 improving the lives of all Americans through bold

1 ideas and progressive action, as well as strong
2 leadership.

3 Prior to joining CAP, I served in
4 President Obama's Administration as the Deputy
5 Assistant Secretary for Policy and Strategic
6 Initiatives in the Office of Elementary and
7 Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of
8 Education, and in my testimony today, I hope to
9 bring my perspective, both from CAP and from my
10 time at the Department, as well as my time as a
11 math and special education teacher.

12 As you know, on December 10th, 2015,
13 the President signed into law the Every Student
14 Succeeds Act, or ESSA, which re-authorized the
15 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965,
16 and replaced No Child Left Behind, as the key
17 federal education law governing K through 12
18 education in this country, and CAP strongly
19 supported the passage of ESSA, as a major step
20 forward from No Child Left Behind, and while it
21 certainly is not perfect, we believe that ESSA
22 strikes the right balance between accountability

1 and flexibility, and it holds states, districts
2 and schools accountable for raising student
3 performance and closing achievement gaps, while
4 giving them the flexibility to design systems
5 that meet their specific local needs.

6 By eliminating No Child Left Behind's
7 one size fits all approach that looked at one
8 test on one day, ESSA now allows for multiple
9 measures to be used, to determine how well
10 schools are serving, school districts and states
11 are serving students.

12 With law's additional flexibility also
13 comes additional responsibility for states and
14 for districts, to ensure that all students are
15 given a chance to succeed.

16 ESSA builds on the work many states,
17 including the District of Columbia, have already
18 done under the Obama Administration's waivers,
19 which should serve as a building block for their
20 new accountability systems under this new law.

21 The law also includes some key
22 provisions and federal guardrails, to help ensure

1 that states and districts meet their
2 responsibilities to improve outcomes for all
3 students.

4 Like its predecessor NCLB, ESSA
5 requires students to be tested annually and for
6 the results to be dis-aggregated by sub-group and
7 reported publically. It continues the emphasis
8 from both the waivers and the school improvement
9 grants program on turning around the lowest
10 performing schools and high schools with the
11 lowest graduation rates, and it requires action
12 in schools where individual groups of students
13 aren't making progress.

14 It ensures that real resources, more
15 than one-billion dollars remain dedicated to
16 improving these schools.

17 Moreover, it places responsibility for
18 improvement not just on schools, but also on
19 districts, and when districts continue to
20 struggle, it gives states the ability to step in
21 and require action.

22 Finally, ESSA supports greater

1 resource equity among schools, by requiring the
2 reporting of actual school level expenditures,
3 including personnel salary data and non-personnel
4 expenditures, providing an important window into
5 the resources that high poverty and low poverty
6 schools alike are receiving.

7 Now that states will be able to look
8 at additional measures, beyond school performance
9 and success beyond just test scores and
10 graduation rates, they'll be able to consider
11 critical factors, like student and teacher
12 engagement, success and participation in advanced
13 course work and school climate and safety.

14 Instead of labeling schools of -- as
15 failing, if they miss a single target under NCLB,
16 states can now take a more holistic approach to
17 determining whether schools are succeeding or
18 struggling, and by holding schools accountable
19 for these types of measures and ensuring that
20 they actually address inequities in these areas,
21 states can help close persistent achievement
22 gaps.

1 While the new law is an exciting step
2 forward for our country, it is also important for
3 states to be thoughtful and deliberate about the
4 changes they consider making to their systems.

5 While ESSA was signed into law in
6 December, many of the new provisions regarding
7 accountability will not go fully into effect
8 until the 2017/2018 school year, and as we've
9 talked about, the Department is currently in the
10 middle of a regulatory process, which will set
11 additional parameters, definitions and provide
12 guidance regarding the laws and provisions.

13 Again, since state plans will not be
14 due to the Department until likely spring 2017,
15 states have an excellent opportunity to seek
16 input from their stakeholders, develop a theory
17 of action and identify clear goals for
18 improvement of their schools.

19 Over the past two decades, D.C. has
20 been a leader in education reform and innovation,
21 and has made remarkable progress in improving
22 outcomes for students.

1 Since 2000, the percentage of students
2 performing at grade level on the national
3 assessment of educational progress has tripled.
4 However, the city still has a long way to go,
5 before all of its students are graduating from
6 high school, prepared for college and a career.

7 In 2015, also on the national
8 assessment of educational progress, less than
9 one-third of all students in D.C. were actually
10 at grade level.

11 The achievement gap between white and
12 black students in the city was by far, the
13 largest in the country. In fourth grade, 81
14 percent of white students were reading on grade
15 level, compared to 18 percent of black students.

16 It's critical that the District of
17 Columbia take advantage of the opportunity that
18 ESSA presents to improve achievement, close gaps
19 and advance equity. At the same time, it's clear
20 that this city's reform efforts have turned the
21 ship in the right direction and dramatic changes
22 could disrupt that progress.

1 Ultimately, the State Board of
2 Education, the Office of the State Superintendent
3 of Education, the D.C. Public Schools and the
4 D.C. Public Charter School Board must work
5 together to create an educational system that
6 gives all students, no matter their background,
7 the opportunity to succeed.

8 Thank you for the opportunity to
9 testify here today, and I look forward to your
10 questions.

11 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, all,
12 so very much for that testimony. We're going to
13 move to questions by Board Members.

14 But I want to reiterate two things
15 that you all have said. One, there is a
16 negotiated rulemaking that is going to take quite
17 a bit of time, before we can even figure out what
18 landscape actually looks like.

19 So, we've got our time to do our
20 homework, and we're going to do that with the
21 Superintendent's Office, and with folks like you.

22 Secondly, that you might want to not

1 make too many big changes too quickly, and really
2 disrupt the system that is headed in the
3 direction, but for the opportunity gap that is,
4 as you said, Mr. Sargrad, is the largest in the
5 nation, between our white students and other
6 students.

7 With that, let's go to five minute
8 rounds of Board Member questions. Mr. Weedon
9 from Ward 6.

10 MEMBER WEEDON: So, first, thank you
11 for being here, very informative.

12 I want to read something from the 2015
13 NAEP report card for the District, specifically
14 the section Score Gaps for Student Groups.

15 In 2015, black students had an average
16 score that was 60 points lower than that for
17 white students. This performance gap was not
18 significantly different than that from 2002.

19 In 2015, Hispanic students had an
20 average score that 55 points lower than that for
21 white students. This performance gap was not
22 significantly different from that in 2002.

1 In 2015, students who were eligible
2 for free and reduced price lunch, an indicator of
3 low family income, had an average score that was
4 58 points lower than that for students who were
5 not eligible. This performance gap was wider
6 than that in 2002.

7 I hear from our city's leaders, I hear
8 from others, the great things that D.C. has done
9 in education, and we have -- I'm first to admit
10 that enrollment is up, graduation rates are up,
11 but there are many features, many factors that
12 have gone into that.

13 Far too often, we look at these broad
14 brush strokes and say, "We're improving." We're
15 not improving for those who need it the most, and
16 we need to be cognizant of that.

17 Mr. Zamora, you said something around
18 graduation rates. Could you revisit that a
19 little bit and share a little bit more,
20 specifically, there was something about high
21 schools that are graduating less than 67 percent
22 of students. Could you elaborate?

1 MR. ZAMORA: Yes, thank you. So, you
2 know, graduation rates are both a required
3 element of the state accountability system and
4 they're also a required category of schools under
5 school identification -- under school
6 improvement.

7 So, you know, in other words, all of
8 the high schools, I think the reference point was
9 below 67 percent, they have to be in a
10 comprehensive support and improvement category,
11 and so, there is a requirement that stakeholders
12 come together, develop and evidence-based plan,
13 and then look to improve that lowest performing
14 school, but you know, again, no more sort of very
15 narrow models established at the Federal level,
16 more flexibility at the state and local level, to
17 determine interventions that are going to work in
18 those schools.

19 MEMBER WEEDON: Okay, so, just again,
20 I'm going to point out some issues of
21 accountability here.

22 If you look at the PARCC scores from

1 last year in the District, there are eight high
2 schools in the District that did not have any
3 students score at level three or four in math on
4 the PARCC College and Career Ready.

5 There were another four schools with
6 less than three percent of students that scored
7 at level three or four in PARCC.

8 Yet, at these high schools, graduation
9 rates reached up to 78 percent, or no, 84
10 percent, I missed one.

11 Clearly, we need to make sure that
12 we're graduating students who are ready to
13 succeed in college and the workforce. Graduation
14 rates can be manipulated.

15 Again, I think we've gone a long way
16 from where they were in this city, but we need to
17 hold everybody accountable. I'll yield the rest
18 of my time.

19 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr.
20 Weedon. We're going to go to Ms. Lord, our at-
21 large member, and then Ms. Wattenberg.

22 MEMBER LORD: Thank you. Just a quick

1 point of picking up on the graduation rates.

2 We have a number of immigrant students
3 and others, who have -- with five years in high
4 school, will do great, but we are sort of bound
5 by the U.S. Department of Education's rules, to
6 count the four year rate.

7 Is there anything in the guidance or
8 anything you've heard so far, that would allow
9 states to essentially step out of that straight-
10 jacket and do what's right for kids?

11 MR. ZAMORA: I believe that there is
12 an opportunity to propose an extended year
13 graduation rate. We'd certainly invite you all
14 to weigh in, as well.

15 MR. SARGRAD: Yes, so, the law
16 provides the flexibility for states to use the --
17 they have to use the four year rate. There is a
18 requirement to consider the four year graduation
19 rate, but they may also use a five year rate, a
20 six year rate, and there are even states that
21 have used under the ESEA flexibility waivers, a
22 seven year graduation rate, to account for

1 students who really do need significantly more
2 time to graduate from high school.

