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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, July 19, 2017

5:30 p.m.

Held At:

441 Fourth Street, N.W.

Old Council Chambers

Washington, D.C.

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A P P E A R A N C E S

BOARD MEMBERS

Karen Williams, President, Ward 7

Jack Jacobson, Ward 2

Ashley Carter, At Large

Laura Wilson-Phelan, Ward 1

Ruth Wattenberg, Ward 3

Lannette Woodruff, Ward 4

Joe Weedon, Ward 6

Mark Jones, Ward 5

Markus Batchelor, Ward 8

C O N T E N T S

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2	
3	I. Call to Order
4	II. Announcement of a Quorum
5	III. Approval of the Agenda
6	IV. Approval of the Minutes
7	V. Comments from the President of the D.C. State
8	Board of Education
9	VI. Public Comment
10	Scott Goldstein
11	Keisha Thorpe
12	Taunya Martin
13	Monica Brokenborough
14	Brian Butcher
15	Laura Fuchs
16	Morgan Williams
17	Mary Levy
18	Elizabeth Davis
19	Erich Martel
20	David Tansey
21	Every Day Counts! Truancy Task Force Update
22	Aurora Steinle, Senior Policy Advisor

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

2 **CALL TO ORDER**

3 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Good afternoon.

4 The time is 5:30p.m. on July 19, 2017. And
5 this public meeting of the District of Columbia
6 State Board of Education is now called to
7 order. The roll will now be called to
8 determine the presence of a quorum.

9 In the absence of our executive
10 director, I will ask our vice president, Jack
11 Jacobson of Ward 2 to please call the roll.

12 **ANNOUCEMENT OF QUORUM**

13 MR. JACOBSON: President Williams?

14 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Present.

15 MR. JACOBSON: Vice President Jacobson
16 is present. Ashley Carter?

17 MS. CARTER: Present.

18 MR. JACOBSON: Ms. Wilson-Phelan?

19 (No response.)

20 MR. JACOBSON: Ruth Wattenberg?

21 MS. WATTENBERG: Present.

22 MR. JACOBSON: Lynette Woodruff?

1 DR. WOODRUFF: Present.

2 MR. JACOBSON: Mark Jones?

3 (No response.)

4 MR. JACOBSON: Joe Weedon?

5 MR. WEEDON: Present.

6 MR. JACOBSON: Markus Batchelor?

7 MR. BATCHELOR: Present.

8 MR. JACOBSON: Madame President, you
9 have a quorum.

10 **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

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

14 Members, note that Board member Laura
15 Wilson-Phelan has arrived. Thank you.

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

18 (No response.)

19 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Seeing no changes,
20 I would entertain a motion to approve the
21 agenda.

22 MR. BATCHELOR: So moved.

1 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. Batchelor.

2 Second?

3 MR. WEEDON: Second.

4 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All opposed? All
5 in favor?

6 (Chorus of ayes.)

7 **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

8 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Members, we have
9 the minutes from our July 12th working sessions
10 before us. Are there corrections or additions
11 to the July 12th meeting?

12 (No response.)

13 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All right. Seeing
14 no changes, I would entertain a motion to
15 approve the minutes.

16 MR. WEEDON: So moved.

17 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. Weedon. Is
18 there a second?

19 MS. CARTER: Second.

20 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Ms. Carter. The
21 motion being properly moved and seconded, I
22 would ask for yeas and nays. All in favor?

1 (Chorus of ayes.)

2 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All opposed?

3 (No response.)

4 **COMMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT OF DC SBOE**

5 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: The motion is
6 approved. Good evening. My name is Karen
7 Williams, Ward 7 representative and president
8 of the State Board of Education. On behalf of
9 the members of the District of Columbia State
10 Board of Education, I want to welcome our
11 guests and our viewing public to our Wednesday,
12 July 19th public meeting.

13 The State Board typically holds its
14 regularly-scheduled meetings on the third
15 Wednesday of every month at the told Council
16 Chambers at 441 Fourth Street, Northwest. As a
17 note to the public, the State Board will not
18 hold a public meeting in August, but will
19 return to the Old Council Chambers on September
20 20th.

21 Tonight's agenda will focus on the
22 State Board's ongoing work to reduce chronic

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1 absenteeism in D.C. Public and Public Charter
2 Schools. As president of the State Board, I am
3 a member of a Truancy Task Force now renamed
4 the Every Day Counts Task Force that is co-
5 chaired by the Deputy Mayor of Education,
6 Jennifer Niles and Deputy Mayor for Health and
7 Human Services, Hanseul Kang.

8 In addition to co-chairs, the following
9 entities are represented: Child and Family
10 Services, Criminal Justice Coordinating
11 Council, Court Social Services Division, D.C.
12 Public Charter School Board, D.C. Public
13 Schools, the Department of Behavioral Health,
14 the Department of Human Services, the Deputy
15 Mayor of Greater Economic Opportunity, the
16 Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, the
17 Department of Health, the Department of
18 Transportation, Justice Branch Administrations,
19 the Metropolitan Police Department, Office of
20 the State Superintendent, Office of the
21 Attorney General, Offices of Chairman Phil
22 Mendelson, and Council Member David Bossells

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1 (ph), Public Charter School leaders and others.

