GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

WEDNESDAY
MARCH 16, 2016

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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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.


MEMBER WEEDON: Present.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Jolly.

MEMBER JOLLY: Present.
MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Contreras.

MEMBER CONTRERAS: Present.

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

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

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

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

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

VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: So moved.

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

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

(Chorus of aye.)

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Any opposed? The motion is approved.

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

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

MEMBER WEEDON: So moved.

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

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Second.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Second by Ms. Wilson Phelan. The motion being properly moved and seconded, I'll ask for the ayes and nays.

All in favor, please say aye.

(Chorus of aye.)

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Any opposed? The
motion is approved. Let the record reflect Ms. Wattenberg is also in attendance.

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

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

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

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

Tonight's agenda includes a vote on regulations that would introduce credit flexibility for the District's high school students. These regulations are the result of
hard work by the State Board's high school credit
flexibility task force, led by my Ward 1
colleague, Ms. Laura Wilson Phelan. She did an
exemplary job.

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

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

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

I'm looking forward to hearing more
about the state of truancy in D.C., and what has
led -- what has been done to better the system
since last year.
We will also hear tonight from two middle school teachers, who will be giving the State Board their perspective on the proposed health education standards.

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

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

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

Last, but certainly not least, the
State Board will be receiving comment from three experts to kick off its work, related to the new Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, the replacement for No Child Left Behind.

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

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

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

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

Our panelists tonight will help the State Board frame its work on ESSA, as we begin
our discussions with OSSE and other stakeholders.

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

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

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

OSSE is excited that the revised health standards, developed in collaboration with
the Board and stakeholders are expected to move forward to a vote in April.

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

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

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

We look forward to working with the State Board through updates and panels at upcoming meetings and other public engagement with school and LEA leaders and community
members, to design this new system over the next year.

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

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

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

Second, tonight the Board will be
voting on rulemaking regarding credit flexibility. If approved, this changes the potential to support high schools in better meeting the learning needs of students.

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

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

Through ongoing dialogue with the Board on the assessments issue, we determined
that further review of this issue would be valuable, and have reserved this section for future consideration. We are committed to working with the Board and stakeholders on this matter.

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

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

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

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you,
Superintendent Kang. The record needs to reflect that Ms. Lord, our At-Large Member, has also joined us.

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

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

MS. ORELLANA: Orellana.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Please come up.

Orellana. Close?

MS. ORELLANA: Orellana.

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

Sarah Livingston, a member of the public. Stanley Carroll, a student at Columbia Heights Education Campus.
Can we get one more chair? Great.

We'll put that right next to Ms. Livingston, I think, and why don't we start with Ms. Holmes.

MS. HOLMES: Sure.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: And then just move to your right.

MS. HOLMES: All right.

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

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

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

We do many things in the community and have done so for the last 15 years. We've been supporting our students strongly, since we started, and we're looking forward to our annual school grade awards ceremony. It's going to be
scheduled for Thursday, June 23rd, 4:00 p.m.

We're still working on a location, but we're going to have all of the valedictorians and salutatorians from our great city assembled, and we're going to honor them and we're going to support them with technological tools that we're sure they need for college. It's going to be a great day. I'll tell you, it's always a pleasure.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I'll tell you, initially, I thought let's get together a committee, so that we can have a bunch of people and all this great big old -- just great big, old think-tank, to see what we can do to support the Class of 2016 val's and sal's, and then I thought, we been doing this for eight years. We already sort of know what we
need to do in order to get support, and the main
ting that we generally need is people on the day
of the event, to help facilitate the event.

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

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

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

MS. HOLMES: Okay.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Ms. Orellana.

MS. ORELLANA: Orellana.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Orellana. Thank
you so much. You have three minutes.

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

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

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

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

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

With this in mind, our goal is to highlight how standards might be modified or
expanded to better serve students who identify as part of the LGBT community, and have or -- and have sexual experience with members of the same sex -- same or both sexes.

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

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

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

The D.C. Center conducted a poll over 200 students attending Youth Pride Day in May of
2014 in Dupont Circle.

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

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

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

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

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

MS. ORELLANA: Yes.

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

MS. ORELLANA: Thank you.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Those issues.

Thank you so much. Ms. Livingston, three minutes.

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

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Yes, ma'am.

MS. LIVINGSTON: Okay, my name is Sarah Livingston, and I live here in the District, in the Shaw neighborhood of Ward 6, and I have come tonight to share a couple of thoughts having to do with the proposed rules, related to high school graduation, flexibility requirements.
There are a number of terms associated with this idea. So, it's not always just one or two words. But anyway, I was pleased to learn in the OSSE memo to the Board of February 26th, that -- and she repeated it tonight, that perhaps, a little more consideration of some of the rules, specifically 2203.7 would be beneficial, and I really appreciate the responsiveness in that. However, I would be even more pleased, if the whole issue were indefinitely tabled in light of past and recent changes, and these changes -- you know, if you look in D.C. history, you see that in 1995, there was a decision made to have charter schools, and that wasn't necessarily a mistake, but it has created enormous problems, physically, legally and in all manner of effects on the children going to school in the District. So, it was done by a small group of people, and not very well-known to the public, and it's created problems, and the same is true of mayoral control, as a reform of educational
governance that we've had since 2007.

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

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

So, I want to -- to also point out that two more recent changes have occurred, that have put us in a different and much more
favorable decision making environment, and first, since 2014 with the -- when this idea first surfaced on this Board, we elected a new Mayor --

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

MS. LIVINGSTON: Yes.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you.

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

So, I just want to --

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you.

MS. LIVINGSTON: -- close by saying that I want to see the most thought put into this particular subject there can possibly be

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

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

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

As a young gay man in D.C., the subject is one I'm very invested in. When I first came out to my friends in eighth grade, many of my male friends were not okay with it and did not feel comfortable staying with me -- staying friends with me at the time.
This reaction, I saw as coming from a place of ignorance, and now, three years later, I am friends with them again, but at the time, did not -- they did not want to be seen with me.

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

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

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

Health classes in my high school have been more detailed. There has been discussion on being gay or lesbian and what that means, and briefly, our class talked about what it means to
be transgender. It's a problem though, that my health class in middle school didn't talk about sexual orientation.

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

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

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

For this reason, I am showing support the D.C. Center's letter of recommended changes to your proposal and I will even encourage you to push voting on this issue back into the
communities, to have a full say in health class centers.

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

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

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

So, thank you all for coming down, and you are excused.
If you have copies of your testimony, you can leave them with our staff or submit them by email.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The resolution before us will provide
-- will approve -- would approve the final regulations related to three of the four original recommendations, a waiver application process, altering the time line for taking Algebra I and for evaluation of approved waiver courses.

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

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: So moved.

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

VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Second.

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

(Chorus of aye.)

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Any opposed?

Motion carries. Ms. Anderson will be authorized to vote electronically and the Executive Director will get her on the line.
Considering her work on this issue, I would like to ask Ms. Wilson Phelan if she would like to introduce the resolution and provide comments.

MEMBER WILSON PHelan: Yes, thank you. I'll begin with the comments.

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

Even if it's better before, even if it's as a result of the tireless efforts of people across our education system, who are reaching out to students and trying to help them succeed, we have to try new things, if they are promising. We are just not making change fast enough, and entire populations of youth are
exiting our system without having been sufficiently supported in their development.

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

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

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

While we've engaged the public through many of the channels that are available to us, at
the same time, my personal learning has been that it's completely insufficient.

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

We must engage them meaningfully in co-creating solutions, to hear their ideas. That's going to get us much farther than the ideas many of us come up with on our own, and I am personally re-committing myself to this priority.

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

My hope is that the leaders of these institutions are seeing this too, and that they will re-double their efforts to be transparent in
their decision making processes, and go to extremes to over-share information with the public.

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

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

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

Whereas, District of Columbia law requires State Board of Education approval of high school graduation requirements.
Whereas, the District is one of the few jurisdictions in the United States, where the time-based Carnegie Unit 120 hours of class or contact time with an instructor during the year, is the sole means for awarding course credit for a traditional high school diploma.

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

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

Whereas, the District of Columbia is the only jurisdiction in the country that
requires students to enroll in Algebra I by ninth grade, regardless of their readiness.

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

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

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

Whereas, student implementation -- excuse me, successful implementation of competency-based courses requires significant thought preparation and teacher support.
Whereas, the State Board of Education convened a cross-city task force of 25 members, representing teachers, principals, traditional and charter public schools, community groups, the business community, the Washington Teachers' Union, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education and the Council of the District of Columbia from August 2015 to December 2015, to develop recommendations for high school credit flexibility.