3 So, the city certainly can look at
4 what the needs are of the students in its
5 schools, and considering those extended year
6 rates. The law does require that the state set
7 targets for those graduation rates, and that
8 there are more aggressive targets for those
9 extended year rates, because naturally, if you're
10 allowing students more time to graduate, you
11 should have more students who graduate.

12 So, the rates are -- do need to be --
13 have higher targets, even though they are
14 extended year.

15 MEMBER LORD: Thank you, and I also
16 want to say this is an amazing conversation. I
17 spent the last year as President of the National
18 Association of State Boards of Education, working
19 with State Board leaders and the chiefs and
20 basically, everybody at the table, to get some
21 milestones, and they're in the Bill. So, this is
22 really exciting.

1 Help me understand what lessons we
2 might learn from No Child Left Behind.

3 Innovations from other states.

4 I keep coming to the yawning gap in
5 achievement, between schools, between populations
6 of students where certain schools are knocking it
7 out of the park. Other schools have struggled to
8 get passed 20 percent proficiency rates.

9 I'm wondering if we are getting the
10 results we're seeing because of what we're
11 measuring and are there states where expanding
12 what they're measuring or maybe not evaluating
13 teachers, maybe teacher evaluations are, in fact,
14 unknowingly leading to unintended consequences
15 that don't promote excellence.

16 So, just share any lessons learned
17 along the road to No Child Left Behind that
18 you've gleaned.

19 MR. ZAMORA: Thank you very much. I
20 think certainly as we looked at the assessment,
21 the public reporting, the accountability systems,
22 the dis-aggregate students results, you know,

1 they've shown a spotlight upon the achievement
2 gap in the country, and I think that has
3 certainly been a healthy movement.

4 I think we have also learned from No
5 Child Left Behind that sort of one size fits all
6 structures, you know, whether it's on school
7 improvement, you know, whether it's on sort of
8 potential accountability, have not proven to
9 yield the kind of results, at least in recent
10 years, that we would like to see, but it has
11 engendered a tremendous amount of activity at
12 state and local levels, to take on the
13 achievement gap, and now, it's really sort of
14 time to harness that energy in the service of
15 kids.

16 MS. LITTLE: Yes, I would just add to
17 that, a couple of thoughts.

18 One is that we've learned that
19 accountability systems don't in and of
20 themselves, drive the improvement. They set
21 expectations and goals, which is critical, and
22 they identify where resources and other shifts

1 and changes need to be made, but it is those
2 resource redirections and those shifts in changes
3 at the school level, that will drive the
4 improvement, not the accountability system in and
5 of itself.

6 We do, however, know that they drive
7 behavior change. We've seen that what we asked
8 of schools out of No Child Left Behind, caused a
9 greater focus on reading and math, for good and
10 for ill.

11 There was an over-narrowing of
12 curriculum in many areas, places where they
13 didn't have the capacity to do better things,
14 simply doubled-down on what they were doing in
15 the moment, but there have been growth in this
16 reading and math scores, the ability of students
17 to do reading and math in a lot of areas.

18 So, it is important to contemplate
19 that the accountability system won't solve the
20 problem, but it will drive behaviors and so, it's
21 super important to think carefully, what do you
22 want to drive, and how do you make sure you're

1 not over-crowding that lever, in the
2 accountability system?

3 Last thing I'd say is, you mentioned
4 teacher eval, and interestingly, we are not
5 seeing states rush away from teacher eval in this
6 moment. We're seeing states take measured
7 consideration of -- they were -- they were told,
8 under the Department's waiver process, to do or
9 Raise to the Top process, to do certain types of
10 eval in certain ways, and many states felt very
11 constricted by that.

12 So, the leading states are revisiting,
13 using data and taking a look at and adjusting
14 their systems, not simply moving away from them,
15 and actually D.C. has been a leader in that
16 regard, and has often held up in teach eval
17 conversations as the state that has done the most
18 to look at its teacher eval system and make
19 continuous improvement to it.

20 MEMBER LORD: And yet we have gap in
21 the relations. So.

22 MS. LITTLE: Indeed, but still --

1 MEMBER LORD: And just one quick
2 question. There is specific funding for the
3 arts, I believe in the new law.

4 Any thought about how to emphasize
5 that in our accountability plan or science, which
6 is my joy and love?

7 MR. SARGRAD: Yes, I think in terms of
8 science, the law does give the flexibility to
9 look at multiple indicators of student
10 achievement.

11 So, not just looking at reading and
12 math scores and graduation rates, but looking at
13 measures, whether they're science assessments or
14 indicators of access to high level science
15 courses.

16 So, there are, I think, a lot of
17 opportunities to examine things like life science
18 and other subjects, whether it's history or
19 civics, physical education, and the arts, as part
20 of the accountability system.

21 So, yes, there is -- like you
22 mentioned, funding for some of these things, but

1 there is also the opportunity to put them in the
2 accountability system if that's something that
3 the state and the city believes is going to drive
4 towards college and career readiness for all
5 kids.

6 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you. Thank
7 you, Ms. Lord. We'll now go to Ms. Wattenberg,
8 then Ms. Jolly.

9 MEMBER WATTENBERG: Thanks for being
10 here, and a special welcome to Bethany, because
11 she's -- her child goes to school in my ward.

12 It's interesting that two of my
13 colleagues have raised this four year high school
14 graduation rate, and it's what I was going to
15 raise, so it's clearly on a lot of people's
16 minds.

17 What I want to ask you about is how
18 other states have maybe dealt with this, because
19 there really is a sense here, that in an effort
20 to push up the high school graduation rates, that
21 part of what's being lost is the idea that
22 graduation should be the result of and be

1 consistent with having learned a lot, and you
2 hear a lot from teachers that they're under
3 pressure to pass kids, whether or not kids have
4 reached the standards in the class.

5 You all were here earlier and you
6 heard some of the concerns around the competency-
7 based learning, and part of what that is based on
8 is a concern that when you lose the seat-time
9 hours, that pressure to push kids on could become
10 even more intense.

11 Every state has been dealing with --
12 has had to have the four year graduation rate as
13 part of their accountability system and on their
14 report card.

15 So, I'm wondering how -- do you hear
16 this kind of concern around the country? How are
17 other people dealing with it? So, that's number
18 one.

19 Related to that is another issue
20 about, you know, what you measure can cause the
21 distortions, right, is there is -- has been a
22 growing push to focus on the higher level

1 courses, but if, as colleagues have said, kids
2 are entering high school so, so far behind, and
3 the push is on the higher courses, it takes away
4 some of the focus on what you should be doing
5 that helps kids who aren't ready yet, for the
6 higher courses.

7 So, it's a dilemma, and again, I --
8 it's not original to us, so I'm curious how
9 others do this, and my third issue again, what
10 are other states doing, relates to what the last
11 speaker said, which is the extent to which the
12 curriculum really has narrowed around reading and
13 math, and we hear a lot of complaints about that
14 at the elementary schools, but in D.C., we also
15 have a lot of middle school campuses, where kids
16 are double-dosed on reading and math, reading and
17 math.

18 So, kids are actually getting into
19 high school in some cases, having had very little
20 exposure, certainly inadequate exposure, to these
21 subjects, which in turn, makes it that much
22 harder to succeed in these course in high school.

1 So, so much effort is going on here,
2 the intentions here in D.C. are so great, so much
3 energy is going into it, how do you think about
4 these dilemmas that we're facing?

5 MR. ZAMORA: Well, certainly, college
6 and career ready graduation is the objective of
7 certainly, our organization and the supports that
8 we provide to states, and I think as we've seen,
9 states in recent years, you know, adopt college
10 and career ready expectations for students, you
11 know, that has, I think in some sense, sort of
12 illuminated the disparity that continues to
13 exist.

14 So, I think this is an opportunity for
15 some real sort of vigorous conversations here in
16 the District and the State Board, as to sort of
17 how to balance these systems to better reflect
18 sort of college and career ready graduation.

19 MS. LITTLE: I have a couple of
20 thoughts. One is that, just to cite rewind to why
21 graduation rates became such a focus in the
22 accountability system.

1 When we first passed the No Child Left
2 Behind Act, there was, in fact, a significant
3 fear and some beginning moves towards the
4 opposite effect, which was that the easiest way
5 to raise test scores, especially in high schools,
6 is to actually push out the students who are most
7 likely to fail the test.

8 So, it became critical that we in
9 fact, put a balancing force in, that takes into
10 account, both achievement and attainment.

11 So, now, you see that. You see a
12 system that expects both achievement and
13 attainment. How we keep high levels of
14 achievement, the goals that you set around
15 college and career readiness, what's expected on
16 PARCC, for example, is a key piece of keeping
17 that balance, but I'd encourage folks not to
18 forget that it is a carefully struck balance.

19 Speaking of balance, you mentioned the
20 narrowing of curriculum challenge, as well, and I
21 guess I would say two quick things about that.

22 One is that it does go back in many

1 ways to those side of building capacity. The
2 idea that students need to be able to read,
3 write, articulate, do math, in order to succeed
4 in society really hasn't changed, and the idea
5 that that is fundamental to their college and
6 career and other success is core.

7 The fact that people are doubling down
8 on those things isn't because they no longer
9 value the other things. It's because they
10 haven't fully taught those skills.

11 So, how do we think about building the
12 capacity in our schools, so that there is no need
13 to double dose at seventh and eighth grade,
14 because these students are building from early
15 childhood, which is another lever that's on the
16 table. We can think about what those investments
17 might be, and there is accountability opportunity
18 to think about that too, how do we look at needs
19 analysis and whether or not students are coming
20 in at similar levels. What does the early
21 childhood opportunity offer to them, for example,
22 so that you're not ending up in a situation where

1 with your seventh and eighth graders, you're
2 still fighting so hard to close those gaps, that
3 you're resorting to double dosing, rather than
4 the deeper, richer curriculum, which we know is
5 actually more likely to engage students and have
6 them raise their reading and math abilities, yet
7 people don't know how to do that, so they resort
8 to the double dose.