2 We are grateful that the Deputy Mayor
3 for Education has enlisted the partnership of
4 the State Board in these efforts to look
5 forward to hearing and update on their progress
6 and plans for the upcoming year. Our State
7 Superintendent Hansuel Kang will not be with us
8 tonight, so we will skip that portion of the
9 meeting.

10 The State Board welcome public
11 participation in activities under our
12 authority. At every public meeting, we begin
13 with testimony from public witnesses on
14 education-related matters. We are thankful
15 that many members of the public have come to
16 present comments to the State Board today.
17 Although there is not an opportunity for
18 discussion tonight on issues you raise, your
19 comments will become part of our official
20 record. As such, we will provide them to other
21 agencies and government bodies in order to
22 expand the reach of your words.

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1 If you are a member of the public and
2 would like to speak at a future public meeting,
3 please contact our staff by email at
4 sboe@dc.gov or by calling 202-741-0888.

5 Tonight, we have multiple panelists.
6 Please come down to the table when I call your
7 name.

8 Excuse me. I have to find a list of
9 names. But in the meantime, I would like to
10 thank Councilmember Robert White for attending
11 our meeting tonight.

12 Marilyn Holmes from Total Sunshine. Is
13 she here?

14 (No response.)

15 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Scott Goldstein,
16 teacher and LEAP LEAD from Roosevelt High
17 School; founder of EmpowerEd. Keisha Thorpe.
18 Tanya Martin, Monica Brokenborough. Did I
19 pronounce that correctly?

20 MS. BROKENBOROUGH: Yes.

21 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.
22 Teacher from Ward 8. Brian Butcher.

1 MR. BUTCHER: Here.

2 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Laura Fuchs. I
3 don't see Laura.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I know she's
5 coming.

6 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Okay. We'll go
7 back around. And Morgan Williams. Mary Levy,
8 I know you're here. Member of the public, Ward
9 2 resident.

10 Okay. You have three minutes to speak
11 this evening. Please note that you must use
12 the microphone in order to be heard. The
13 microphones are already on and ready. You will
14 also see in your upper-right hand side of the
15 table a timer. The light will be green for the
16 first two and-a-half minutes and the light will
17 turn yellow for the last 30 seconds. We will
18 begin on your left, my right, with Mary Levy.

19 Begin when you're ready, Ms. Levy.

20 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

21 MS. LEVY: Good evening. I'm Mary
22 Levy. I have studied the school system for the

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1 last 37 years and kept archives and doing a lot
2 of statistical analysis. One of the projects
3 I've undertaken for a long time is tracking
4 teacher turnover.

5 I have a database that goes all the way
6 back to 2001 and I have also downloaded every
7 study of teacher turnover that I can find on
8 the internet to get comparative data. I've
9 looked at the annual turnover rates in D.C.
10 plus the cohort rates and I've looked at the
11 school leaving rates in the 40/40 schools.

12 The numbers are that all 1815 teachers
13 in DCPS is almost 20 percent a year. The
14 national average is 11 percent a year. And the
15 latest study that had 16 large urban districts,
16 13 percent. So we're high. If you look at
17 cohorts, there is over five years, on the
18 average, we lose 56 percent of teachers. That
19 compares with 45 percent in other large urban
20 districts. New hire teachers, they leave at a
21 higher rate than the general teacher workforce,
22 which is almost 25 percent a year. They're

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1 gone in a year, 25 percent of them.

2 Over five years, three-quarters of them
3 leave. Nationally, the five-year average is 75
4 percent. So we are as high as any of the major
5 cities. I looked at the 40/40 schools and
6 schools with the highest -- they have high
7 rates in poverty and they also are in the
8 lowest performing. Every year on the average,
9 one-third of their faculty leaves.

10 Nationally, with the only two studies I
11 could find, the low poverty schools leave at 58
12 and 20 percent a year. So we are high on any
13 measure that I could find. We know from the
14 literature that this can be very damaging,
15 educationally, to children. It's also very
16 expensive. I will end by noting that the
17 charter schools have an even worse rate, but
18 that doesn't help us with DCPS.

19 Thank you.

20 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

21 Introduce yourself.

22 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Good evening. My name
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1 is Scott Goldstein. I'm a 10th year teacher,
2 currently teaching in DCPS, and the founder of
3 a new organization called EmpowerEd, who seeks
4 to lift the voices of teachers to improve our
5 schools.

6 Teacher turnover is fundamentally about
7 the climate created in our schools. D.C.
8 continues to have some of the highest teacher
9 turnover in the nation, especially in our most
10 challenging schools, with 33 percent of teachers
11 in D.C.'s lowest performing schools
12 leaving each year.