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

Whereas, the task force's report makes the following recommendations for earning high school credit.
Number one, create a waiver process for school wishing to pursue competency-based learning.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Whereas, the public comment period
officially closed on February 22nd, 2016, with
the State Superintendent having received numerous
comments from advocates and members of the
regulated community.

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

Whereas, the State Board of Education
finds that the final rulemaking may assist
students at all levels of academic performance by
eliminating barriers to meeting individual
educational needs, and by promoting competency-
based learning that ensures students advance with
the requisite knowledge to be successful.

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

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

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: So moved.

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

MEMBER JOLLY: Second.

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

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

I want to thank the task force, and
especially my colleague from Ward 1, Laura Wilson
Phelan, for their work on this issue.
However, I've had long -- I've long
had concerns about the lack of accountability in
our public school systems, and I believe we need
more clear lines of accountability.

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

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

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

My belief is that the work of the
State Board must create a frame work to ensure
transparency and accountability.

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

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

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

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

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Is there a second?
MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Second, for discussion.

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

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

Any additional discussion? Ms. Lord.

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

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

So, I just want to say I'm very
supportive of this amendment. I, in fact, had an
amendment of my own ready to queue up about the
accountability and need to measure our success.
Thank you.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Ms. Wilson

Phelan.

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

The first is that the language that
actually was put into the regulation was very
carefully constructed to ensure a balance of
accountability and authority where they
appropriately lie within our law, and I think
this goes above and beyond that, and I will
particularly speak to the authorities associated
with the Public Charter School Board, whereas all
of us know, they have the authority to charter
public charter schools in our city, and as part
of that chartering process, they approve the
approaches to teaching associated with all of those schools, including their curriculum.

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

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Mr. Weedon.

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

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

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: yes.

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

Any additional -- Ms. Wattenberg from Ward 3.
MEMBER WATTENBERG: Hi. Thank you. I have a multi-part amendment here, which I'm going to explain and then I will motivate it. So, what I'd like for people to do is to look at the resolution titled "Evaluating and Monitoring the Progress and Effectiveness of Competency-Based Learning," the resolution that I have submitted.

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

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

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

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

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

In effect, what I'm doing --

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Point of inquiry, Ruth.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Yes.

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

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Above line one --

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: I think that makes more sense.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: -- on page --

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: And then insert
MEMBER WATTENBERG: That's fine. I mean, that's fine.

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: -- 10 to 21 --

MEMBER WATTENBERG: At the end?

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Yes.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: That's fine.

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

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

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

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

Whereas, the task force report stated
that in the waiver, educational institutions must
describe for which course or series of courses
the waiver applies, the method for determining
competency within those courses, and the level of
performance or achievement that will constitute
mastery of state standards for each course or
series of courses that will not be using Carnegie
Units.

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

Whereas, task force members, "Express
support for appropriate review of the progress
and implementation of waivers, and expect that
OSSE will analyze, evaluate and transparently
share with the public, the information it
collects from DCPS and PCSB, to assess whether
CBL is improving outcomes for students."
The second set of inserts goes like this.

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

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

So, I'll be brief in my motivation and
simply say that as we've heard in the comments thus far, and as we've heard as many of us have gone to community meetings to discuss this and as has been discussed in a number of State Board meetings, we do think that it's critical, that as we move forward with this exciting reform of competency-based learning, that we do so in a way that's really going to gather the kind of information necessary, so that everybody who is involved will know what is working well, what is not working and everybody can make sure that as this moves forward, the best possible practices are being used and those that aren't used, we know it and they can be -- and they can be discarded.

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

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

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

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

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Stated.

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

MEMBER WATTENBERG: No, I think it's just in the first one. It is just in the first one. It's not in the second one.
MR. HAYWORTH: So, the second one should still read --

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Yes.

MR. HAYWORTH: -- recommended?

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Yes.

MR. HAYWORTH: Okay, thank you.

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


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

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: It is accepted as friendly. Additional discussion or amendments?

Ms. Lord.

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

MEMBER WATTENBERG: No. Thanks to Laura's stylistic amendment to the amendment, the whereas's will go at the top of page two, and the resolves will go before the resolves.
MEMBER LORD: Okay, I just want to make that clear.

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

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

So, we were able to bring that into our discussions here. Subsequent to that, my colleague Mr. Jacobson went to Maine, to see their state's competency-based system.
We have had lots of informative discussion with NASBE, including a stipend to do this competency-based work, and we got to the point of almost voting on a competency-based proposal at the end of December 2014.

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

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

So, to get to my amendment. There is a -- on page two, line 37, I would propose that we strike the clause beginning on line 41, which is, the comment period, the Superintendent having received numerous comments from advocates and
members of the regulated community, to whereas,
the proposed rule was adjusted by the Office of
the State Superintendent of Education, to reflect
numerous comments received before the February
22nd, 2016 -- before February 22nd, 2016,
including reserving for further examination, Sub-
Section 2203.7(b) in the notice of proposed
rulemaking, that established an option for
students to receive course credit by obtaining a
minimum score on an approved assessment.

That was -- I did not think that
classifying the public comments was accurate
or necessary, and the result of those comments
was to have a clause reserved, the one that
causethemostcomments.

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

So, this proposal would replace lines
37 through 46.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Is there a
second? Is that -- is that your full amendment?
MEMBER LORD: That's my full amendment.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Is there a second?

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Second.

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

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

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: It's accepted as friendly.

MEMBER LORD: Thank you for that.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Any additional amendments or discussion?

MEMBER LORD: I have just one --

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Ms. Lord.

MEMBER LORD: -- technical amendment. On page one, the third whereas, line 16, it says currently, "The performance for sub-groups of high school students differed by as much as 78 percentage points."

I went back and did some math, and I
would like to suggest that we -- which showed performance for sub-groups of students, not high school students, but students, differed by as much as -- let me check my math one more time, 72 percentage points.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Is there a second?

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Second.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Any discussion?

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: It's accepted as friendly.

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

If not, Ms. Jolly from Ward 8.

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

So, I just wanted to go on the public
record for an explanation of that.

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

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

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

Any additional comment? If not, I would move to the vote.
MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Second.

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

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

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

MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Jacobson.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Aye.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Williams.

VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Yes.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Lord.

MEMBER LORD: Aye.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Wilson Phelan.

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Yes.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Wattenberg.

(No audible response.)

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Anderson.

MEMBER ANDERSON: Aye.

MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Jones.

MEMBER JONES: Aye.
MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Weedon.
MEMBER WEEDON: Aye.
MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Jolly.
MEMBER JOLLY: Aye.
MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Contreras.
MEMBER CONTRERAS: Aye.

(No audible response.)

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

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

MEMBER WILSON PHELAN: Just point of information. I need to excuse myself for the rest of the meeting, for a family emergency.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Okay, is there a
possibility of getting some confirmation on that,
just so that all the people can know that it's
put aside for now, and they can worry about other
things related to improving schools.

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

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Okay, terrific.

Thank you very much. Much appreciated.

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

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

Lisa Aleshire, a teacher at Hart Middle School, and Ms. Aleshire, are you here?

No? Rayshonna Hill, a teacher at Brookland Middle School.

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

These standards are truly a labor of love for me. The data is clear, we are failing
our students by not providing the best and most accurate information related to their health, that we can.

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

MS. HILL: Yes.

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

MS. HILL: Okay, great.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so much.

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

MEMBER LORD: Could you move closer to the microphone?

MS. HILL: Sure.
MEMBER LORD: Thank you.

MS. HILL: Thank you for having me.

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

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

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

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

During my time in DCPS, I've seen health education shift and become more skills-focused, and I think that is very important, because students need to be equipped with the skills necessary to just tackle life.
The proposed health standards reflect this shift.

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

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

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

Doing this will develop deeper
understanding on how to apply the content to their lives. When students learn how to apply the content to their own lives, they will improve the outcomes of themselves, and hopefully their families and friends, and just people around them in general.

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

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

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

Teachers will need to see how to teach both content and the skills that are addressed in these new standards. The training should show
how to actually address the standards and how to integrate those things into our health and P.E. courses. That way, we are ensuring that students get the full knowledge necessary.

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

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

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

MS. HILL: No problem.

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

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

MS. HILL: Thank you.

MEMBER JONES: And share with me, how
you're doing at your school, at Brookland.

MS. HILL: How I'm doing?

MEMBER JONES: Yes.