9 MR. SARGRAD: So, just speaking to
10 your two questions about higher level courses and
11 a little bit in the narrowing with the
12 curriculum.

13 In terms of the high level -- higher
14 level course work, I think we're seeing states
15 take the balance -- a balanced approach between
16 looking at the performance in advanced course
17 work, so whether students are scoring at high
18 levels on AP and IB exams, and also looking at
19 the participation, are schools actually providing
20 access to those courses to kids from all groups,
21 including kids who are traditionally
22 disadvantaged?

1 So, I think accountability system is
2 the -- like we had mentioned, can provide
3 incentives for different things, and if there are
4 incentives only associated with performance, and
5 then that means that it's easy to just look at
6 the kids who are likely to do well on those
7 advanced courses, whereas, if there are
8 incentives associated with participation, then
9 there is an incentive to encourage more students
10 to take those courses and become prepared to
11 succeed in advanced courses.

12 The other piece of the higher level
13 courses is, considering things like career and
14 technical education, and whether students are
15 graduating career ready, in addition to college
16 ready.

17 So, there are states like Kentucky
18 that have really taken a hard look at their
19 career readiness initiatives, and for students
20 who might not be taking an AP course or an IB
21 sequence, they are taking career readiness
22 courses, and they are passing career and

1 technical education courses and assessments, to
2 be ready for receiving certifications and having
3 a well-paying job when they leave high school.

4 So, I think this balance between
5 advanced courses and also career education is
6 very important to consider.

7 Just on the point of narrowing of the
8 curriculum, the thing I would add is that a lot
9 of the narrowing of the curriculum under NCLB was
10 driven by this focus on a single test on a single
11 day, and that being the sole measure of a
12 school's quality.

13 So, if -- that's one sudden group of
14 students failing to meet a target on a reading
15 test, could put your school into improvement and
16 require the district to pay for tutoring, then
17 naturally, the incentive was to spend as much
18 time as possible to prevent that from happening,
19 by getting kids to pass the reading test.

20 But under the new law, there is, in
21 fact, focus on a single test on a single day and
22 I think the natural extension of that is, there

1 won't be this feeling that they have to spend so
2 much time on one or two subjects, just to get a
3 score on a test.

4 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so
5 much. We'll go to Ms. Jolly and then Mr. Jones.

6 MEMBER JOLLY: Thank you. Under ESSA,
7 I know that states are required to include at
8 least one indicator or school quality or student
9 success in the accountability systems, and I was
10 wondering if I could get the opinions of the
11 panel, in what you might consider a meaningful
12 measure of school quality or student success, to
13 add onto the specifically mandated ones.

14 MR. SARGRAD: So, I would go first,
15 and actually, the approach that I would take is
16 not to start with an indicator. The approach
17 would be to start with the things that a state
18 values and the things that a state thinks that
19 they need to improve, so that all kids are ready
20 for college and a career.

21 From that, I think the important is
22 again, not to think about the specific indicator,

1 but whether the indicator is going to serve that
2 purpose.

3 So, to look at actual data on whether
4 the indicator that you're considering is going to
5 first of all, show actual differences between
6 schools. So, there are a lot of indicators that
7 might seem like they're important, but no school
8 -- every school has the same score on it, and
9 that kind of indicator actually doesn't add very
10 much information to an accountability system,
11 because it doesn't differentiate among schools.
12 It doesn't help you to decide if one school is
13 doing well or doing poorly.

14 Then the second piece is to actually
15 look at whether the measures that you're
16 considering are related to the key student
17 outcomes that you're most concerned about,
18 whether they are related to students that are
19 achieving at high levels, and that they are
20 showing growth, and that they're graduating from
21 high school.

22 So, looking at a measure that is

1 related to those outcomes, but is not measuring
2 the exact same thing.

3 So, again, you're looking for measures
4 that are differentiating among schools, are
5 adding something to the accountability system
6 that you don't already have from the measures
7 that are required, but is valued by the state, by
8 the stakeholders and is going to help students
9 when they graduate.

10 So, whether that turns out to be
11 access to and performance in advanced course
12 work, which I think is a really promising measure
13 for high schools, or whether it's something like
14 chronic absenteeism at the elementary and middle
15 school level, which we know is a leading
16 indicator of students dropping out of high
17 school, and there are some clear promising
18 indicators, but I would really encourage the
19 state and the city here to take a close look at
20 the data and what those -- what the data actually
21 show about the indicators that you're
22 considering.

1 MS. LITTLE: I would echo what Scott
2 said, and in fact, some of the specific measures,
3 I would think about are very similar around
4 access to and success in rigorous course work
5 like AP/IB, chronic absenteeism, which is
6 different than attendance rates, and importantly
7 different, as well as things like school climate
8 as measured by discipline.

9 One key other thing about that
10 indicator is, it has to be able to differentiated
11 by sub-group, and it's very important to think
12 about what kind of indicator will give you
13 information that is actionable by the school and
14 by the system, that isn't just reflecting racial,
15 ethnic, socio-economic patterns, but is giving
16 you information about what the schools and the
17 system is doing for and to kids. So, I think
18 it's important to keep that in mind.

19 We think of these measures as ones
20 that need to be measurable, reliably validly
21 measurable and for the purposes of an
22 accountability system, and meaningful, having to

1 -- to Scott's point, meaning in the system you're
2 trying drive towards and then malleable,
3 something that you can do something about, you
4 can make a difference based on what you've
5 learned.

6 MR. ZAMORA: I'll just add to that. I
7 think that we'll see different states and sort of
8 different groupings of states organized around
9 different measures, and we at CCSSO, you know,
10 representing, you know, the broad -- the country,
11 will be organizing communities of practice around
12 sort of some of these different measures, and so,
13 we look forward to helping support in any way
14 that we can.

15 MEMBER JOLLY: So, your point about
16 starting with the value, instead of the specific
17 indicator is well taken.

18 But I would like to follow up just by
19 asking if there any indicators that you would shy
20 away from, outside of them, obviously not
21 specifically being applicable or addressing key
22 student outcomes, as outlines in that value?

1 MR. SARGRAD: So, I think the only
2 thing I would say on that is that there are some
3 measures of things like social and emotional
4 learning, and what is sometimes termed non-
5 curricular cognitive skills that are very
6 important for learning.

7 There is a lot of good research
8 showing how important it is for students to have
9 these skills and to be able to exhibit
10 determination and grit and resiliency and things
11 like that, but there's been more recent research
12 showing that the measures of those are sometimes
13 very challenging.

14 So, I think that those are really
15 important measures to consider, but thinking
16 about just how you might want to use them in a
17 system is going to be really critical.

18 MS. LITTLE: I would add just to be
19 stingy in your use of a fifth indicator, fifth
20 indicators.

21 There could be many of them, and I
22 don't think that's necessarily a smart path

1 because the fewer the sort of weights associated
2 with them, the less they're likely to drive real
3 information, authentic differentiation and
4 behavior change.

5 So, I think that's worth considering.

6 I would agree that it's important to be
7 thoughtful about whether or not the measure that
8 you're asking about, given what you will learn,
9 what will people do to try to improve that
10 measure?

11 So, if you're asking a question that
12 drives people to push students out of school, for
13 example, that is not a measure you want to use,
14 and it's important because people will respond to
15 the measures in the accountability system, and
16 so, when you ask based on my socio-emotional
17 learning SEL measure, my students don't have
18 grit, do the teachers know how to address that as
19 a result, or are they likely to shift the measure
20 and ask different questions about how the
21 students feel about their grit, etcetera.

22 So, I think it's important to

1 understand what it will drive.

2 MR. ZAMORA: I think another area to
3 think about would be to make sure that they're
4 accessible to students, sort of across the range,
5 and so, you know, valid, reliable, accessible to
6 students with disabilities, accessible to English
7 learners, for example.

8 So, but I think that's a prism which
9 we need to bring to the Bill as a whole, and
10 particularly, to these new measures.

11 MEMBER JOLLY: Thank you so much.

12 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
13 Jolly. Mr. Jones.

14 MEMBER JONES: Thank you, Mr.
15 President. I have, I believe, a very simple
16 question.

17 Mr. Sargrad, you mentioned the
18 achievement gap between black and white students,
19 and I know previously, within the black students
20 and Latino students, as well, boys typically were
21 even -- the achievement gap was even more vast,
22 even among their group of color.

1 Has that closed or does that still
2 exist?

3 MR. SARGRAD: I don't have the data in
4 front of me, so I can't say for certain, but I do
5 know that in general, there is a very large gap
6 between boys and young men of color and girls of
7 color, as well.

8 MEMBER JONES: Thank you.

9 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr.
10 Jones. Board Members who haven't -- Ms.
11 Williams? Mr. Contreras?

12 Would the witnesses be willing to
13 stick around for 20 more minutes, so that Board
14 Members could ask an abbreviated round of
15 questions? I think we're very eager to learn
16 more and with such a distinguished panel before
17 us, I'd hate to miss this opportunity.

18 Then let's go start at the end, Ms.
19 Wattenberg, then Ms. Lord, then we'll move down,
20 if anyone has anything.

21 MEMBER WATTENBERG: Two questions.
22 One, somebody talked about there's going to be a

1 requirement that the budget is going to be
2 transparent at the school level.

3 So, that's very interesting, very new.
4 So, I'd like for someone to explain what that
5 means.

6 The other thing that I heard, that I
7 wasn't fully aware of was that the interventions
8 for the poorest schools, for the poorest
9 performing schools have to be evidence-based.

10 Now, that in education, has meant
11 different things at different times, and my
12 question is, how strong is that and how -- yes,
13 so two questions for any and all.

14 MR. ZAMORA: I'll take the first one.
15 So, there is now a requirement that the school
16 and the state report card, actually report out
17 resources and the source of resources, federal,
18 state and local, and so, that is going to be a
19 substantial departure.