13 We cannot accept arguments that
14 turnover is somehow a positive signal of the
15 shedding of ineffective teachers when so many
16 inspired teachers leave because of the culture
17 of compliance that stifles their innovation and
18 voice. DCPS lost some phenomenal educators
19 this year: Katie Smith, a math teacher at my
20 school for the past four years has dedicated to
21 her craft as anyone I've ever known. Said of
22 her experience, "The distrust of teachers

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1 permeated through the staff this year.
2 Enthusiastic teachers who I had known for up to
3 four years were suddenly lacking in motivation
4 to go above and beyond. In the end, after four
5 years, I left DCPS to be closer to my family.
6 That was the pull. But the push was the lack
7 of trust in humanity given to me as an
8 individual and to the staff as a whole."

9 This is systemic; not just one teacher
10 in one school. Losing inspired teachers is
11 preventable. The inside school culture survey
12 given to all DCPS teachers each year provides
13 data that could predict teacher turnover and be
14 used dynamically to prevent that turnover.

15 From 2015 to 2016 on the question of is
16 this a good place to teach and learn? My
17 school went from 62 percent to 28 percent, a 34
18 percent drop in just less than one year. On 29
19 out of 30 questions on the survey, our school
20 went down by an average of 19 percent on 29 out
21 of 30 questions. Had those alarming numbers
22 been public, DCPS could've been compelled to do

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1 something about that before we experienced the
2 departure of some amazing educators at the end
3 of the year. At the least, the State Board of
4 Education and the public should have those
5 insight numbers.

6 In 2012, Kaya Henderson identified the
7 40/40 lowest performing schools in the
8 District, committed to increasing proficiency
9 by 40 percent by this year. That meant heavy
10 investment and heavy surveillance from central
11 office, based on the belief that struggling
12 schools will improve faster through the
13 increased compliance rather than local
14 innovation.

15 Five years later, 40/40 schools are
16 nowhere near those targets. The failure is
17 directly tied to a failure to create of
18 innovation, inspired teaching and the retention
19 of our best teachers. Principals are also
20 victims of this culture of fear. In turnaround
21 schools, with their job constantly on the line,
22 they're naturally afraid to take risks that

1 challenge the mandates of instructional
2 superintendents who are afraid to loosen the
3 reigns and allow innovation because they have
4 to prove themselves to the chancellor and
5 chancellor to the mayor. That's the dangerous
6 culture of fear mayoral control has produced, a
7 culture where anything, including grade
8 inflation, under-reporting suspensions, and
9 more happens, not because of bad people, but
10 pressure to improve stats for a shiny brochure
11 or next year's campaign.

12 When I served on the chancellor's
13 teacher cabinet two years ago, both Henderson
14 and Jason Cameris told me that impact had
15 finally gotten them the teachers they wanted in
16 the system and they move to models like LEAP to
17 make those great teacher's content experts. If
18 they believe that, they need to start
19 respecting and trusting teachers they have,
20 hand-picked, as true professionals, with the
21 same autonomy that a professional doctor or
22 lawyer would have in their craft. But when

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1 resources turn into a never-ending stream of
2 mandates from central office, great teachers
3 run for the door.

4 The new initiative could be
5 transformative and a new chancellor has spoken
6 of leadership, which is promising. The new
7 autonomy does not hamper accountability. It is
8 proven to increase it with transparency and
9 accountability, the school climate and staff
10 morale, we can prevent inspired teachers from
11 leaving D.C. neediest schools and improve our
12 results for all students.

13 Thank you.

14 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

15 MS. BROKENBOROUGH: Good evening and
16 thank you. I am Monica Brokenborough, teacher
17 at Ballou High School as well as the building
18 representative. A recent study in New York
19 indicated that students in grade levels with
20 higher turnover score lower in both English
21 language arts and math, and that these stats
22 are particularly strong in schools with more

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1 low-performing and black students.

2 Moreover, the results suggested that
3 there is disruptive effective of turnover
4 beyond changing the distribution and teacher
5 quality. Another study presented at a
6 conference held by the Center for Longitudinal
7 Data in Educational Research indicates that
8 when teachers leave schools, overall, morale
9 appears to suffer enough that student
10 achievement declines, both for those students
11 taught by departed teachers and by the students
12 whose teachers remained.

13 Impact is DCPS's system for assessing
14 and rewarding the performance of teachers and
15 other school-based staff. This year, there
16 were several major changes made to the impact
17 evaluation system. All observations are
18 conducted via in-house administration. Last
19 year, DCPS had master educators that were not
20 school-based and they were content specialists
21 and were an impartial third-party that shuttled
22 from school-to-school. Throughout the 2015/'16

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1 school year, the master educator would conduct
2 two observations on the teacher and the in-
3 house administration would conduct the
4 remaining observations.

5 Informal impact observations have been
6 eliminated, the number of observations has
7 decreased. During the 2015/'16 school year,
8 most teachers received four formal observations
9 and one informal observation and now they only
10 receive three formals.