MS. HILL: I'm doing --

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But tell me more about your students and their encounters.

MS. HILL: It's a pretty -- it's an area of mostly black students at the school.
They'll come in from different areas of the city.

A lot of them -- we have a population

-- we have a good number on -- that just made --

we do honor roll assembly. We have a few

students that made honor roll.

We have had some struggles at the

school dealing with different bullying and things

like that, but the school has been coming up.

We have a lot of support coming from

outside that's helping, and things like that.

MEMBER JONES: Okay, if you could ask

for help, in your area, that would help your

students at your school, whether it was me or any

other Board Member, and I'll tell you why I'm

asking this, what would you ask for?

MS. HILL: Right now, I'd ask for, you

know, just resources to help my students with

some more, like character development.

MEMBER JONES: What kind of resources?

Try to be as specific as possible.

MS. HILL: Different programs, maybe

different mentoring programs that can help the
students to see more -- not just what they see around them every day, but give them access to things that they may not be exposed to, to help them hopefully live a more healthier, successful life, because that's what I feel like in those areas.

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

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

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

But I must share with you, there is not a day literally, that goes by, that we don't get bad reports on what's going on over there, and I ask you that because I sincerely want to help.
Quite often, we put blinders on and say things are fine. Guess what? Things are not fine over there. I live very close to the school, and I encounter the students almost on a daily basis, myself.

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

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

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

MEMBER JONES: And you teach physical education?

MS. HILL: Health and physical
education, yes.

MEMBER JONES: Health and physical education?

MS. HILL: Yes.

MEMBER JONES: Nice gymnasium, isn't it?

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

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

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

Secondly, it also gives the phys ed teachers enough room to carry out their tasks for their students.
So, but it's a beautiful school. I believe everyone there is committed, but give it some thought, because there are a lot of businesses and community people that want to provide assistance.

MS. HILL: Right.

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

MS. HILL: Yes, I was.

MEMBER JONES: Congratulations.

MS. HILL: Thank you.

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

MS. HILL: Yes, we did.

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

MS. HILL: Security.

MEMBER JONES: -- security. I'll pay for the security.
MS. HILL: Well, that's -- I'll definitely be in touch.

MEMBER JONES: And I'm saying this publically because again, I know Central Office is sometimes, "Oh, no, we can't do that."

Central Office, I am volunteering, and other businesses will, as well.

MS. HILL: I hope they're listening.

MEMBER JONES: Thank you for coming down.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So, whereas, I would have programs -- well, I'm teaching lessons on healthy relationships and interactions. I'm able to bring in resources from like, the Rape Prevention Program, into my classroom, to teach kids skills and give them more information, to basically piggyback off of what I am teaching the students.
Again, you know, I've never been to a situation like that. So, to have, you know, people coming in that can talk and then give more resources, that has helped.

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

So, again, that's how I've been helping access it, again. So, a lot of programs and a lot of things that I've come into contact with, I've been able to incorporate and allow help teach those skills. So, whether it be refusal skills, whether it be skills on how to just say no, how to be -- to stand apart and make -- you know, stand out for being -- doing something positive, instead of doing something negative.
We go over those things. So, instead of it just being like a role playing, where you guys come up with scenarios, I'm telling them, you know, how they can respond to certain situations. So, that when they get into it, it's not like a shock, like I don't know what to do.

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

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

So, I mean, as much as we can, I think it's important to incorporate those things, and that's what I try to do, and it just gives different feel, instead of just trying to learn facts and figures, you know, about something.
So, I think that's pretty much more --
very more important, to just be prepared to
tackle those every day solutions.

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

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

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

So, whether it's resources that we
can, you know, have them access or send them out
to, after learning about these things and what
the signs and symptoms may be, things like that,
I think will definitely help.

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

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

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

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

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

So, just going through different things like that, I think is a big help, because that's -- you know, what helps us get to our students, because I take everything from, you know, off paper and say, yes, this is going to
work for my kids, but I can take parts of it and say, "Hey, this might work and this might work," for my particular population and things like that. So, I think more training like that.

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

MS. HILL: No problems.

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

MS. HILL: Thank you.

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

MEMBER LORD: Thank you very much.

Thank you very much for being here. It's wonderful to be able to hear from an educator and sort of get that voice, fresh voice from the field.

Just a real basic question. What does the health curriculum or how many minutes a week do you spend doing health? Is it a half-year
thing? Is it one course for the whole year, and just help me understand just how many minutes in a week, you're interacting with your students.

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

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

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

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

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

MEMBER LORD: And do you interact or
integrate your lessons with say, the science teacher or the literacy English language arts teacher?

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

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

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

I was wondering if you could just give me some insights onto how these new standards
would address those things, or how perhaps, you
address them in your teaching, that might be
informed -- that might inform the standards or
even change them.

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

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

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

So, being able to put students through
making a meal, you know, just basic breakfast,
lunch and dinner, using the different nutritional
facts and things like that, I feel like that is
important, letting them know, you know, what that
can mean to them, and you know, so that's one way
that I know I've incorporated different things
doing -- into my classroom.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I guess I'm going back to that skills thing. So, giving them the, you know, resources to access that information that they need, you
know, I'm fine with that, and I'm fine with the
new way that they adopted it, as I read over them
and highlighted different things that were
important to me, in my class and my students.

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

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

There are some things that we've left
out of the high school standard, because they're
covered in middle school, things like actual
intercourse and what it is, appropriate condom
use and other STD prevention measures, that are
taught really strongly in middle school, so we
skip them in high school, and it is because there
is just not enough time? Do you have really good tactics that you use as a teacher? How can we improve this, so that information is retained throughout?

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

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

So, you may not even -- in middle school, you may not be having sexual intercourse or anything at that point. So, when you get the information it's, you know, kind of like, oh, icky, but in high school now, you're getting interested.
So, again, it's not, oh, you learned it already. It's should still, you know, roll into let's touch on it again, because now, it's different on how you might interact with the information that you receive, at that time.

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

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

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

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Right, right.

MS. HILL: For some, it's -- but for some, it is. So, I mean, the shift is -- I think it's going younger and younger. So, I think -- you know.
PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Terrific, and then at the high school level, would you recommend that individual high school teachers reiterate and reinforce or do you think that the standards should actually be reiterated at the high school level, for those skills, particularly human growth and development skills learned at middle school?

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

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Okay.

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

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Terrific.

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

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: You are. Absolutely, and with that, we're going to let you go, unless any colleagues have additional questions.

Thank you so very much for bringing
a teacher's perspective. We really appreciate your input onto these standards and we really -- I personally really appreciate you just coming down here tonight.

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

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

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

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

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

Bethany Little is a principal at Education Council, and Scott Sargrad, I hope I
got that pretty close, is the managing director of K-12 Education Policy at the Center for American Progress.

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

    MR. ZAMORA:  Perfect.

    PRESIDENT JACOBSON:  Thank you.

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

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

    So, we have a lot of interest in states, as you can imagine, around the elementary and secondary education act re-authorization.

    ESSA, I think we'll call it here for short.

    So, CCSSO is strongly supportive of
the re-authorization, because it preserves many
of the key elements of No Child Left Behind,
while also moving passed many of the flaws of
that law.

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

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

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

I will, I think, go over some of the
high levels, sort of overview of some of the big
topics and certainly welcome any questions that
folks might have.
So, on accountability, and this is a substantial departure from what we saw under No Child Left Behind or even under ESEA flexibility waivers.

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

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

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

The next two are even more of a departure, I think from current law, where it's requiring states to include growth or another
statewide academic indicator.

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

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

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

Then that feeds into a school improvement system that's very different than No Child Left Behind, or ESEA waivers.
So, the school improvement grant, four models, those go away under the new Act, and evidence -- evidence-based interventions are now required.

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

Then it's also high schools that have below 67 percent graduation rate. So, in other words, they're graduating you know, fewer than two-thirds of their students, and then also there is a targeted support and improvement category, which is schools that have consistently under-performing sub-groups, as defined by the state, and that if they don't improve after a state-determined period of time, that they have to receive comprehensive supports and improvements.
Teacher evaluation and equity. So, the Act does not require specific educator evaluation measures or methods, but it does require that there is an equity component in the distribution of teachers.

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

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

So, state evaluation is one of those potential elements, but it's no longer required, although it does authorize the Teacher Incentive Fund, which is a competitive grant program, that supports innovative educator evaluation systems.
Then quickly, I see my time is wrapping up, but you know, it does also, you know, create many opportunities for states to advance teacher supports, and to sort of better align teacher evaluation supports.