20 We'll have to see, sort of what kinds
21 of implementation and supports we get from the
22 U.S. Department around that, but yes, school

1 level transparency around --

2 MEMBER WATTENBERG: And it's the total
3 amount of resources? It doesn't get into how
4 they're used at all, is that correct?

5 MR. ZAMORA: No, it's sort of around
6 school funding levels --

7 MEMBER WATTENBERG: Okay.

8 MR. ZAMORA: -- and then the sources,
9 federal, state and local.

10 MEMBER WATTENBERG: Okay.

11 MR. ZAMORA: But I think we have sort
12 of broad statutory language. There may be
13 additional guidelines coming from the Department
14 on that.

15 MS. LITTLE: I would say to both of
16 your questions, we'll know more, because there
17 are issues around how you use supplement --
18 implement and supplement under Title 1, that will
19 require more understanding of per pupil
20 allocations.

21 There's also an equitable distribution
22 of resources that will require more transparent

1 per pupil understanding of how much is ending up
2 where and from what sources. So, we'll know more
3 later.

4 To your particular question -- what
5 was your second question?

6 MEMBER WATTENBERG: On the evidence-
7 based and --

8 MS. LITTLE: Evidence-based, right,
9 thank you. I knew it was one I cared -- so, I
10 wanted to answer.

11 So, on the particular question of
12 evidence-based, the requirement is that there are
13 evidence-based interventions as a part of a
14 school improvement plan, and there is an actual
15 definition of what evidence-based means.

16 The Bill in its entirety has four
17 tiers of evidence, but for the purposes of this
18 issue, of turning around the low performing
19 schools, it has to come -- your intervention has
20 to come from one of the top three tiers of
21 evidence.

22 So, this is evidence that's done in a

1 randomized control trial study or at a correlated
2 study with significant guardrails around, you
3 know, making sure that it's valid and reliable.

4 So, it's a fairly high level of
5 evidence of the purposes of a school turnaround.
6 We're still learning how the Department is going
7 to implement all of that, but it will push us to
8 ask questions about where is the best evidence of
9 what's most likely to improve these schools.

10 MEMBER WATTENBERG: And so, it is
11 pushing up the evidence base that's now required,
12 is that --

13 MS. LITTLE: It is.

14 MEMBER WATTENBERG: -- a correct
15 understanding?

16 MR. SARGRAD: And the only thing I
17 would add on the school level budgeting is that
18 it does require two categories of expenditures to
19 be reported, both personnel expenditures
20 specifically, and that is actual personnel
21 expenditures, so not a district average salary,
22 but actual school-level salary information, and

1 then non-personnel expenditures.

2 So, spending on things like
3 curriculum, instructional materials, other sorts
4 of resources. So, those two categories of
5 spending do need to be dis-aggregated in the
6 reporting.

7 MEMBER WATTENBERG: And then do I have
8 time for one more?

9 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Briefly.

10 MEMBER WATTENBERG: So, you started by
11 talking about how the accountability system can't
12 solve the problems.

13 So, having said that, and that
14 building capacity is ultimately what has to be
15 done here.

16 So, given those realities, if you
17 think about our very serious issue of the low
18 reading levels, is there anything in the law or
19 the way that we think about this, that we can be
20 using to help address that problem?

21 MR. ZAMORA: I would just say as a
22 general matter, I mean, there are -- many fewer

1 specifics and sort of similar dedicated programs.

2 I mean, there is a literacy program,
3 which we can talk about, but I think what there
4 is, is sort of the flexibility and the authority
5 to design, you know, programs at the state and
6 local levels, that are consistent with federal
7 rules.

8 So, I think, you know, much less
9 specificity, more flexibility and opportunity to
10 work here, to figure out the solution with
11 Federal funds.

12 MEMBER WATTENBERG: And I'm wondering
13 if there is anything we -- some of us have talked
14 about the whole idea of reading by three, the
15 Campaign for Grade Level Reading, sort of what
16 you can do to really try to force that attention
17 to those levels.

18 I mean, we already report test scores
19 at their grade, so it's not -- I don't know what
20 more is in here that we can do, that gets to how
21 do we do it. Maybe we can work with the -- do
22 more with the evidence-based interventions, I

1 would think, and maybe can we -- is there
2 something that we can do, that sort of uses
3 those, but in early grades, I guess? Would that
4 be --

5 MS. LITTLE: So, two quick thoughts.
6 One is that I do think that the evidence-based
7 interventions and reading are some of the
8 strongest areas.

9 So, I think the fact that people will
10 be asking what is the evidence-based that this
11 reading intervention is likely to work, is
12 helpful and important.

13 The other thing is, I would push
14 towards the early childhood conversation, even in
15 -- it can be an accountability conversation, in
16 terms of how do we understand what the levels of
17 opportunity and access that our students are
18 getting, coming into school, look like. It can
19 also be a needs analysis conversation, once we've
20 identified low performance.

21 Are we asking about what sort of
22 opportunities students are getting, coming in for

1 early childhood, and then there is also lots of
2 opportunity in this Bill for coordination and
3 collaboration, bringing in all of the different
4 early childhood programs in an area, whether
5 they're directly related to the District or not,
6 and sharing things like professional development
7 funds, understanding of standards and goals and
8 alignment.

9 So, I think that would be another
10 place I would look on the reading front, in
11 particular.

12 MR. SARGRAD: And I would just add
13 that the early learning piece is hugely
14 important, and the Bill for the first time,
15 actually authorizes an early learning program
16 within the elementary and secondary education,
17 which is a huge step forward, and has a great
18 emphasis on high quality early learning in
19 particular.

20 So, access to early learning and also,
21 the quality of the programs for students, and
22 that is one of the best interventions that you

1 can provide, is to start early for students, to
2 make sure that they're on track by the time they
3 actually get to Kindergarten, not just to third
4 grade.

5 MS. LITTLE: There's also a reading
6 grant program that's new in the Bill. So, that's
7 worth looking into, as well.

8 MEMBER WATTENBERG: Thanks a lot.

9 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you. Ms.
10 Lord. Five minutes.

11 MEMBER LORD: Ms. Little, I'd like to
12 follow up on something you said about setting
13 measures, that measurable, reliable, meaningful
14 and actionable on the part of schools, currently
15 not just here, but everywhere, test scores pretty
16 much track socio-economic status, gender, English
17 language learner, special ed.

18 What kind of measures should we think
19 about avoiding? Attendance, you know, that's
20 something that schools really don't have much
21 control over. The kid is either being brought to
22 school by a parent or isn't.

1 So, that's one part of it, and then
2 the second bigger thing is, how will the new law
3 have an effect on our most needy and challenged
4 populations, particularly special education
5 students?

6 MS. LITTLE: So, in terms of what to
7 avoid, I don't know that there is -- for example,
8 attendance is actually not a particularly
9 meaningful measure, but chronic absenteeism
10 actually is, and actually, the District is doing
11 impressive work in thinking about how you tackle
12 issues like chronic absenteeism.

13 So, while it's true that somebody has
14 to bring a child to school at a certain age,
15 going after those things, we know makes a great
16 deal of difference. It's an early warning
17 indicator to a likelihood of dropping out and
18 failing in school or failing to succeed in
19 college.

20 So, there are measures like that, that
21 do matter. So, I think it is worth thinking
22 about which are the -- what are the things you

1 value? How do they align to the college and
2 career readiness of the students? Are they
3 measurable, reliably, validly in ways that are
4 going to drive towards the source of improvements
5 that you seek in the system.

6 MEMBER LORD: And what about
7 specifically special education students, because
8 that is a population that I think just about
9 every district in the nation has been struggling
10 to educate fully and fairly?

11 MS. LITTLE: I'll say a quick word.
12 My colleagues and friends probably know more.

13 I would say that that -- so much about
14 this law is a devolution and a shift, that what
15 will happen for students in any one sub-group, I
16 think remains largely to the states that
17 implement it, and there are not significant new
18 moves in the area of what must be done for
19 students with disabilities.

20 A bunch of them have been made, but
21 not in this law per se. They've been made
22 through various administrative actions and things

1 like that, where they're asking for more of a
2 focus on results and outcomes for students with
3 disabilities, which is very important.

4 You might choose to say, how do we
5 align those systems? If we're being asked by one
6 side of the Department of Education, what our
7 results and outcomes are for students with
8 disabilities, and we're being asked what our
9 accountability system is, how do we want to bring
10 those things together?

11 So, there are opportunities to drive
12 good, important conversations about those
13 services for the students who need it most, but I
14 don't see significant new opportunity in this
15 Bill, in that way it's drafted, so much as in the
16 -- in its implementation, to drive these
17 improvements. But you may see other things.

18 MR. SARGRAD: Yes, I think the two
19 things that I see as opportunities are, I think
20 there is an emphasis in the Bill on inclusion of
21 students with disabilities, and making sure that
22 they are a part of the general education

1 curriculum, that they are in classes with their
2 non-disabled peers, and that we know there is
3 very strong evidence that that is what leads to
4 higher outcomes for kids with disabilities.

5 So, whether it's in the assessment
6 requirements that make sure that there's only a
7 very small percentage of students with
8 disabilities, who are actually excluded from
9 general assessments for an alternate assessment,
10 but 99 percent of students do need to take that
11 general assessment, and they should be included
12 with students without disabilities.

13 I think that emphasis on inclusion,
14 whether it's in assessments or in curriculum
15 instruction is there in the Bill, and it's not an
16 additional requirement in a sense, but it an
17 emphasis.

18 Then the second piece is again, in the
19 assessment area, but I think this applies to
20 other areas too, is the idea of universal design
21 for learning, and that whether it's an
22 assessments or curriculum or instruction

1 materials, should be designed from the beginning
2 with the needs of all students in mind, and that
3 applies to students with disabilities, but also
4 to English language learners, and students from
5 all sorts of backgrounds.