11 During the 2015/'16 school year, any
12 observation that was one full point value lower
13 than the average of the other scores, the low
14 score would be dropped. This has been
15 eliminated for the 2016/'17 school year. There
16 has also been a new edition during this year
17 when a student satisfaction survey, which
18 accounts for 10 percent of a teacher's final
19 score.

20 To my knowledge, these address the
21 alterations to the suggestive impact evaluation
22 system were not negotiated with the Washington

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1 Teacher's Union prior to implementation. As a
2 result, administrators which are not even
3 content specialists, are given complete
4 autonomy over the employment status of
5 teachers. Specifically at Ballou High School,
6 a team of administrators use impact as a
7 professional bullying tool to eliminate
8 teachers based on their personal feelings
9 towards the individuals and not based on job
10 performance.

11 I have been employed by DCPS for two
12 years as a music teacher at Ballou High School.
13 During the 2016/'17 school year, I became the
14 proud building representative and
15 unfortunately, witnessed the deplorable working
16 conditions that played a significant impact in
17 the high turnover rate of teachers in DCPS.
18 Students reporting to class for several months
19 with absence of a certified teacher. Students
20 constantly missing class due to a ridiculously
21 high number of field trips. Most field trips
22 were not even educational.

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1 Lack of support, training,
2 communication with staff, especially new hires,
3 uncontrollable student behavior. Teachers
4 physically assaulted and verbally abused by
5 students. Teachers verbally abused by
6 administration, preferential treatment by
7 providing advanced notice of formal
8 observations to certain teachers, although
9 impact observations are supposed to be
10 unannounced.

11 Failure to review documents submitted
12 by teachers to score impact components such as
13 CSC and TASK. Copying and pasting generic
14 score reports to send to multiple teachers for
15 scoring, submitting false comments for points
16 for core professionalism. Teachers assigned to
17 teach courses in which they do not hold a legal
18 required certification. Holding teachers
19 accountable for in-seat attendance via the CFC
20 points, failure to comply with the dot-lines in
21 the Impact Guide Book, failure to comply with
22 the Collective Bargaining Agreement,

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1 retaliatorily acts against active WTB members,
2 and misappropriation of funding for
3 instructional resources.

4 These egregious acts have been reported
5 in the form of grievances and in-person
6 meetings with labor management employee
7 relations personnel with no prevail or justice
8 for teachers. Unfortunately, there is
9 absolutely no oversight or supervision of the
10 actions of in-house administrators and they
11 take full advantage of this opportunity.

12 Prior to the placement of the present
13 administrative team, Ballou High School had a
14 significantly higher number of effective and
15 highly effective teachers with an article that
16 was published in the Washington Post. However,
17 at the conclusion of this school year, I have
18 contacted by six Ballou High School teachers
19 that have lost their jobs due to unfair biased
20 impact scores. Each of these teachers are
21 unsure of their employment future and are
22 fearful of not being able to provide for

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1 themselves and their families.

2 It pains me to witness my colleagues
3 endure the permanent damage inflicted by
4 professional bullying. It is highly noteworthy
5 that many of the mid-year reservations at
6 Ballou High School were due to unjust impact
7 scoring. Several of these teachers were not
8 willing to stick around and allow a set of
9 rogue administrators to determine their fate
10 and bar them from future teaching employment
11 opportunities. Therefore, these teachers opted
12 to resign.

13 Also, do not be fooled into thinking
14 that the teacher turnover at Ballou was not an
15 issue. Shortly after the story was published
16 about mid-year resignations, there was an
17 effort to override the significance with
18 stories pertaining to college acceptance.
19 However, the majority of the senior class
20 graduated due to an unethical implementation of
21 credit recovery as a means of increasing the
22 graduation rate.

1 Ballou High School was recently slated
2 for the largest budget cut of \$637,400.
3 Unfortunately, teacher turnover is also likely
4 to have a significant fiscal impact as schools
5 in districts must fund additional recruitment
6 programs, implement, interview and hiring
7 procedures and provide additional professional
8 development. Not to mention the multiple
9 experience and expertise.,

10 In a study on the cost of the teacher
11 turnover, research has estimated these costs to
12 be as much as 150 percent of the leading
13 teacher's salary, though they recommend the
14 average estimate of 20 percent. Therefore, it
15 is devastating to see tax dollars utilized in
16 this manner.

17 Today I have a big ask. Assist what
18 reinstated employment to teachers at Ballou
19 High School that have been bullied and
20 evaluated in an unfair and unjust manner.
21 Provide oversight of the actions of in-house
22 administrators of DCPS officials.

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1 Thank you.

2 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

3 MR. BUTCHER: My name is Brian Butcher.

4 I am also a teacher from the Ballou Senior High
5 School, social studies.

6 I want to speak personally about my
7 experience at Ballou so you can get a better
8 insight on what really goes on at Ballou and
9 why so many teachers left Ballou or are leaving
10 Ballou. I came to Ballou two years ago in the
11 second week constitution. That meant the
12 school hired 80 percent of the staff were brand
13 new.