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

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

There is also allowed activities around reforming state certification and licensure systems, develop, as we had just discussed, you know, new teacher evaluation systems and many other priorities.
But as President Jacobson noted, I think earlier in the meeting today, you know, the law is not fully implementable yet, because there is a regulatory process that's happening right now, at the Department of Education, there is a negotiated rulemaking that starts this coming week, and then there will be proposed ESL regulations that will be published for public comment later this spring, and we expect those to be finalized by the end of this year.

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

In August of this year, the waivers expire. Then there is a transition period, as we look at the next school year 2016/2017, as we move towards full implementation in school year 2017/2018.
So, we are urging states to be thoughtful around how they use this transition process, to engage with stakeholders and to move forward with solid state plans in 2017 and 2018. So, I think with that, thank you very much. I welcome your questions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The biggest shift, as you heard from my colleague Peter is that it moves more authority regarding the design of some of those systems, from the federal level, back to states and districts, and most importantly perhaps, it anchors the Federal law in what is a shift that has already been made by the states, to the
expectation of college and career readiness for all students.

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

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

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

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

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

While there are a lot of decision points the state might consider in revisiting the accountability system, the values that underline the design of an accountability system are probably most important to keep top of mind in this moment, so I'm going to spend a moment talking about what some of those values are, that
really matter in the design of accountability systems.

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

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

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

The third value I would indicate is around alignment. All indicators in the system should be aligned to the North Star, in this
case, of achieving college and career readiness
for all students, and in particular, the issue of
equity and how are we using the accountability
system to advance most quickly, students who have
the least access to opportunity, towards that
college and career readiness?

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

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

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

Is it important for the decision about
differentiation among schools, understanding what
the performance of schools is, or is it more
important to tell us about the needs analysis and
the interventions for those schools, or is it
more important to tell us something about how to
inform parents and the community about those
schools?

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

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

Accountability systems are actually
slow to take hold and to begin to drive change.
They're somewhat blunt instruments in what we
have to undertake in this work, and so, it is
important that while change should be made when
necessary, it should be as part of a deliberate
response to data driven continuous improvement,
not made lightly or frequently.

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

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

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

My name is Scott Sargrad and I am the Managing Director for K-12 Education Policy at the Center for American Progress, here in Washington, D.C., and CAP, the Center for American Progress, is an independent, non-partisan policy institute that is dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans through bold
ideas and progressive action, as well as strong leadership.

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

As you know, on December 10th, 2015, the President signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, which re-authorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and replaced No Child Left Behind, as the key federal education law governing K through 12 education in this country, and CAP strongly supported the passage of ESSA, as a major step forward from No Child Left Behind, and while it certainly is not perfect, we believe that ESSA strikes the right balance between accountability
and flexibility, and it holds states, districts
and schools accountable for raising student
performance and closing achievement gaps, while
giving them the flexibility to design systems
that meet their specific local needs.

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

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

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

The law also includes some key
provisions and federal guardrails, to help ensure
that states and districts meet their responsibilities to improve outcomes for all students.

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

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

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

Finally, ESSA supports greater
resource equity among schools, by requiring the reporting of actual school level expenditures, including personnel salary data and non-personnel expenditures, providing an important window into the resources that high poverty and low poverty schools alike are receiving.

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

Instead of labeling schools of -- as failing, if they miss a single target under NCLB, states can now take a more holistic approach to determining whether schools are succeeding or struggling, and by holding schools accountable for these types of measures and ensuring that they actually address inequities in these areas, states can help close persistent achievement gaps.
While the new law is an exciting step forward for our country, it is also important for states to be thoughtful and deliberate about the changes they consider making to their systems.

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

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

Over the past two decades, D.C. has been a leader in education reform and innovation, and has made remarkable progress in improving outcomes for students.
Since 2000, the percentage of students performing at grade level on the national assessment of educational progress has tripled. However, the city still has a long way to go, before all of its students are graduating from high school, prepared for college and a career.

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

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

It's critical that the District of Columbia take advantage of the opportunity that ESSA presents to improve achievement, close gaps and advance equity. At the same time, it's clear that this city's reform efforts have turned the ship in the right direction and dramatic changes could disrupt that progress.
Ultimately, the State Board of Education, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, the D.C. Public Schools and the D.C. Public Charter School Board must work together to create an educational system that gives all students, no matter their background, the opportunity to succeed.

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

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

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

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

Secondly, that you might want to not
make too many big changes too quickly, and really
disrupt the system that is headed in the
direction, but for the opportunity gap that is,
as you said, Mr. Sargrad, is the largest in the
nation, between our white students and other
students.

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

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

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

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

In 2015, Hispanic students had an
average score that 55 points lower than that for
white students. This performance gap was not
significantly different from that in 2002.
In 2015, students who were eligible for free and reduced price lunch, an indicator of low family income, had an average score that was 58 points lower than that for students who were not eligible. This performance gap was wider than that in 2002.

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

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

Mr. Zamora, you said something around graduation rates. Could you revisit that a little bit and share a little bit more, specifically, there was something about high schools that are graduating less than 67 percent of students. Could you elaborate?
MR. ZAMORA: Yes, thank you. So, you know, graduation rates are both a required element of the state accountability system and they're also a required category of schools under school identification -- under school improvement.

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

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

If you look at the PARCC scores from
last year in the District, there are eight high schools in the District that did not have any students score at level three or four in math on the PARCC College and Career Ready.

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

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

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

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

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

MEMBER LORD: Thank you. Just a quick
point of picking up on the graduation rates.

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

Is there anything in the guidance or
anything you've heard so far, that would allow
states to essentially step out of that straight-

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

MR. SARGRAD: Yes, so, the law
provides the flexibility for states to use the --
they have to use the four year rate. There is a
requirement to consider the four year graduation
rate, but they may also use a five year rate, a
six year rate, and there are even states that
have used under the ESEA flexibility waivers, a
seven year graduation rate, to account for
students who really do need significantly more
time to graduate from high school.

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

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

MEMBER LORD: Thank you, and I also
want to say this is an amazing conversation. I
spent the last year as President of the National
Association of State Boards of Education, working
with State Board leaders and the chiefs and
basically, everybody at the table, to get some
milestones, and they're in the Bill. So, this is
really exciting.
Help me understand what lessons we might learn from No Child Left Behind.

Innovations from other states.

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

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

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

MR. ZAMORA: Thank you very much. I think certainly as we looked at the assessment, the public reporting, the accountability systems, the dis-aggregate students results, you know,
they've shown a spotlight upon the achievement
gap in the country, and I think that has
certainly been a healthy movement.

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

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

One is that we've learned that
accountability systems don't in and of
themselves, drive the improvement. They set
expectations and goals, which is critical, and
they identify where resources and other shifts
and changes need to be made, but it is those resource redirections and those shifts in changes at the school level, that will drive the improvement, not the accountability system in and of itself.

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

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

So, it is important to contemplate that the accountability system won't solve the problem, but it will drive behaviors and so, it's super important to think carefully, what do you want to drive, and how do you make sure you're
not over-crowding that lever, in the
accountability system?

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

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

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

MS. LITTLE: Indeed, but still --
MEMBER LORD: And just one quick question. There is specific funding for the arts, I believe in the new law.

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

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

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

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

So, yes, there is -- like you mentioned, funding for some of these things, but
there is also the opportunity to put them in the
accountability system if that's something that
the state and the city believes is going to drive
towards college and career readiness for all
kids.

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

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

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

What I want to ask you about is how
other states have maybe dealt with this, because
there really is a sense here, that in an effort
to push up the high school graduation rates, that
part of what's being lost is the idea that
graduation should be the result of and be
consistent with having learned a lot, and you
hear a lot from teachers that they're under
pressure to pass kids, whether or not kids have
reached the standards in the class.

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

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

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

Related to that is another issue
about, you know, what you measure can cause the
distortions, right, is there is -- has been a
growing push to focus on the higher level
courses, but if, as colleagues have said, kids are entering high school so, so far behind, and the push is on the higher courses, it takes away some of the focus on what you should be doing that helps kids who aren't ready yet, for the higher courses.

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

So, kids are actually getting into high school in some cases, having had very little exposure, certainly inadequate exposure, to these subjects, which in turn, makes it that much harder to succeed in these course in high school.
So, so much effort is going on here, the intentions here in D.C. are so great, so much energy is going into it, how do you think about these dilemmas that we're facing?