6 So, it's a very important concept that
7 applies to not just again, assessments and
8 materials, but also the way that instruction
9 happens in the classroom, to think about the way
10 that a teacher can ensure that all students are
11 included from the beginning, without making
12 modifications on the back end.

13 MEMBER LORD: Thank you. It does sort
14 of make us pause, because I think the dangers
15 that we inadvertently narrow the curriculum, we
16 inadvertently maintain an over-testing regime or
17 at least the image of that.

18 So, this has really helped tease out
19 some of the things for future work. Thank you.

20 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
21 Lord. Ms. Williams, our Vice President.

22 VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you

1 for coming. This has been a very informative and
2 interesting conversation. I'm sure this is just
3 the beginning of the tip of the iceberg, per se.

4 So, the questions are coming and I
5 hear the questions my colleagues are asking, but
6 I hear you also saying that we have to figure it
7 out, in your answers.

8 So, that's why I find it difficult to
9 ask a question, because you're not able to really
10 answer the questions. It's for us to figure out.

11 But I appreciate you being here. I
12 just have one quick question. Since we have to
13 have evidence-based school improvement, we have
14 to develop the plans and the mechanism in which
15 to do that.

16 We have to then collect the data, to
17 see if our improvements are working. Do we have
18 a time frame or are we constricted to a specific
19 time frame to make these determinations, before
20 we re-evaluate our -- or when we evaluate our
21 programs?

22 MR. ZAMORA: That's a great question.

1 So, the states are going to set the sort of
2 entrance criteria and then also, exit criteria, I
3 think.

4 So, there is an opportunity, and also,
5 looking at the application for school improvement
6 funds. I think that's a substantial lever that
7 states can look at.

8 So, I think on the -- on the targeted
9 sub-group schools where, you know, there is one
10 sub-group that's consistently under-performing,
11 the school as a whole, might do well.

12 States have up to four -- or schools
13 have up to four years, a period not to exceed
14 four years, that the state would set, after which
15 if they don't exit, they would enter into that
16 comprehensive support and improvement category.

17 Then the state is also required to
18 take a more significant state action, if that
19 school doesn't improve after a state period --
20 state defined period of time.

21 So, it's a little more nuanced than
22 what we see, sort of, certainly under No Child

1 Left Behind, but effectively, there is an
2 opportunity to improve and then the state is
3 going to set sort of the limit on what that time
4 period would be.

5 VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

6 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Ms. Jolly and Mr.
7 Weedon? Mr. Contreras?

8 Then I'll have -- I won't take my full
9 five minutes. I promise. You've been very
10 patient with us.

11 The assessment piece is tough. I
12 spoke last month, before a room of about 1,300
13 high school students, and they asked about PARCC,
14 and when I started talking about it, I got booed
15 pretty heartily.

16 So, academic experience is more than
17 just a test score, and I believe if I hear you
18 right, ESSA allows us to take that into account.
19 Is that correct, for more or less?

20 MR. ZAMORA: Very much so. Very much
21 so.

22 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Terrific. I also

1 really love what you had talked about, in terms
2 of setting a goal for what we value as a city,
3 and setting --basically, we need to set a vision
4 of what high quality, equitable education looks
5 like and what our students need to be successful
6 in life.

7 Do you have -- is that just -- how do
8 we get there? How do we develop that vision with
9 stakeholders, that something that's actually
10 actionable, that can be put into words, into this
11 plan?

12 MR. ZAMORA: I guess some of that
13 supports that CCSSO is providing for states are
14 sort of urging states to start with that vision
15 and then sort of have that kind of drive.

16 You know, in think in certain
17 instances in the past, you know, the tendency has
18 been to sort of let the federal requirements
19 drive, sort of state action, and here, it's sort
20 of having states take the lead and then, sort of
21 plug that in and make sure that you're compliant.

22 Obviously, we all need to be

1 compliant, but having that sort of state vision
2 driving it.

3 So, we're providing some supports to
4 states and starting big and then sort of moving
5 into the more sort of detailed policy with that
6 vision intact.

7 MS. LITTLE: I would say a couple of
8 thoughts. One is, I do think it's important that
9 you take the opportunity to ask what do we care
10 about, but I also think it's important to
11 recognize that if you're going to do it in some
12 context, which I wouldn't recommend. I'd love to
13 see us invest significantly more in what we're
14 doing in our schools in this city.

15 But if you are going to be doing it in
16 a zero sub-context, careful that you don't simply
17 say, we expect more out of everybody all the
18 time, that you're thoughtful about what are the
19 trade-offs that you're putting on the table in
20 that conversation, because those are real.

21 There is only so many hours in the day
22 for the teachers to teach and the students to

1 learn. So, it's important to be rigorous about
2 that. But in that context, thinking about what
3 is -- what is the full range of knowledge and
4 skills that we value towards college and career
5 readiness?

6 Again, you've set this. You've led
7 the nation in saying, "We care about college and
8 career readiness." I don't think you need to
9 waiver from that to say, but is it just about a
10 reading and math score?

11 No. Not necessarily. We know a lot
12 more about the need for collaboration.
13 Metacognition, how to learn, self-regulation,
14 executive function. There are a lot of things
15 that drive towards college and career readiness.

16 So, understanding what the full range
17 of breadth and depth, what is the knowledge
18 expectation we have for our students, and really,
19 do we think it's a three on PARCC or a four on
20 PARCC or a five on PARCC. Those are good
21 conversations, and this law does invite
22 stakeholder engagement and the opportunity to

1 have those and to get -- I don't know that it's
2 about shifting the vision, so much as it is about
3 sharing it, and creating buy-in, so that there is
4 more of a shared understanding of what we're
5 driving towards as a city.

6 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: I love that
7 explanation. Getting buy-in from all the
8 stakeholders. Incredibly important.

9 I apologize, Mr. Sargrad, if I cut you
10 off.

11 MR. SARGRAD: No, the only thing I was
12 going to add was that I think it's an opportunity
13 to learn from some other states that have had a
14 really thoughtful goal and vision setting
15 process, and just quickly.

16 The three that come to mind that I
17 would point to are one, Oregon has a -- had a
18 really clear vision for what they expect and
19 their results -- particularly, their high school
20 system to be, in terms of students graduating,
21 going onto two year and four year colleges or
22 going onto well-paying jobs.

1 Then the other two are Kentucky, which
2 has a very clear vision for college and career
3 readiness, and what that means for their state
4 and how to improve the learning outcomes for
5 students, on that whole continuum.

6 Then the last one is Tennessee, which
7 has done a fantastic job in really engaging with
8 districts on what the needs are there, and what
9 the vision is for all students graduating college
10 and career ready.

11 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Terrific. Well,
12 then we are in very good hands, are our
13 Superintendent of Education is from Tennessee and
14 worked with the State Board there.

15 I really would like to talk about
16 over-regulation, moving too fast, putting too
17 many indicators in. I'm going to leave that for
18 another conversation and you have our thanks for
19 being here, and for your advocacy and for your
20 efforts. We really appreciate the input, and we
21 will probably have follow up at some point in our
22 process.

1 MS. LITTLE: Thank you.

2 MR. ZAMORA: Thank you.

3 MR. SARGRAD: Thank you very much.

4 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, all.

5 Now, we're going to move to the last item on our
6 agenda. Follow up to the SBOE truancy report,
7 and Aurora, you can come sit down.

8 Almost a year ago, the State Board
9 approved a report highlighting the impact of the
10 District's compulsory attendance laws.

11 In that report, the Board called for
12 further resources -- research to be completed by
13 the administration.

14 Tonight, we will receive a report from
15 Aurora Stienle. I get that name right?

16 MS. STIENLE: Got it.

17 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Terrific. Senior
18 Policy Advisor for Equity and Opportunity to the
19 Deputy Mayor of Education, on that research.

20 As Ms. Stienle comes forward, let me
21 remind the public about the information the Board
22 requested.

1 First, we requested an investigation
2 into the challenges and inconsistent findings
3 reported by school-based administrators, along
4 with practices employed at the school level.

5 In the recordation of student absences
6 and tardies, based on the 80/20 rule. We
7 requested the inclusion of a proposal to
8 implement solutions that ensure uniform, fair and
9 accurate reporting of absences and tardies,
10 across all D.C. schools, or to make adjustments
11 to the definition of present within the schools.

12 Second, we asked that research be
13 conducted on truancy prevention practices and
14 strategies in the District of Columbia, as well
15 as in other districts and states, including an
16 investigation into the background and rationale
17 for implementing the 80/20 rule.

18 As members of the Board know, Ms.
19 Stienle is the lead staff member in the Deputy
20 Mayor for Education's Office on the truancy task
21 force. I think we've got a couple of folks that
22 serve on that. Ms. Kamili Anderson from Ward 4

1 serves as the Board's representative. I think
2 our staff members, John Paul Hayworth and Sean
3 Chalk regularly attend meetings, and I believe
4 the chief student advocate and Ombudsman are
5 involved, as well.

6 So, we are -- and I serve on the
7 Steering Committee. So, we're heavily involved
8 in this, and we're committed to seeing this
9 through, and we appreciate you coming down
10 tonight. Please take five minutes, and then we
11 will have questions.

12 MS. STIENLE: Great. So, again, Aurora
13 Stienle, Senior Advisor of Equity and Opportunity
14 with the Deputy Mayor for Education's Office.

15 With that introduction, actually I'm
16 going to change what I was going to say a little
17 bit, and just start by thanking you all for your
18 engagement.

19 As you know, I'm here to update the
20 Board on the District's work to address truancy
21 and chronic absenteeism, and also respond to
22 progress made on the Board's report on that

1 topic.

2 I say the District's work because this
3 truly has been collaborative, as you -- as the
4 President mentioned.

5 There has been significant involvement
6 from the State Board, but also, we've had
7 significant input and participation from over one
8 dozen government agencies, as well as our
9 Council. So, it's truly been a collaboration.