14 This is my second year there and out of
15 the 80 percent who were hired, almost all of us
16 -- I would say about 85 percent of us have left
17 the school. And I think the main reason why
18 most of us are leaving the school system is
19 because of the bullying and the use of impact
20 as retaliation against teachers, especially if
21 you are a teacher that is a member of like, the
22 SCAT team or any WTU organization on the

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1 testimony.

2 MR. BATCHELOR: Madame Chair?

3 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: If you have a copy

4 --

5 MR. BUTCHER: Yes, I'll email my copy.

6 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Can you please
7 leave it so that we can get it to the formal
8 authorities? The proper authorities. I
9 apologize.

10 MR. BATCHELOR: Madame Chair? I think
11 given the light of the number of public
12 witnesses we have today and it seems to be a
13 very important issue and something I think that
14 we could glean some very helpful information
15 from, I would like to move to suspend all rules
16 to allow one round of three-minute questions
17 per panel, per member, so that we may be able
18 to glean some information from these witnesses
19 who took the time to come and address today.

20 MS. WATTNEBERG: Second. I think
21 that's so important, given what we just heard,
22 which is pretty extraordinary. And I'll say,

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1 in my own high school, there are huge levels of
2 turnaround there. This is important to ask
3 questions so that we know what's going on.

4 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. Jacobson is
5 acting as our director.

6 MR. JACOBSON: The motion has been
7 moved and seconded. Is there a discussion?

8 (No response.)

9 MR. JACOBSON: If not, I do.

10 MS. WILSON-PHELAN: I just want to say
11 I appreciate the effort to engage the witnesses
12 and to share more about and have their
13 questions answered, but Ruth, I would just make
14 sure that we're saying -- we're listening to
15 the perspectives of those shared here. To find
16 out what's going, we would have to have a lot
17 more information in front of us from all sides
18 of the picture. And so I want to make sure
19 we're classifying what we're hearing especially
20 from those who are sharing.

21 MS. WATTENBERG: And I certainly
22 believe that what we hear is what we hear and

1 they would obviously come and testify as well.

2 MR. JACOBSON: My only thought was
3 we've had these discussions for quite some
4 time. I would just encourage members who like
5 to change our Bylaws to bring those suggested
6 changes to the committee for discussion and
7 implementation. With that, I'll call the role.

8 President Williams?

9 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: No.

10 MR. JACOBSON: Vice-President Jacobson.
11 That's a no.

12 Ms. Carter?

13 MS. CARTER: Not at this time, no.

14 MR. JACOBSON: Ms. Wilson-Phelan?

15 MS. WILSON-PHELAN: Yes.

16 MR. JACOBSON: Ms. Wattenberg?

17 MS. WATTENBERG: Yes.

18 MR. JACOBSON: Dr. Woodruff?

19 DR. WOODRUFF: Yes.

20 MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Jones?

21 MR. JONES: Yes.

22 MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Weedon?

1 MR. WEEDON: Yes.

2 MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Batchelor?

3 MR. BATCHELOR: Yes.

4 MR. JACOBSON: Madame President, the
5 ayes are 6, the nays are 3. The motion to
6 suspend the rules has passed.

7 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Okay. One second.
8 All right. Will the four panelist who just
9 spoke please return to the podium?

10 (Panelists return to podium.)

11 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All right. We'll
12 have one round of questions, starting with Mr.
13 Batchelor.

14 MR. BATCHELOR: Thank you, Madame
15 President. For one, I want to thank you all
16 for taking the time to join us this evening,
17 especially to my constituents from Ballou High
18 School, who we know have had a procedurally
19 difficult situation this past school year. So
20 your perspective is definitely appreciated and
21 we thank you for the time.

22 My first question I think are to the
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1 teachers on the panel. We've heard a lot about
2 the negative impacts on school climate and
3 teacher climate with regards to the impact
4 system, among other things. But I think more
5 broadly, could I just ask some of the teachers
6 on the panel, what are the things that could be
7 done, both at a system level and I think at an
8 individual school level, but more particularly
9 at a system level that would improve school
10 culture and would improve the support that
11 teachers need to be successful in our
12 classrooms?

13 MR. GOLDSTEIN: I'll start. I think
14 there is a more of a demonstrable link in
15 evidence between staff morale and student
16 achievement than there is between any of the
17 factors that have received substantial
18 attention and funding over the past several
19 decades. So whether that's vouchers, charter
20 movements, data and accountability, there is a
21 very direct link in multiple studies between
22 the correlation between staff morale, teacher

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1 and accountability to staff morale issues, but
2 second, and this is the work that I'm doing
3 with EmpowerEd that I introduced, is that
4 teachers need to be more a part of an integral
5 of daily decision-making at schools. They do,
6 to some extent, with the curriculum, but it's
7 not fitting into the broader pattern of the
8 daily culture that DCPS has instituted. There
9 are already starting to talk about how to
10 incorporate the impact, right, by making LEAD
11 coaches part of their impact evaluation, right.