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

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

MS. LITTLE: I have a couple of thoughts. One is that, just to cite rewind to why graduation rates became such a focus in the accountability system.
When we first passed the No Child Left Behind Act, there was, in fact, a significant fear and some beginning moves towards the opposite effect, which was that the easiest way to raise test scores, especially in high schools, is to actually push out the students who are most likely to fail the test.

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

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

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

One is that it does go back in many
ways to those side of building capacity. The idea that students need to be able to read, write, articulate, do math, in order to succeed in society really hasn't changed, and the idea that that is fundamental to their college and career and other success is core.

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

So, how do we think about building the capacity in our schools, so that there is no need to double dose at seventh and eighth grade, because these students are building from early childhood, which is another lever that's on the table. We can think about what those investments might be, and there is accountability opportunity to think about that too, how do we look at needs analysis and whether or not students are coming in at similar levels. What does the early childhood opportunity offer to them, for example, so that you're not ending up in a situation where
with your seventh and eighth graders, you're still fighting so hard to close those gaps, that you're resorting to double dosing, rather than the deeper, richer curriculum, which we know is actually more likely to engage students and have them raise their reading and math abilities, yet people don't know how to do that, so they resort to the double dose.

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

In terms of the high level -- higher level course work, I think we're seeing states take the balance -- a balanced approach between looking at the performance in advanced course work, so whether students are scoring at high levels on AP and IB exams, and also looking at the participation, are schools actually providing access to those courses to kids from all groups, including kids who are traditionally disadvantaged?
So, I think accountability system is the -- like we had mentioned, can provide incentives for different things, and if there are incentives only associated with performance, and then that means that it's easy to just look at the kids who are likely to do well on those advanced courses, whereas, if there are incentives associated with participation, then there is an incentive to encourage more students to take those courses and become prepared to succeed in advanced courses.

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

So, there are states like Kentucky that have really taken a hard look at their career readiness initiatives, and for students who might not be taking an AP course or an IB sequence, they are taking career readiness courses, and they are passing career and
technical education courses and assessments, to
be ready for receiving certifications and having
a well-paying job when they leave high school.

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

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

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

But under the new law, there is, in
fact, focus on a single test on a single day and
I think the natural extension of that is, there
won't be this feeling that they have to spend so much time on one or two subjects, just to get a score on a test.

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

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

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

From that, I think the important is again, not to think about the specific indicator,
but whether the indicator is going to serve that
purpose.

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

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

So, looking at a measure that is
related to those outcomes, but is not measuring
the exact same thing.

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

So, whether that turns out to be
access to and performance in advanced course
work, which I think is a really promising measure
for high schools, or whether it's something like
chronic absenteeism at the elementary and middle
school level, which we know is a leading
indicator of students dropping out of high
school, and there are some clear promising
indicators, but I would really encourage the
state and the city here to take a close look at
the data and what those -- what the data actually
show about the indicators that you're
considering.
MS. LITTLE: I would echo what Scott said, and in fact, some of the specific measures, I would think about are very similar around access to and success in rigorous course work like AP/IB, chronic absenteeism, which is different than attendance rates, and importantly different, as well as things like school climate as measured by discipline.

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

We think of these measures as ones that need to be measurable, reliably validly measurable and for the purposes of an accountability system, and meaningful, having to
-- to Scott's point, meaning in the system you're
trying drive towards and then malleable,
something that you can do something about, you
can make a difference based on what you've
learned.

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

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

But I would like to follow up just by
asking if there any indicators that you would shy
away from, outside of them, obviously not
specifically being applicable or addressing key
student outcomes, as outlines in that value?
MR. SARGRAD: So, I think the only
thing I would say on that is that there are some
measures of things like social and emotional
learning, and what is sometimes termed non-
curricular cognitive skills that are very
important for learning.

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

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

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

There could be many of them, and I
don't think that's necessarily a smart path
because the fewer the sort of weights associated
with them, the less they're likely to drive real
information, authentic differentiation and
behavior change.

So, I think that's worth considering.

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

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

So, I think it's important to
understand what it will drive.

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

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

MEMBER JOLLY: Thank you so much.

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

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

Mr. Sargrad, you mentioned the achievement gap between black and white students, and I know previously, within the black students and Latino students, as well, boys typically were even -- the achievement gap was even more vast, even among their group of color.
Has that closed or does that still exist?

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

MEMBER JONES: Thank you.

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

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

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

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Two questions.

One, somebody talked about there's going to be a
requirement that the budget is going to be transparent at the school level.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Okay.

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

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Okay.

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

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

There's also an equitable distribution of resources that will require more transparent
per pupil understanding of how much is ending up where and from what sources. So, we'll know more later.

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

MEMBER WATTENBERG: On the evidence-based and --

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

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

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

So, this is evidence that's done in a
randomized control trial study or at a correlated study with significant guardrails around, you know, making sure that it's valid and reliable.

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

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

MS. LITTLE: It is.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: -- a correct understanding?

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

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

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

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Briefly.

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

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

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

MR. ZAMORA: I would just say as a general matter, I mean, there are -- many fewer
specifics and sort of similar dedicated programs.

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

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

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

    I mean, we already report test scores at their grade, so it's not -- I don't know what more is in here that we can do, that gets to how do we do it. Maybe we can work with the -- do more with the evidence-based interventions, I
would think, and maybe can we -- is there
something that we can do, that sort of uses
those, but in early grades, I guess? Would that
be --

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

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

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

Are we asking about what sort of
opportunities students are getting, coming in for
early childhood, and then there is also lots of
opportunity in this Bill for coordination and
collaboration, bringing in all of the different
early childhood programs in an area, whether
they're directly related to the District or not,
and sharing things like professional development
funds, understanding of standards and goals and
alignment.

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

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

So, access to early learning and also,
the quality of the programs for students, and
that is one of the best interventions that you
can provide, is to start early for students, to make sure that they're on track by the time they actually get to Kindergarten, not just to third grade.

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

MEMBER WATTENBERG: Thanks a lot.

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

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

What kind of measures should we think about avoiding? Attendance, you know, that's something that schools really don't have much control over. The kid is either being brought to school by a parent or isn't.
So, that's one part of it, and then the second bigger thing is, how will the new law have an effect on our most needy and challenged populations, particularly special education students?

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

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

So, there are measures like that, that do matter. So, I think it is worth thinking about which are the -- what are the things you
value? How do they align to the college and
career readiness of the students? Are they
measurable, reliably, validly in ways that are
going to drive towards the source of improvements
that you seek in the system.

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

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

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

A bunch of them have been made, but
not in this law per se. They've been made
through various administrative actions and things
like that, where they're asking for more of a focus on results and outcomes for students with disabilities, which is very important.

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

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

MR. SARGRAD: Yes, I think the two things that I see as opportunities are, I think there is an emphasis in the Bill on inclusion of students with disabilities, and making sure that they are a part of the general education
curriculum, that they are in classes with their
non-disabled peers, and that we know there is
very strong evidence that that is what leads to
higher outcomes for kids with disabilities.

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

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

Then the second piece is again, in the
assessment area, but I think this applies to
other areas too, is the idea of universal design
for learning, and that whether it's an
assessments or curriculum or instruction
materials, should be designed from the beginning
with the needs of all students in mind, and that
applies to students with disabilities, but also
to English language learners, and students from
all sorts of backgrounds.

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

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

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

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

VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you
for coming. This has been a very informative and interesting conversation. I'm sure this is just the beginning of the tip of the iceberg, per se.

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

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

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

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

MR. ZAMORA: That's a great question.
So, the states are going to set the sort of
entrance criteria and then also, exit criteria, I
think.

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

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

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

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

So, it's a little more nuanced than
what we see, sort of, certainly under No Child
Left Behind, but effectively, there is an opportunity to improve and then the state is going to set sort of the limit on what that time period would be.

VICe PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

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

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

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

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

MR. ZAMORA: Very much so. Very much so.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Terrific. I also
really love what you had talked about, in terms of setting a goal for what we value as a city, and setting -- basically, we need to set a vision of what high quality, equitable education looks like and what our students need to be successful in life.

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

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

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

Obviously, we all need to be
compliant, but having that sort of state vision driving it.

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

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

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

There is only so many hours in the day for the teachers to teach and the students to
learn. So, it's important to be rigorous about that. But in that context, thinking about what is -- what is the full range of knowledge and skills that we value towards college and career readiness?