10 So, the city-wide strategy that exists
11 to address the issues called out in your report
12 is the truancy task force.

13 The task force is co-chaired by the
14 Deputy Mayor for Education, and also the Deputy
15 Mayor for Health and Human Services, and it does
16 include representatives from over 10 government
17 agencies and the District Council.

18 Since January 2015, the task force has
19 worked collaboratively to identify key data
20 trends, develop sound policy recommendations and
21 business rules for calculating truancy, and also
22 identify best practices for local education

1 agencies and their schools, reviewing national
2 best practices, among other things.

3 So, namely, we've also used an EdStat
4 framework, which uses data to identify
5 efficiencies and recommends systemic policy
6 changes.

7 Further overview of the task force can
8 be found in my full testimony, and some of the
9 associated attachments.

10 I would also point you to -- for
11 information regarding the reporting completed on
12 80/20, the September truancy EdStat has a number
13 of sites that address that, and we can go over
14 those further here, as well, and also to the
15 Student Attendance Clarification Committee
16 Report, which of course came from Council.

17 Additionally, for information
18 regarding some of the research and reporting
19 completed on truancy prevention, best practices,
20 you can reference the attachment that was LEA
21 best practices. Again, glad to talk that through
22 here, but kind of did a little bit of information

1 dump, so you call have that to reference.

2 I do want to highlight a few
3 accomplishments of the truancy task force, and
4 then turn to questions.

5 So, the additional accomplishments I
6 want to highlight include developing and
7 implementing a more rigorous EdStat measure,
8 monitor and act model, which we borrowed from New
9 York, which is driving our task force towards
10 action.

11 We also identified some key trends in
12 the data, and I'll just zip through those now,
13 but we can dig in, if helpful.

14 Those include that truancy and
15 attendance rates for both sectors, CCPS and our
16 public charter sector, declined from school year
17 2012/2013 to 2013/2014, but neither sector saw
18 significant changes between 2013/2014 and
19 2014/2015.

20 Middle school's truancy declined
21 significantly between 2012/2013 and 2013/2014,
22 and also continued to show a decline the

1 following year.

2 Our high schools have the highest
3 rates of truancy. Perhaps slightly more
4 interesting than that is that the truancy rate
5 more than doubles, the rate of chronic truancy
6 we're talking about, more than doubles between
7 eighth and ninth grade, and I can see that in the
8 slides, where this red arrow is really dramatic.

9 Finally, whereas, three percent of
10 students in grades K to eight had more than 21
11 unexcused absences, 32 percent of students in
12 ninth grade had 21 or more unexcused absences,
13 and we talk about some of the reasons for that,
14 but that's a pretty significant difference in the
15 quantity and type of absenteeism we're seeing.

16 Some additional accomplishments again,
17 include developing and implementing a committee
18 structure for driving task force work between
19 meetings, developing initial policy
20 recommendations, including reaching consensus on
21 the need for comprehensive change in this next
22 school year, and I'll just note there that that

1 also closely reflects some aspects of the State
2 Board's report in the changes that we decided
3 were most critical for the next school year.

4 We also developed some common business
5 rules for calculating truancy at the school,
6 district, sector and state level, including a
7 common definition at the district and sector
8 level.

9 We collaborated on attendance
10 awareness month, providing some joint research --
11 resources and doing joint outreach. We
12 collaborate with Council on emergency legislation
13 that took effect in this school year, and then
14 also collaborated on some of the legislation that
15 is now awaiting mark-up by the committee of the
16 whole.

17 We identified key data questions and
18 are working towards the first actual coherent
19 data plan for the truancy task force, and we've
20 been identifying best practices for LEA's and
21 their schools, and we adopted the Every Student
22 Every Day cite-wide plan for action, which looks

1 at what each specific kind of role player across
2 all of our public partners can do to impact
3 truancy.

4 So, with having highlighted a few of
5 those accomplishments, I will note that we have a
6 few more milestones that we hope to complete
7 soon. One is that we're working on finalizing
8 the truancy task force strategic plan. I think
9 one of the outstanding items is setting our goals
10 and metrics, and that's tied with getting a
11 handle on how we're doing, so that we can be
12 working from the right baseline.

13 Second is finalizing the truancy task
14 force data plan, to really ensure that what we're
15 reporting on annually, and then what we're
16 reporting on even in the short term, we don't
17 decide to report on it every year, but do we need
18 to know it this year, or maybe for the next two
19 years. We are trying to finalize the plan that
20 addresses all of those items.

21 Then finally, we're collaborating with
22 the D.C. Equity Lab, to plan a truancy task force

1 design challenge, which will innovatively address
2 key areas facing students and families by more
3 directly engaging in the solution development
4 process.

5 So, that's a little bit about what
6 we've been doing. I'm happy to take questions on
7 attendance and truancy, including information
8 about the work of the task force and
9 implementation of the report.

10 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so
11 much, Ms. Stienle.

12 MS. STIENLE: Great.

13 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Board member
14 questions? Mr. Contreras?

15 MEMBER CONTRERAS: Thank you. I was
16 wondering what the distinction is between truancy
17 and in-seat attendance. You talked about that,
18 what's like the difference there?

19 MS. STIENLE: Yes, and there's a third
20 term we use too, which is chronic absenteeism,
21 just to make it even more complicated.

22 The most critical distinction between

1 those two terms is that truancy is defined as
2 unexcused absences.

3 In both cases, if you're talking about
4 chronic truancy, we're talking about the number
5 of students who have ten or more unexcused
6 absences.

7 With in-seat attendance, you're
8 actually looking at the rate at which students
9 are butts in seats, how many students are there
10 on a given day, and so, it doesn't matter if
11 maybe that student is out for an excused reason,
12 which then would not count towards your truancy
13 rate, but from an educational standpoint, and
14 this is the same direction that chronic
15 absenteeism moves us in, because that also
16 includes the rate at which you have students
17 missing more than 10 percent of any school day
18 for any reason, regardless of the excuse or
19 unexcused.

20 From an educational standpoint, that
21 matters because ultimately they're missing their
22 learning that day, and so, we kind -- we want to

1 think about both, and they can mean somewhat
2 different things, but they're both really
3 important for us to look at, and while we can
4 consider renaming the truancy task force, we've
5 certainly been talking about both. So.

6 MEMBER CONTRERAS: Okay, thank you,
7 and then I was also wondering, you said you could
8 talk a little about the reason for the shift from
9 K through eight to high school, why there is such
10 that big leap, in terms of truancy. Could you go
11 a little further into that?

12 MS. STIENLE: Yes, so, I would -- I'm
13 only hypothesizing. This is something I think
14 we're really interested in.

15 So, when we talk about the work of the
16 task force, there is the work that we've done so
17 far, and I think we're doing a good job at
18 understanding what data we have and making the
19 decisions we have information on, and moving on
20 that.

21 But there is also the many, many
22 things that we have lined up, that we'd like to

1 do. I think one of the things we're like to do
2 is really look at high performers in the
3 District.

4 We have some really high performing
5 schools that are beating the odds, in terms of
6 attendance, and don't have some of the chronic
7 issues, persisting attendance issues that some of
8 their peers have, and in the middle school space,
9 if we know our middle schools saw this
10 significant improvement, if we -- if we feel like
11 the data is good, then we need to understand what
12 the reason for that is, from a perspective of
13 what the school did.

14 The other way to come at that jump is
15 to think about policy and the data and try and
16 look under it, and say, is there something in the
17 way that 80/20 for example, is implemented, that
18 looks different at the middle school versus high
19 school.

20 One of the challenges for us is
21 because in this policy landscape, there has been
22 some flux and so, just by way of history, there

1 is a -- the 80/20 rule, I'm sure everyone here is
2 very familiar with, used to be 60/40 and
3 different before that.

4 So, there has been some change in the
5 way we count attendance, which means that when we
6 look at our long term trends, everything becomes
7 a little shakier, which was something that came
8 up a lot in the task force discussions is, what
9 do we know about our data, our trends and when is
10 it the right moment to make further change,
11 because change does kind of come at a cost, when
12 you're talking about understanding your long term
13 trajectory.

14 MEMBER CONTRERAS: Thank you.

15 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr.
16 Contreras. We'll go to Ms. Lord, our at-large
17 member, and then Ms. Jolly.

18 MEMBER LORD: Thank you. As someone
19 who served on the -- our truancy committee, this
20 is of great interest.

21 Let's start with the 80/20 rule. I
22 know our report called for some solutions to

1 ensure that there was a uniform, fair and
2 accurate reporting of tardies versus absences.

3 Do you have any information about
4 that, and also about the -- whether the chronic
5 truancy rates are based on the full day or half
6 day absences under the 80/20 rule?

7 So, I'm trying to get a this --

8 MS. STIENLE: Yes, what does the data
9 mean? So, we -- let me start with the
10 recommendation that was in the report, and I
11 think there is a set of these that we actually
12 went through kind of a similar process of all the
13 consultation you did, but kind of a mini version.

14 So, we had, you know, six
15 recommendations from the State Board. We have a
16 task force that involves many agencies. I think
17 I've never had fewer than 10 agencies represented
18 at the table.

19 You have six recommendations, 10
20 agencies. There is a lot of overlap, but we
21 sought everyone's input, and so, we did then get
22 this long list.

1 So, one thing we did was go through
2 this -- this is the slides, but we went through a
3 prioritization process, to ask everyone, how
4 important is this to you, or how important do you
5 think this is for kids? How urgent is this and
6 how difficult is this? We tried to kind of
7 understand how things shook out.