12 So resisting the temptation to make
13 things that are supposed to be about
14 collaboration and trust, have to resist the
15 temptation to also make a bad evaluation. At
16 some point, if we do have the teachers that
17 we're requesting and they made that declaration
18 to me and others, if we do not have those
19 teachers because we've been using impact, it's
20 time to trust the people we have.

21 MR. BATCHELOR: Can I respond? I know
22 my time has elapsed, but I'll ask the Chair if

1 she'll allow it.

2 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Do you have a
3 question, Ms. Carter?

4 MS. CARTER: Uh --

5 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Ms. Wattenberg?

6 MS. CARTER: I do have a question,
7 yeah.

8 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: You do? Yes, go
9 ahead.

10 MS. CARTER: Thank you all for coming
11 out tonight. This is a very important issue.
12 It's something that I have personally been
13 looking into. I'm very sympathetic to the high
14 teacher turnover. It's something that has
15 angered many, many constituents across the
16 city. My question is actually specifically for
17 Mr. Goldstein and his testimony. Actually, if
18 anyone else has some questions, this may
19 actually be something that the teacher from
20 Ballou may respond to. I apologize, your last
21 name?

22 MS. BROKENBOROUGH: Brokenborough.

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1 MS. CARTER: Brokenborough. In your
2 testimony, you talked about obviously, staff
3 morale and climate and culture and how
4 principals themselves didn't have the autonomy
5 to really set a climate that they wanted to for
6 the schools and that they were actually scared
7 by some of the many, many different
8 restrictions that they have.

9 Looking into some of the studies going
10 on in Chicago, they had equally high teacher
11 turnover rates and we saw that this all came
12 down to the majority of its principals setting
13 the culture into and for the school. Do you
14 believe that this comes down to that number one
15 factor is principals in the school and if they
16 were given more slack or more rope, having more
17 autonomy, would this be helpful to the teachers
18 and the school system?

19 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Okay. Should I be
20 brief so you can comment too? I think if you
21 ask 10 people in 10 different schools, you may
22 get 10 different answers on that question

1 because of the variety of principals and their
2 relationship with staff.

3 I think that teacher empowerment is the
4 number one factor. And the autonomy of
5 teachers who have proven to be innovative and
6 inspired and effective in their classroom, not
7 just as measured by impact, but other measures
8 of innovation in a classroom, can be given the
9 autonomy to lead within their schools. That is
10 the number one factor that could increase
11 morale. But I do think that principals are, in
12 part, a victim to that system but because there
13 are principals who want to have the backs of
14 their teachers, who want their schools to be
15 able to innovate and follow a mission that
16 might not align with the view of the
17 instructional superintendent, or might not be
18 the thing that puts numbers on the brochure
19 quickly enough. And so I think they are a part
20 of that system as well.

21 MS. BROKENBOROUGH: And like he said,
22 if you talked to 10 different teachers, you

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1 will get 10 different answers. I would say
2 that my administration was given complete
3 autonomy and they kind of went an unfortunate
4 direction with that by taking advantage of it
5 and using it to bully people. So as far as
6 like, you know, making teachers collaborative
7 and inclusive, you know, it was a lot of
8 choosing of who our administration would
9 collaborate with.

10 So basically, if you weren't on that
11 list of preferential people, you were excluded
12 from the decision-making process. So like I
13 said before, there just needs to be a lot more
14 oversight when they do give all of this
15 autonomy to them because, unfortunately, we do
16 have some administration that will take
17 advantage of that and it works to the
18 disadvantage of the employees.

19 MR. BUTCHER: I think also, too, there
20 is more collaboration that needs to be done.
21 At Ballou in particular, I don't think there is
22 any collaboration at all. At Ballou, there is

1 a need for collaboration because we are a hard-
2 to-staff school. We have a whole slew of
3 problems. And I think one of the things about
4 Ballou is that Ballou is a school in a crisis.
5 It's always been in a school in crisis. And no
6 one is looking at Ballou as a school in a
7 crisis.

8 I worked on the second floor. And on
9 the second floor, I was the only teacher there
10 that was not a sub, for many days. So that's a
11 school in crisis.

12 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: That is.

13 MS. CARTER: Thank you very much.

14 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Ms. Wattenberg?

15 MS. WATTENBERG: Yes. I want to start
16 with a couple of quick factual questions to
17 Mary Levy and then I want to come back to the
18 rest of you.

19 Mary, you were very good about seeing
20 what the D.C. number was and the national
21 number. So for example, 20 percent a year of
22 D.C. teachers or people in the teacher level

1 turnover compared to 13 percent of a big urban
2 nationally, or 11 percent nationally and so on.

3 When you talked about new teachers, you
4 said that we lost 25 percent of them in the
5 first year. Do you know what the national is
6 on that?