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

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

So, understanding what the full range of breadth and depth, what is the knowledge expectation we have for our students, and really, do we think it's a three on PARCC or a four on PARCC or a five on PARCC. Those are good conversations, and this law does invite stakeholder engagement and the opportunity to
have those and to get -- I don't know that it's about shifting the vision, so much as it is about sharing it, and creating buy-in, so that there is more of a shared understanding of what we're driving towards as a city.

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

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

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

The three that come to mind that I would point to are one, Oregon has a -- had a really clear vision for what they expect and their results -- particularly, their high school system to be, in terms of students graduating, going onto two year and four year colleges or going onto well-paying jobs.
Then the other two are Kentucky, which has a very clear vision for college and career readiness, and what that means for their state and how to improve the learning outcomes for students, on that whole continuum.

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

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

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

MR. ZAMORA: Thank you.

MR. SARGRAD: Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, all.

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

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

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

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

MS. STIENLE: Got it.

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

As Ms. Stienle comes forward, let me remind the public about the information the Board requested.
First, we requested an investigation into the challenges and inconsistent findings reported by school-based administrators, along with practices employed at the school level.

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

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

As members of the Board know, Ms. Stienle is the lead staff member in the Deputy Mayor for Education's Office on the truancy task force. I think we've got a couple of folks that serve on that. Ms. Kamili Anderson from Ward 4
serves as the Board's representative. I think
our staff members, John Paul Hayworth and Sean
Chalk regularly attend meetings, and I believe
the chief student advocate and Ombudsman are
involved, as well.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Since January 2015, the task force has worked collaboratively to identify key data trends, develop sound policy recommendations and business rules for calculating truancy, and also identify best practices for local education
agencies and their schools, reviewing national
best practices, among other things.

    So, namely, we've also used an EdStat
framework, which uses data to identify
efficiencies and recommends systemic policy
changes.

    Further overview of the task force can
be found in my full testimony, and some of the
associated attachments.

    I would also point you to -- for
information regarding the reporting completed on
80/20, the September truancy EdStat has a number
of sites that address that, and we can go over
those further here, as well, and also to the
Student Attendance Clarification Committee
Report, which of course came from Council.

    Additionally, for information
regarding some of the research and reporting
completed on truancy prevention, best practices,
you can reference the attachment that was LEA
best practices. Again, glad to talk that through
here, but kind of did a little bit of information
dump, so you call have that to reference.

I do want to highlight a few accomplishments of the truancy task force, and then turn to questions.

So, the additional accomplishments I want to highlight include developing and implementing a more rigorous EdStat measure, monitor and act model, which we borrowed from New York, which is driving our task force towards action.

We also identified some key trends in the data, and I'll just zip through those now, but we can dig in, if helpful.

Those include that truancy and attendance rates for both sectors, CCPS and our public charter sector, declined from school year 2012/2013 to 2013/2014, but neither sector saw significant changes between 2013/2014 and 2014/2015.

Middle school's truancy declined significantly between 2012/2013 and 2013/2014, and also continued to show a decline the
following year.

Our high schools have the highest rates of truancy. Perhaps slightly more interesting than that is that the truancy rate more than doubles, the rate of chronic truancy we're talking about, more than doubles between eighth and ninth grade, and I can see that in the slides, where this red arrow is really dramatic.

Finally, whereas, three percent of students in grades K to eight had more than 21 unexcused absences, 32 percent of students in ninth grade had 21 or more unexcused absences, and we talk about some of the reasons for that, but that's a pretty significant difference in the quantity and type of absenteeism we're seeing.

Some additional accomplishments again, include developing and implementing a committee structure for driving task force work between meetings, developing initial policy recommendations, including reaching consensus on the need for comprehensive change in this next school year, and I'll just note there that that
also closely reflects some aspects of the State Board's report in the changes that we decided were most critical for the next school year.

We also developed some common business rules for calculating truancy at the school, district, sector and state level, including a common definition at the district and sector level.

We collaborated on attendance awareness month, providing some joint research -- resources and doing joint outreach. We collaborate with Council on emergency legislation that took effect in this school year, and then also collaborated on some of the legislation that is now awaiting mark-up by the committee of the whole.

We identified key data questions and are working towards the first actual coherent data plan for the truancy task force, and we've been identifying best practices for LEA's and their schools, and we adopted the Every Student Every Day cite-wide plan for action, which looks
at what each specific kind of role player across all of our public partners can do to impact truancy.

So, with having highlighted a few of those accomplishments, I will note that we have a few more milestones that we hope to complete soon. One is that we're working on finalizing the truancy task force strategic plan. I think one of the outstanding items is setting our goals and metrics, and that's tied with getting a handle on how we're doing, so that we can be working from the right baseline.

Second is finalizing the truancy task force data plan, to really ensure that what we're reporting on annually, and then what we're reporting on even in the short term, we don't decide to report on it every year, but do we need to know it this year, or maybe for the next two years. We are trying to finalize the plan that addresses all of those items.

Then finally, we're collaborating with the D.C. Equity Lab, to plan a truancy task force
design challenge, which will innovatively address
key areas facing students and families by more
directly engaging in the solution development
process.

So, that's a little bit about what
we've been doing. I'm happy to take questions on
attendance and truancy, including information
about the work of the task force and
implementation of the report.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so
much, Ms. Stienle.

MS. STIENLE: Great.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Board member
questions? Mr. Contreras?

MEMBER CONTRERAS: Thank you. I was
wondering what the distinction is between truancy
and in-seat attendance. You talked about that,what's like the difference there?

MS. STIENLE: Yes, and there's a third
term we use too, which is chronic absenteeism,
just to make it even more complicated.

The most critical distinction between
those two terms is that truancy is defined as unexcused absences.

In both cases, if you're talking about chronic truancy, we're talking about the number of students who have ten or more unexcused absences.

With in-seat attendance, you're actually looking at the rate at which students are butts in seats, how many students are there on a given day, and so, it doesn't matter if maybe that student is out for an excused reason, which then would not count towards your truancy rate, but from an educational standpoint, and this is the same direction that chronic absenteeism moves us in, because that also includes the rate at which you have students missing more than 10 percent of any school day for any reason, regardless of the excuse or unexcused.

From an educational standpoint, that matters because ultimately they're missing their learning that day, and so, we kind -- we want to
think about both, and they can mean somewhat
different things, but they're both really
important for us to look at, and while we can
consider renaming the truancy task force, we've
certainly been talking about both. So.

MEMBER CONTRERAS: Okay, thank you,
and then I was also wondering, you said you could
talk a little about the reason for the shift from
K through eight to high school, why there is such
that big leap, in terms of truancy. Could you go
a little further into that?

MS. STIENLE: Yes, so, I would -- I'm
only hypothesizing. This is something I think
we're really interested in.

So, when we talk about the work of the
task force, there is the work that we've done so
far, and I think we're doing a good job at
understanding what data we have and making the
decisions we have information on, and moving on
that.

But there is also the many, many
things that we have lined up, that we'd like to
do. I think one of the things we're like to do is really look at high performers in the District.

We have some really high performing schools that are beating the odds, in terms of attendance, and don't have some of the chronic issues, persisting attendance issues that some of their peers have, and in the middle school space, if we know our middle schools saw this significant improvement, if we -- if we feel like the data is good, then we need to understand what the reason for that is, from a perspective of what the school did.

The other way to come at that jump is to think about policy and the data and try and look under it, and say, is there something in the way that 80/20 for example, is implemented, that looks different at the middle school versus high school.

One of the challenges for us is because in this policy landscape, there has been some flux and so, just by way of history, there
is a -- the 80/20 rule, I'm sure everyone here is very familiar with, used to be 60/40 and different before that.

So, there has been some change in the way we count attendance, which means that when we look at our long term trends, everything becomes a little shakier, which was something that came up a lot in the task force discussions is, what do we know about our data, our trends and when is it the right moment to make further change, because change does kind of come at a cost, when you're talking about understanding your long term trajectory.

MEMBER CONTRERAS: Thank you.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Contreras. We'll go to Ms. Lord, our at-large member, and then Ms. Jolly.

MEMBER LORD: Thank you. As someone who served on the -- our truancy committee, this is of great interest.

Let's start with the 80/20 rule. I know our report called for some solutions to
ensure that there was a uniform, fair and accurate reporting of tardies versus absences.

Do you have any information about that, and also about the -- whether the chronic truancy rates are based on the full day or half day absences under the 80/20 rule?

So, I'm trying to get a this --

MS. STIENLE: Yes, what does the data mean? So, we -- let me start with the recommendation that was in the report, and I think there is a set of these that we actually went through kind of a similar process of all the consultation you did, but kind of a mini version.