8 The 80/20 rule and its impact came up
9 really high on that. The idea of consistency of
10 implementation came up, probably from Kamili and
11 others, but came up as less urgent, and so, there
12 is this very kind of complicated looking diagram,
13 where I tried to visually map out all of the
14 challenges that were raised, and how they connect
15 with each other, because one of the issues that
16 kept coming up was, there is an inter-
17 connectedness.

18 So, if we want to understand the
19 impact of 80/20, but we're not confident about
20 how it's being implemented, and then on top of
21 it, people really hate the consequences of it,
22 what do you do if the connector is 80/20, which

1 thing do you tackle and how?

2 So, we tried to kind of grapple with
3 the landscape, and so, I would say on the first
4 recommendation regarding consistency to
5 implementation, we haven't dug in on that in a
6 big way. We have asked DCPS -- I mean, I think
7 DCPS, you know, representing significant number
8 of the schools, we kind of pushed with them on
9 like their PD and what they're doing.

10 We've had a really excellent
11 relationship with Andrea, who is, I think their
12 director of attendance data and other things, and
13 she shared what they're doing to really improve
14 the consistency in their schools of when
15 attendance is taken, what 80/20 means to them.

16 But the bigger issue that really pops
17 the top of the list, based on urgency and
18 importance, the impact it was having on kids, was
19 the way 80/20 -- the consequences of 80/20 and
20 how high numbers of referrals under 80/20 equaled
21 really significant consequences that didn't
22 always match up for families and students.

1 So, I'll just say we -- it's still on
2 our list, I would say if we feel stronger and get
3 some of the surrounding policy right, I think
4 then it makes more sense than to make a bigger
5 push on effective implementation.

6 MEMBER LORD: So, essentially, what we
7 were hearing was that we were essentially falsely
8 branding tardy kids as truant kids.

9 MS. STIENLE: Right, and so, that was
10 -- right, that's exactly the rub, and we heard
11 that, you know, in your report, but also, that
12 was one of the consistent reflections across the
13 task force was, you know, from court social
14 services, and they're getting referrals for kids
15 that, you know, skipped a period of a high school
16 class, and maybe they consistently skip their
17 math class.

18 Is that an educational issue?

19 Absolutely. Does it warrant being referred to
20 court? No.

21 So, and then there also the tardiness
22 piece and when people are taking attendance, if

1 you have a teacher who is -- you're tardy for
2 your one period, then you're marked absent for
3 that period. You know, this is where the
4 connectedness comes in.

5 So, I think we decided to really try
6 and tackle some of the consequences issues, but I
7 think that issue is still on our list and is
8 outstanding.

9 MEMBER LORD: And just help me
10 understand how we can take action on the
11 information. We just had a session on actionable
12 information collected from data.

13 It's pretty horrifying that a third of
14 D.C. public school's ninth graders are racking up
15 21 days. That's a full month of school, and what
16 policy levers do we have, other than the bully-
17 pulpit to say, "Hey, guys, go to school."

18 Do we have to combat that, because
19 right away, I mean, 21 days of learning is --

20 MS. STIENLE: It's huge.

21 MEMBER LORD: -- you know, of course,
22 we're going to have gaps in achievement and

1 opportunity.

2 MS. STIENLE: Yes. So, I think there
3 is two roles that the task force is playing to
4 help us all take action really.

5 One is looking at what works in other
6 jurisdictions, and so, one of the attachments,
7 we've done this kind of comparison between the
8 sequence of experiencing attendance policies in
9 D.C. versus some more leading jurisdictions, and
10 to just sum up what you see, in terms of
11 differences.

12 First is the general level of response
13 for all students, there is more kind of low
14 level, low cost, but generalized interventions
15 related to attendance.

16 So, like sending every family get text
17 messages or something, it doesn't matter if
18 you're on your tenth unexcused absence of your
19 first. Everyone is getting a text message that
20 says -- and not only that, it says something
21 meaningful, like you've missed more of school
22 than like 90 percent of kids in your class, or

1 things that make parents go, oh, and kids kind of
2 pay attention.

3 So, there is some low cost
4 interventions that you see being applied, just
5 for everyone, and in D.C., there is not -- there
6 is D.C. -- there is different policies. It
7 varies. I think DCPS definitely does robo-calls
8 and most charters do some more, at least that
9 bar.

10 But then the other thing you see
11 besides a higher, just kind of generalized
12 baseline is, you see more steps along the way,
13 so, and more meaningful steps.

14 So, in our system, you basically --
15 there is the five absence SST referral and then
16 there is the 10 or 15 absence referral to CFSA an
17 CSSD, anything that happens between there is
18 either completely up to the schools.

19 There is nothing we know or guarantee
20 will happen along the way, and it's not -- it's
21 that second -- that second bump or that second
22 intervention for us, is most punitive.

1 In terms of supports, you get one kind
2 of opportunity with an SST, and if that doesn't
3 kind of jump start you, we don't have as many
4 steps along the way and kind of nuanced
5 interventions. We wait until you get to five,
6 then we try and do something, and then we see you
7 again when you get a letter and a threat and a
8 referral down the road.

9 So, and there are, again, there are
10 schools that are doing this -- doing many more
11 things, and we want to learn from those
12 successes, so that we can apply that more
13 broadly.

14 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Ms. Jolly.

15 MEMBER JOLLY: Thank you. I share my
16 colleague, Ms. Lord's deep troubling about the
17 ninth grade attendance rates, particularly
18 because we know that academic success in the
19 ninth is one of the leading indicators of whether
20 or not a student will actually graduate from high
21 school.

22 How can you be successful your ninth

1 grade year, if you have missed an entire month?
2 If one-third of our students are missing an
3 entire month of school, just wow.

4 So, I guess what I'm curious about
5 then is, in your task force work, in your
6 research, what you discovered other districts and
7 states to be doing, in terms of truancy
8 prevention practices, and how do those other
9 states and district's practices compare with what
10 we're doing here?

11 MS. STIENLE: So, I do think part of
12 it is a little bit of what I just described,
13 which is that they are -- they are jumping in
14 very early.

15 So, if you have a ninth grader who is
16 maybe already having some attendance issues in
17 junior high, keep them on -- like, they should be
18 on high alert from day one of ninth grade, and
19 then if you're -- your student is missing a
20 significant portion of the first week of school,
21 or the first two weeks, don't wait until they
22 meet that threshold, to get them some kind of

1 supports or engage them in the SST process. You
2 can look at just that first week and start to
3 make some decisions.

4 So, starting early, lots of using data
5 to really pinpoint who is at risk, and then also
6 having a lot of supportive interventions along
7 the way.

8 I think one of the most concerning
9 issues with the system we currently have set up
10 and the biggest contrast with leading systems is
11 that we have a number of punitive interventions,
12 and frankly, that just doesn't match up. Those
13 intervention points, which are so critical, and
14 we're using them on things that are more or less
15 punishments.

16 So, I think that's an area we're
17 really interested in figuring out what works to
18 actually change the path and what doesn't work.

19 What we need to do that actually is a
20 little better data. So, that's something we've
21 been working on in the data plan is, what are the
22 key evaluation -- evaluations we need to do of

1 the investments we are making?

2 So, how much is it costing us and what
3 is the impact of sending students over to court
4 social services, versus how much is it costing us
5 and what is the impact of programs like Stand Up
6 Show Out, actually they're mostly at the
7 elementary level and some middle school, but
8 Access Youth is also supported by a District
9 grant.

10 We're trying to glean from the
11 grantees and some of the positive interventions
12 we have in the field, to get data on what
13 actually works, instead of the punitive piece.

14 MEMBER JOLLY: Just a quick follow up.
15 I guess the slide is no longer up, but you can
16 see, I don't know if you noticed, Board Members,
17 the one where you can see the percent -- the
18 blue, yellow -- the blue, orange and green by
19 grade.

20 MS. STIENLE: Okay.

21 MEMBER JOLLY: You can see, and it's
22 so troubling that by the time you get to 12th

1 grade, the attendance rates get much better, but
2 it's because all of kids that weren't showing up,
3 have already dropped out, and that is just heart-
4 breaking, especially -- I'm a high school
5 teacher, and I see -- I see that happen when the
6 kids that don't show up, just stop coming back.

7 One thing that I would like -- I would
8 be interested in knowing more about -- you guys
9 don't know this, but maybe -- how to phrase this?

10 I hope that you would look at the
11 impact of school counselors on truancy rates,
12 particularly because school counselor is an
13 essential job, is to come up with individualized
14 plans for students about how to improve their
15 attendance, behavior and class performance, and
16 I'm wondering if there is a link between a low
17 student/teacher ratio -- I'm sorry, a low
18 student/counselor ratio --

19 MS. STIENLE: Yes.

20 MEMBER JOLLY: -- and improved truancy
21 rates in schools?

22 MS. STIENLE: Yes, I'll definitely

1 take that back. It's kind of already on our list
2 of things to explore, but I think that's really
3 smart and is reflective of kind of what we're
4 heard too, as one of the challenges that came up
5 was, we have attendance counselors that are
6 wearing a lot of different hats, and some aren't
7 necessarily qualified to do the job of trying to
8 develop a plan with someone to stay in school.
9 That's actually really hard work. So.

10 MEMBER JOLLY: I agree, thank you,
11 Aurora.

12 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: I don't think any
13 other Board Members have questions, so, I'll just
14 take a couple of quick minutes.

15 I want to take us back to big picture,
16 from some of the first meetings that I went to.

17 There is absenteeism, truancy affects
18 students in two ways. One, they're not getting
19 enough learning time, and two, it's a safety
20 issue, and Chairman Mendelson really focuses on
21 the safety part.

22 Can you just give us the -- how do you

1 balance those and how is the task force tackling,
2 making sure that we're paying attention to both,
3 both issues, as we work on this?

4 MS. STIENLE: That's absolutely been
5 one of the, I think most interesting and
6 challenging parts of the task force, and why it's
7 so critical, I think, that we do have a single
8 body that is reflective of people who have
9 expertise in those different areas, because
10 frankly, you know, being DME, we're going to come
11 at it more from an educational standpoint, but we
12 absolutely get the safety concerns, and we have a
13 Mayor who is absolutely thinking about the safety
14 concerns.