7 Unfortunately, I have read dozens of
8 articles and I --

9 MS. WATTENBERG: That's all right.
10 There was the one hole --

11 MS. LEVY: -- didn't find it.

12 MS. WATTENBERG: I just want to make a
13 note that -- it kind of relates to what a
14 number of you were talking about. If 25
15 percent of our teachers are leaving each year,
16 my understanding from the literature is that
17 most teachers don't become even decent until
18 their third year. So basically, every year
19 we're subjecting our kids to 25 percent of
20 teachers who haven't even reached a modest
21 level of quality. And as I understand it from
22 Ms. Levy, that number is 33 percent in our

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1 highest poverty, most-challenged schools like
2 Ballou.

3 So I just want to note, this is
4 tremendous. It's a tremendous problem. We're
5 told often that the retention of highly
6 effective teachers is very high. I think that
7 is 80 percent or something. But that doesn't
8 get to this fact that a quarter of the teachers
9 leave each year and those are the teachers that
10 our kids are learning from.

11 So I just wanted to note that. One
12 question I have, when I was talking to -- I
13 interviewed a number of the teachers that left
14 from our high school, Wilson, and I heard a lot
15 about what I would call a blizzard of mandate.
16 Sort of the top down issues that may come up a
17 little bit. Some of it had to do with the way
18 LEAP was implemented. Some of it had to do
19 with the new grading system that required
20 teachers to give grades that weren't
21 necessarily their intention. And I'm hearing
22 two different things. There's that, which I

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1 think is a very serious problem and greatly
2 impedes the ability of teachers to create a
3 climate that in turn creates good learning
4 conditions, but I'm also hearing something
5 that's either further down that continuum or
6 really something different, which is the
7 bullying.

8 I wonder, I guess, one question for the
9 teachers on the bullying, do you think there
10 are other schools where this is an issue. Let
11 me start with that.

12 MS. BROKENBOROUGH: Absolutely. Like I
13 said earlier when I introduced myself, I am the
14 building representative for Ballou, but I've
15 actually had teachers at other schools reach
16 out to me because their union leader, you know,
17 wasn't really available or very responsive. So
18 I've heard from several schools where it is an
19 issue and that's why a lot of people would
20 leave mid-year because if you wait until that
21 final score post over the summer, you're done.
22 We call it the funeral for teachers. Once you

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1 get that, it's almost virtually impossible to
2 find employment anywhere else, even like, I've
3 heard recently, PG County, they ask for D.C.
4 teacher's impact scores.

5 MS. WATTENBERG: So people resign
6 before they get the impact scores?

7 MS. BROKENBOROUGH: Right. So before
8 that final score posts. Like I said, this year
9 I listed all the changes that were made to
10 impact. Before, we had -- it kind of balanced
11 it out because we would have a couple of
12 evaluations from someone who was not housed in
13 the building and it as a lot more fuller. And
14 now that everything is done in-house, people
15 are seeing their scores plummet if they weren't
16 on that special list of teachers.

17 MS. WATTENBERG: Thank you.

18 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. Jones?

19 MR. JONES: Thank you, Madame
20 President. My first question -- thank you all
21 for coming. My first question to Ms. Levy, on
22 this part of your testimony, I want to ask you

1 about the process for determining the 20
2 percent. First of all, if you can speak to the
3 process and then I want you to speak to the
4 reliability of the process because I believe
5 there is a problem, but my belief is one thing.
6 I also believe that we should trust our numbers
7 and we should have data that demonstrates that
8 we have a problem.

9 So if you could speak to the process
10 and the reliability of it, please.

11 MS. LEVY: Every year I get an employee
12 list from the school system. Often it comes
13 through response to the D.C. Council in
14 performance oversight. But I also, if
15 necessary, file a FOIA request. I then track
16 teachers from year-to-year by name. Often, I'm
17 able to have an employee ID number which makes
18 that easier. It's a tedious process, but I do
19 track them by name and by year. I have a huge
20 database with a list of teachers each year and
21 if I get any other information, I collect it.
22 For example, sometimes a teacher will be there

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1 one year and not there the next year, but then
2 the following year, that teacher will be back.

3 So that teacher was only on a leave of
4 absence and that's how I do it.

5 MR. JONES: Okay. Also, your numbers,
6 does it, for student, add a certain time, they
7 are marked habitually truant?

8 Before a teacher leaves, sometimes
9 there is -- you can see a pattern.

10 MS. LEVY: Yes.

11 MR. JONES: Do you track that pattern?
12 Do you have a benchmark to say okay, if this
13 teacher has been missing for five days or ten
14 days within --

15

16 MS. LEVY: Now, that information is not
17 available to the public.

18 MR. JONES: It is not.

19 MS. LEVY: In any event, what I do is
20 point in time. It's mid-winter of one year to
21 mid-winter of the next year. I do not pick up
22 any of the teachers that were discussed in the

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1 Washington Post article, those who come in at
2 the beginning of the year and resign before
3 mid-winter.

4 So ideally, the information is there in
5 the school system's computers. But to my
6 knowledge, no one has ever gotten access to it
7 and tracked it.