So, we had, you know, six recommendations from the State Board. We have a task force that involves many agencies. I think I've never had fewer than 10 agencies represented at the table.

You have six recommendations, 10 agencies. There is a lot of overlap, but we sought everyone's input, and so, we did then get this long list.
So, one thing we did was go through this -- this is the slides, but we went through a prioritization process, to ask everyone, how important is this to you, or how important do you think this is for kids? How urgent is this and how difficult is this? We tried to kind of understand how things shook out.

The 80/20 rule and its impact came up really high on that. The idea of consistency of implementation came up, probably from Kamili and others, but came up as less urgent, and so, there is this very kind of complicated looking diagram, where I tried to visually map out all of the challenges that were raised, and how they connect with each other, because one of the issues that kept coming up was, there is an inter-connectedness.

So, if we want to understand the impact of 80/20, but we're not confident about how it's being implemented, and then on top of it, people really hate the consequences of it, what do you do if the connector is 80/20, which
thing do you tackle and how?

So, we tried to kind of grapple with the landscape, and so, I would say on the first recommendation regarding consistency to implementation, we haven't dug in on that in a big way. We have asked DCPS -- I mean, I think DCPS, you know, representing significant number of the schools, we kind of pushed with them on like their PD and what they're doing.

We've had a really excellent relationship with Andrea, who is, I think their director of attendance data and other things, and she shared what they're doing to really improve the consistency in their schools of when attendance is taken, what 80/20 means to them.

But the bigger issue that really pops the top of the list, based on urgency and importance, the impact it was having on kids, was the way 80/20 -- the consequences of 80/20 and how high numbers of referrals under 80/20 equaled really significant consequences that didn't always match up for families and students.
So, I'll just say we -- it's still on our list, I would say if we feel stronger and get some of the surrounding policy right, I think then it makes more sense than to make a bigger push on effective implementation.

MEMBER LORD: So, essentially, what we were hearing was that we were essentially falsely branding tardy kids as truant kids.

MS. STIENLE: Right, and so, that was -- right, that's exactly the rub, and we heard that, you know, in your report, but also, that was one of the consistent reflections across the task force was, you know, from court social services, and they're getting referrals for kids that, you know, skipped a period of a high school class, and maybe they consistently skip their math class.

Is that an educational issue?

Absolutely. Does it warrant being referred to court? No.

So, and then there also the tardiness piece and when people are taking attendance, if
you have a teacher who is -- you're tardy for
your one period, then you're marked absent for
that period. You know, this is where the
connectedness comes in.

So, I think we decided to really try
and tackle some of the consequences issues, but I
think that issue is still on our list and is
outstanding.

MEMBER LORD: And just help me
understand how we can take action on the
information. We just had a session on actionable
information collected from data.

It's pretty horrifying that a third of
D.C. public school's ninth graders are racking up
21 days. That's a full month of school, and what
policy levers do we have, other than the bully-
pulpit to say, "Hey, guys, go to school."

Do we have to combat that, because
right away, I mean, 21 days of learning is --

MS. STIENLE: It's huge.

MEMBER LORD: -- you know, of course,
we're going to have gaps in achievement and
opportunity.

MS. STIENLE: Yes. So, I think there is two roles that the task force is playing to help us all take action really.

One is looking at what works in other jurisdictions, and so, one of the attachments, we've done this kind of comparison between the sequence of experiencing attendance policies in D.C. versus some more leading jurisdictions, and to just sum up what you see, in terms of differences.

First is the general level of response for all students, there is more kind of low level, low cost, but generalized interventions related to attendance.

So, like sending every family get text messages or something, it doesn't matter if you're on your tenth unexcused absence of your first. Everyone is getting a text message that says -- and not only that, it says something meaningful, like you've missed more of school than like 90 percent of kids in your class, or
things that make parents go, oh, and kids kind of pay attention.

So, there is some low cost interventions that you see being applied, just for everyone, and in D.C., there is not -- there is D.C. -- there is different policies. It varies. I think DCPS definitely does robo-calls and most charters do some more, at least that bar.

But then the other thing you see besides a higher, just kind of generalized baseline is, you see more steps along the way, so, and more meaningful steps.

So, in our system, you basically -- there is the five absence SST referral and then there is the 10 or 15 absence referral to CFSA and CSSD, anything that happens between there is either completely up to the schools.

There is nothing we know or guarantee will happen along the way, and it's not -- it's that second -- that second bump or that second intervention for us, is most punitive.
In terms of supports, you get one kind of opportunity with an SST, and if that doesn't kind of jump start you, we don't have as many steps along the way and kind of nuanced interventions. We wait until you get to five, then we try and do something, and then we see you again when you get a letter and a threat and a referral down the road.

So, and there are, again, there are schools that are doing this -- doing many more things, and we want to learn from those successes, so that we can apply that more broadly.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Ms. Jolly.

MEMBER JOLLY: Thank you. I share my colleague, Ms. Lord's deep troubling about the ninth grade attendance rates, particularly because we know that academic success in the ninth is one of the leading indicators of whether or not a student will actually graduate from high school.

How can you be successful your ninth
grade year, if you have missed an entire month?

If one-third of our students are missing an entire month of school, just wow.

So, I guess what I'm curious about then is, in your task force work, in your research, what you discovered other districts and states to be doing, in terms of truancy prevention practices, and how do those other states and district's practices compare with what we're doing here?

MS. STIENLE: So, I do think part of it is a little bit of what I just described, which is that they are -- they are jumping in very early.

So, if you have a ninth grader who is maybe already having some attendance issues in junior high, keep them on -- like, they should be on high alert from day one of ninth grade, and then if you're -- your student is missing a significant portion of the first week of school, or the first two weeks, don't wait until they meet that threshold, to get them some kind of
supports or engage them in the SST process. You can look at just that first week and start to make some decisions.

So, starting early, lots of using data to really pinpoint who is at risk, and then also having a lot of supportive interventions along the way.

I think one of the most concerning issues with the system we currently have set up and the biggest contrast with leading systems is that we have a number of punitive interventions, and frankly, that just doesn't match up. Those intervention points, which are so critical, and we're using them on things that are more or less punishments.

So, I think that's an area we're really interested in figuring out what works to actually change the path and what doesn't work.

What we need to do that actually is a little better data. So, that's something we've been working on in the data plan is, what are the key evaluation -- evaluations we need to do of
the investments we are making?

So, how much is it costing us and what is the impact of sending students over to court social services, versus how much is it costing us and what is the impact of programs like Stand Up Show Out, actually they're mostly at the elementary level and some middle school, but Access Youth is also supported by a District grant.

We're trying to glean from the grantees and some of the positive interventions we have in the field, to get data on what actually works, instead of the punitive piece.

MEMBER JOLLY: Just a quick follow up. I guess the slide is no longer up, but you can see, I don't know if you noticed, Board Members, the one where you can see the percent -- the blue, yellow -- the blue, orange and green by grade.

MS. STIENLE: Okay.

MEMBER JOLLY: You can see, and it's so troubling that by the time you get to 12th
grade, the attendance rates get much better, but
it's because all of kids that weren't showing up,
have already dropped out, and that is just heart-
breaking, especially -- I'm a high school
teacher, and I see -- I see that happen when the
kids that don't show up, just stop coming back.

One thing that I would like -- I would
be interested in knowing more about -- you guys
don't know this, but maybe -- how to phrase this?

I hope that you would look at the
impact of school counselors on truancy rates,
particularly because school counselor is an
essential job, is to come up with individualized
plans for students about how to improve their
attendance, behavior and class performance, and
I'm wondering if there is a link between a low
student/teacher ratio -- I'm sorry, a low
student/counselor ratio --

MS. STIENLE: Yes.

MEMBER JOLLY: -- and improved truancy
rates in schools?

MS. STIENLE: Yes, I'll definitely
take that back. It's kind of already on our list of things to explore, but I think that's really smart and is reflective of kind of what we're heard too, as one of the challenges that came up was, we have attendance counselors that are wearing a lot of different hats, and some aren't necessarily qualified to do the job of trying to develop a plan with someone to stay in school. That's actually really hard work. So.

MEMBER JOLLY: I agree, thank you, Aurora.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: I don't think any other Board Members have questions, so, I'll just take a couple of quick minutes.

I want to take us back to big picture, from some of the first meetings that I went to.

There is absenteeism, truancy affects students in two ways. One, they're not getting enough learning time, and two, it's a safety issue, and Chairman Mendelson really focuses on the safety part.