15 So, but we need, you know, the voices
16 of MPD, of the justice side of things to help us
17 understand what smart policy looks like there,
18 and we're hearing from our justice colleagues,
19 that it's not that there isn't a role on the
20 justice side, but their current way of
21 interacting and engaging isn't helpful, and when
22 they are not satisfied with their own role that

1 they're being kind of tasked with, and they kind
2 of need to execute on, that really sends a lot of
3 alarm bells, because those are -- if anyone is
4 going to, you know, want to be concerned on the
5 safety side and understand what it means to have
6 youth of school and what that looks like from a
7 police officer's perspective, it's all of those
8 voices.

9 So, for them to be concerned with the
10 current role, and helping us to re-balance, I
11 think says a lot.

12 We're trying to find ways so that
13 those things aren't so at odds, and it might mean
14 that we don't have every policy trying to address
15 both. I actually think that's part of why 80/20
16 has become so problematic, because we try to take
17 an educational stance, which was to raise the bar
18 high, and yet, we tied it to safety and justice
19 consequences, and so, right there, we blended two
20 things and put them intention, and I don't know
21 that they had to be intention like that.

22 If we focus on our school base

1 policies and you know, engagement and supports
2 and those types of things, and then separately
3 figure out where the safety concerns come in and
4 don't necessarily tie them so tightly, I think
5 we'll hopefully have more success. But as a
6 task force, we have taken on both objectives.

7 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: And I am glad you
8 have. I mean, my mom was a teacher and my dad is
9 a cop. I get both sides of that. I wasn't able
10 to miss school ever.

11 You were just talking about school
12 based policies, and if you could just really
13 briefly, what schools are doing this right and
14 what are some of their tactics?

15 There are schools that I'm sure in
16 D.C., that have really difficult, vulnerable
17 populations. Do you have a quick overview or any
18 come to mind?

19 MS. STIENLE: I would love to name-
20 drop some schools that are doing really -- a
21 really great job, but actually, what you can find
22 is in the quarterly task force -- sorry, the

1 quarterly report to the truancy task force, we do
2 a breakdown of top schools, and I think one thing
3 that we added to our reporting this quarter is
4 most improved schools, because again, that is --
5 we haven't gotten to the point of being able to
6 dig in.

7 We're asked around a little bit, kind
8 of anecdotally, and I think we shared that out at
9 a couple of meetings, but we haven't in a
10 rigorous way, tried to understand what's
11 happening there, but we're starting the process
12 of acknowledging those schools.

13 So, I know it's actually -- I just
14 don't want to drop-throw any name. I can use
15 Patterson Elementary. But they did a great job
16 and the --

17 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: I'm not going to

18 --

19 MS. STIENLE: -- and the secretary of
20 education was there and --

21 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: I'm not going to

22 --

1 MS. STIENLE: We have some stellar
2 performers in the District. So.

3 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Terrific. Well,
4 keep sharing that with us.

5 MS. STIENLE: Okay.

6 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: And with that, if
7 Board Members don't have any more questions, I'd
8 like to let her go. Good luck getting home, given
9 that metro is still down. Ms. Lord, briefly.

10 MEMBER LORD: I would like -- I'd --
11 since the people at home don't have the benefit
12 of seeing this slide show, I just wanted to ask.

13 It says that if the rule were changed
14 instead of 80 percent of school day and 20
15 percent, makes it 75 percent in the school and 25
16 percent absence, that there would be almost 1,200
17 fewer D.C. public school students who would have
18 been truant and referred, and if it was 60/20
19 approximately 2,000, almost 2,200.

20 So, you know, adjusting these rules
21 actually has an impact on real live students.

22 MS. STIENLE: It does. I think --

1 MEMBER LORD: And that was an
2 astonishing amount of --

3 MS. STIENLE: It's significant, and
4 that's why we asked DCPS to do this break down.

5 It's -- we still will have a -- we
6 will have a problem regardless. Like, we have --
7 we definitely have a problem with chronic
8 absenteeism and truancy, and so, it's kind of --
9 the approach that was suggested, accountability,
10 it's what do you want to use the number to do?

11 If we want to use it to -- we think
12 these individuals are safety concerns and we want
13 to use it to make referrals, that number being
14 very high and changing just 1,000 students, means
15 a lot. That's a really big deal.

16 But ultimately if we mostly want to
17 understand are kids getting their educational
18 benefit, a change of 1,000 and if you look at the
19 break down, this is actually -- 80/20 largely
20 impacts high schools and middle school students.

21 So, one thing that's interesting to me
22 that I've always wanted to dig into a little bit

1 is, what that really comes down to is how many
2 periods do they have in a day, and who missed one
3 period and who has block schedules and therefore,
4 one period is --

5 And so, the difference between 75 and
6 80, part of that jump could be actually digging
7 into the data that what -- the difference that
8 happens in the hours of the day between one
9 period and two, or something like that.

10 So, all that to say that yes, there is
11 a significant -- the numbers do change, as you
12 lower the threshold, but it doesn't change that
13 we have a problem, and it doesn't necessarily
14 then dictate -- tell us exactly what we want to
15 do with the number. We have to decide that.

16 MEMBER LORD: Yes, good point. Good
17 point. Thanks.

18 MS. STIENLE: And I think the slides
19 will be posted on the State Board website for
20 viewers out there.

21 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Ms. Wattenberg,
22 do you have a brief comment?

1 MEMBER WATTENBERG: I have a quick --
2 I have a question, because I'm just looking at
3 this slide, and it talks about this -- the
4 districts that have much lower thresholds for
5 truancy, Seattle 50 percent, Miami-Dade 30
6 percent.

7 Do you know whether, when districts
8 lower the threshold that much, if it has a -- any
9 impact, perhaps negative impact and whether or
10 not kids spend more time in the day or do they
11 come less? Do we know what the tradeoff is on
12 that?

13 MS. STIENLE: I don't know. It is a
14 really good question. I guess, kind of the
15 behavioral science of these things.

16 MEMBER WATTENBERG: It would be
17 interesting --

18 MS. STIENLE: Yes.

19 MEMBER WATTENBERG: -- as we play
20 around with this, to --

21 MS. STIENLE: And I do think that's --
22 the hope was that by putting it at 80, everyone

1 is afraid to skip so much as a class, whereas,
2 maybe at 60/40 they weren't. But we don't know
3 for sure. So.

4 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, and I
5 just got an email from Ms. Anderson, from Ward 4.
6 She conveys her thanks to you for this effort,
7 and she will follow up with you directly and will
8 continue working on behalf of the Board, with the
9 truancy task force, to see this through to a
10 successful end.

11 So, with that, thank you. You have
12 our thanks, and we look forward to continuing our
13 work together.

14 MS. STIENLE: Thank you for having me.

15 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Board Members, I
16 would entertain a motion to adjourn.

17 VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: So moved.

18 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Moved by Ms.
19 Williams. Is there a second?

20 MEMBER JONES: Second.

21 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Do we have special
22 announcements from Board Members? Ms. Lord?

1 MEMBER LORD: Quick promo. The D.C.
2 city-wide STEM fair, the science and engineering
3 fair is this Saturday at Dunbar High School at
4 101 N Street, Northwest.

5 They still need volunteers to help set
6 up Thursday evening, Friday evening and clean up
7 on Saturday. I'm going to be a judge and I hope
8 you will join me.

9 The next week, at the National
10 Archives, the Archives is hosting our National
11 History Day, city-wide competition. It's amazing
12 history. If you have any time, I think it's from
13 8:00 to 3:00 on Wednesday and Thursday.

14 Then finally, I just want to
15 congratulate the Woodson Warriors for their
16 astonishing, bring it home, first time in a long
17 time, undefeated state championships, and I took
18 my dancing partner for Dancing with the Scholars,
19 and he was very impressed.

20 So, that's all I have to say. Those
21 are my promos.

22 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.

1 Lord. Any other special announcements from Board
2 Members? Mr. Contreras?

3 MEMBER CONTRERAS: Thank you. I'd
4 like to reiterate, it was mentioned earlier, but
5 there is a second meeting for students to provide
6 input on the new health standards. It will be
7 taking place tomorrow from five to seven at the
8 Young Women's Project, which is 2217 14th Street,
9 Northwest, on the second floor. So, that's sort
10 of near Meridian Hill Park, I think.

11 Refreshments will be provided and
12 we'll be talking about a lot of issues that are
13 really important to the student body today,
14 sexual assault and violence, safe sex, sex
15 positivity and body positivity, bullying, a lot
16 of mental health issues that are specific to the
17 student population, so anxiety and stress and
18 depression, drug and alcohol safety, LGBTQ-plus
19 inclusivity.

20 So, a lot of very important relevant
21 social issues that affect a significant portion
22 of the student body on a daily basis.

1 Ms. Orellana and Mr. Carroll talked a
2 lot about how important these issues are in their
3 testimonies, and how health classes have a very
4 real effect on how students interact with other
5 students who are different than them or yes, so,
6 it's very important issue, and I'd encourage
7 people to attend, so they can provide input on
8 those regulations. Thank you.

9 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr.
10 Contreras. Any additional? Then I have just a
11 quick hello to Donna Johnson, the executive
12 director of the State Board of Education in
13 Delaware who is watching online, and with that,
14 I'd entertain a motion to adjourn.

15 MEMBER WATTENBERG: So moved.

16 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Moved by Ms.
17 Wattenberg. Second by Ms. Lord. All in favor?

18 (Chorus of aye.)

19 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: We're adjourned.

20 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
21 went off the record at 8:40 p.m.)
22

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This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Public Meeting

Before: DC SBOE

Date: 03-16-16

Place: Washington, DC

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