Can you just give us the -- how do you
balance those and how is the task force tackling, making sure that we're paying attention to both, both issues, as we work on this?

MS. STIENLE: That's absolutely been one of the, I think most interesting and challenging parts of the task force, and why it's so critical, I think, that we do have a single body that is reflective of people who have expertise in those different areas, because frankly, you know, being DME, we're going to come at it more from an educational standpoint, but we absolutely get the safety concerns, and we have a Mayor who is absolutely thinking about the safety concerns.

So, but we need, you know, the voices of MPD, of the justice side of things to help us understand what smart policy looks like there, and we're hearing from our justice colleagues, that it's not that there isn't a role on the justice side, but their current way of interacting and engaging isn't helpful, and when they are not satisfied with their own role that
they're being kind of tasked with, and they kind
of need to execute on, that really sends a lot of
alarm bells, because those are -- if anyone is
going to, you know, want to be concerned on the
safety side and understand what it means to have
youth of school and what that looks like from a
police officer's perspective, it's all of those
voices.

So, for them to be concerned with the
current role, and helping us to re-balance, I
think says a lot.

We're trying to find ways so that
those things aren't so at odds, and it might mean
that we don't have every policy trying to address
both. I actually think that's part of why 80/20
has become so problematic, because we try to take
an educational stance, which was to raise the bar
high, and yet, we tied it to safety and justice
consequences, and so, right there, we blended two
things and put them intention, and I don't know
that they had to be intention like that.

If we focus on our school base
policies and you know, engagement and supports
and those types of things, and then separately
figure out where the safety concerns come in and
don't necessarily tie them so tightly, I think
we'll hopefully have more success. But as a
task force, we have taken on both objectives.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: And I am glad you
have. I mean, my mom was a teacher and my dad is
a cop. I get both sides of that. I wasn't able
to miss school ever.

You were just talking about school
based policies, and if you could just really
briefly, what schools are doing this right and
what are some of their tactics?

There are schools that I'm sure in
D.C., that have really difficult, vulnerable
populations. Do you have a quick overview or any
come to mind?

MS. STIENLE: I would love to name-
drop some schools that are doing really -- a
really great job, but actually, what you can find
is in the quarterly task force -- sorry, the
quarterly report to the truancy task force, we do a breakdown of top schools, and I think one thing that we added to our reporting this quarter is most improved schools, because again, that is -- we haven't gotten to the point of being able to dig in.

We're asked around a little bit, kind of anecdotally, and I think we shared that out at a couple of meetings, but we haven't in a rigorous way, tried to understand what's happening there, but we're starting the process of acknowledging those schools.

So, I know it's actually -- I just don't want to drop-throw any name. I can use Patterson Elementary. But they did a great job and the --

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: I'm not going to --

MS. STIENLE: -- and the secretary of education was there and --

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: I'm not going to --
MS. STIENLE: We have some stellar performers in the District. So.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Terrific. Well, keep sharing that with us.

MS. STIENLE: Okay.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: And with that, if Board Members don't have any more questions, I'd like to let her go. Good luck getting home, given that metro is still down. Ms. Lord, briefly.

MEMBER LORD: I would like -- I'd -- since the people at home don't have the benefit of seeing this slide show, I just wanted to ask.

It says that if the rule were changed instead of 80 percent of school day and 20 percent, makes it 75 percent in the school and 25 percent absence, that there would be almost 1,200 fewer D.C. public school students who would have been truant and referred, and if it was 60/20 approximately 2,000, almost 2,200.

So, you know, adjusting these rules actually has an impact on real live students.

MS. STIENLE: It does. I think --
MEMBER LORD: And that was an astonishing amount of --

MS. STIENLE: It's significant, and that's why we asked DCPS to do this break down.

It's -- we still will have a -- we will have a problem regardless. Like, we have -- we definitely have a problem with chronic absenteeism and truancy, and so, it's kind of -- the approach that was suggested, accountability, it's what do you want to use the number to do?

If we want to use it to -- we think these individuals are safety concerns and we want to use it to make referrals, that number being very high and changing just 1,000 students, means a lot. That's a really big deal.

But ultimately if we mostly want to understand are kids getting their educational benefit, a change of 1,000 and if you look at the break down, this is actually -- 80/20 largely impacts high schools and middle school students.

So, one thing that's interesting to me that I've always wanted to dig into a little bit
is, what that really comes down to is how many
periods do they have in a day, and who missed one
period and who has block schedules and therefore,
one period is --

And so, the difference between 75 and
80, part of that jump could be actually digging
into the data that what -- the difference that
happens in the hours of the day between one
period and two, or something like that.

So, all that to say that yes, there is
a significant -- the numbers do change, as you
lower the threshold, but it doesn't change that
we have a problem, and it doesn't necessarily
then dictate -- tell us exactly what we want to
do with the number. We have to decide that.

MEMBER LORD: Yes, good point. Good
point. Thanks.

MS. STIENLE: And I think the slides
will be posted on the State Board website for
viewers out there.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Ms. Wattenberg,
do you have a brief comment?
MEMBER WATTENBERG: I have a quick --

I have a question, because I'm just looking at
this slide, and it talks about this -- the
districts that have much lower thresholds for
truancy, Seattle 50 percent, Miami-Dade 30
percent.

Do you know whether, when districts
lower the threshold that much, if it has a -- any
impact, perhaps negative impact and whether or
not kids spend more time in the day or do they
come less? Do we know what the tradeoff is on
that?

MS. STIENLE: I don't know. It is a
really good question. I guess, kind of the
behavioral science of these things.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: It would be
interesting --

MS. STIENLE: Yes.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: -- as we play
around with this, to --

MS. STIENLE: And I do think that's --
the hope was that by putting it at 80, everyone
is afraid to skip so much as a class, whereas, maybe at 60/40 they weren't. But we don't know for sure. So.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, and I just got an email from Ms. Anderson, from Ward 4. She conveys her thanks to you for this effort, and she will follow up with you directly and will continue working on behalf of the Board, with the truancy task force, to see this through to a successful end.

So, with that, thank you. You have our thanks, and we look forward to continuing our work together.

MS. STIENLE: Thank you for having me.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Board Members, I would entertain a motion to adjourn.

VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: So moved.

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

MEMBER JONES: Second.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Do we have special announcements from Board Members? Ms. Lord?
MEMBER LORD: Quick promo. The D.C. city-wide STEM fair, the science and engineering fair is this Saturday at Dunbar High School at 101 N Street, Northwest.

They still need volunteers to help set up Thursday evening, Friday evening and clean up on Saturday. I'm going to be a judge and I hope you will join me.

The next week, at the National Archives, the Archives is hosting our National History Day, city-wide competition. It's amazing history. If you have any time, I think it's from 8:00 to 3:00 on Wednesday and Thursday.

Then finally, I just want to congratulate the Woodson Warriors for their astonishing, bring it home, first time in a long time, undefeated state championships, and I took my dancing partner for Dancing with the Scholars, and he was very impressed.

So, that's all I have to say. Those are my promos.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
Lord. Any other special announcements from Board Members? Mr. Contreras?

MEMBER CONTRERAS: Thank you. I'd like to reiterate, it was mentioned earlier, but there is a second meeting for students to provide input on the new health standards. It will be taking place tomorrow from five to seven at the Young Women's Project, which is 2217 14th Street, Northwest, on the second floor. So, that's sort of near Meridian Hill Park, I think.

Refreshments will be provided and we'll be talking about a lot of issues that are really important to the student body today, sexual assault and violence, safe sex, sex positivity and body positivity, bullying, a lot of mental health issues that are specific to the student population, so anxiety and stress and depression, drug and alcohol safety, LGBTQ-plus inclusivity.

So, a lot of very important relevant social issues that affect a significant portion of the student body on a daily basis.
Ms. Orellana and Mr. Carroll talked a lot about how important these issues are in their testimonies, and how health classes have a very real effect on how students interact with other students who are different than them or yes, so, it's very important issue, and I'd encourage people to attend, so they can provide input on those regulations. Thank you.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Contreras. Any additional? Then I have just a quick hello to Donna Johnson, the executive director of the State Board of Education in Delaware who is watching online, and with that, I'd entertain a motion to adjourn.

MEMBER WATTENBERG: So moved.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Moved by Ms. Wattenberg. Second by Ms. Lord. All in favor?

(Chorus of aye.)

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: We're adjourned.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 8:40 p.m.)
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Before: DC SBOE

Date: 03-16-16

Place: Washington, DC

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

[Signature]
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