8 MR. JONES: Right. Are charting for
9 traditional public and charters?

10 MS. LEVY: No, I don't track charters,
11 but they report. They do an annual report
12 through the Public Charter School Board and
13 then they report their turnover. I have not
14 analyzed that. Somebody else did and put a
15 post on the internet about it. It is higher in
16 the charter schools, definitely.

17 MR. JONES: Who is responsible for that
18 report from the charter school? Is it the
19 principals at the school?

20 MS. LEVY: Whoever is the principal or
21 the CEO of each charter school would be
22 responsible. The Public Charter School Board

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1 has a format that charter schools are supposed
2 to follow. I don't know that 100 percent of
3 them do them because they are jealous of their
4 autonomy, but most of them have reported that
5 particular number.

6 MR. JONES: Okay. Thank you. I do
7 have more questions, but my time is up. Thank
8 you.

9 MS. WILSON-PHELAN: Thank you all for
10 coming tonight. Well, I'm going to follow up
11 to what Mark was asking Mary. When a teacher
12 transitions to another school, you're able to
13 capture that?

14 MS. LEVY: The figures I've given you
15 are not school waivers, the 20 percent. That
16 is just leaving DCPS. In order to track
17 teachers moving from school-to-school within
18 the system, that's an even more tedious
19 process. It took me some days to do it for the
20 40 lowest performing schools. I would like to
21 do it when I get the time, but it really
22 shouldn't be necessary. We should have some

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1 professional organization.

2 I could get runover by a Metro bus and
3 you wouldn't have any problems.

4 MS. WILSON-PHELAN: Don't do that.

5 Just to be clear then, so the information you
6 provided about the 20 percent is DCPS-wide and
7 doesn't control for transfer between schools.

8 MS. LEVY: No, it does not.

9 MS. WILSON-PHELAN: Okay. That's all I
10 wanted to know.

11 MS. LEVY: It does work for the
12 boarding schools, but not generally.

13 MS. WILSON-PHELAN: Okay. I had a
14 question for Mr. Goldstein related to your
15 comment about the level at which you want
16 teacher input solicited and taken seriously.
17 And you gave one example about how, if I
18 understood you correctly, you do not think that
19 we should influence impact. But I wondered if
20 you had other examples of the kinds of things
21 that you don't feel that teachers are a part of
22 insurance and decision-making that you think we

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1 should.

2 MR. GOLDSTEIN: So on LEAP, I would say
3 look, I understand the process of saying that
4 LEAP is now part of someone's job, so they
5 should be evaluated as part of the whole pie of
6 what's in their job.

7 At the same time, the entire push
8 towards LEAP is founded on the idea that now
9 we're moving towards more trust of people who
10 have been effective in the system, even the
11 system as validated as effective under this.
12 So now we're going to trust those people to
13 lead their peers. So I think if we're going to
14 move towards collaboration and trust, we need
15 to move toward collaboration and trust. That
16 trust actually has to be evident in the
17 process. There are a whole lot of ways,
18 obviously, there is union structure within our
19 public schools that the charter schools don't
20 even have. So there is an even bigger issue
21 there.

22 But even with that, there is a level of
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1 decision-making at the schools which principals
2 and administration can decide or not decide to
3 include teachers on issues of hiring and firing
4 of budgeting of school programing on new
5 initiatives and rollout new initiatives on
6 strategic planning for the schools that had a
7 yearly plan.

8 So there are a whole lot of issues
9 where teacher decision-making could more of a
10 role in decision-making. What I think is you
11 need to identify those innovative and inspired
12 teachers in each school and make sure that
13 there is a systematic way for them to be part
14 of those decision-making process.

15 MS. WILSON-PHELAN: So I'm going to cut
16 you off because I am out of time. So there is
17 the LSAT in every traditional public school has
18 teachers on it who are elected by their peers.

19 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Right.

20 MS. WILSON-PHELAN: And not only as
21 teachers, parents, community members, a member
22 of the administration and they are responsible

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1 and legally mandated to sign off on strategy
2 and budget.

3 MR. GOLDSTEIN: So I think there needs
4 to be transparency and accountability to
5 whether school administrations use them
6 effectively.

7 MS. WILSON-PHELAN: Right. So I just
8 want to encourage, it's really important, for
9 me, anyway, as an official in D.C. to hear
10 really grounded data and facts. And I know
11 that you all are teachers and you are
12 expressing your own perspectives, but there is
13 a structure for that, right.

14 So in order for me to say like, yes,
15 that's the thing we need to do, there has to be
16 an acknowledgement that the structure exists.
17 And then when you said like, oh, we should be
18 transparent. We should be working on it more
19 effectively, then I can understand where you're
20 coming from. I just wanted to share that.

21 MR. GOLDSTEIN: I think that is
22 concrete for the LSAT.

1 MR. BUTCHER: Can I comment on that?
2 We have that structure in Ballou but it was
3 avoided. SCAT in the last -- a member of the
4 SCAT team, and she refused to meet with us.
5 She refused to meet with us. We invited her
6 several times but she refused to meet with us.
7 So the things that are in place, but it
8 depends on the principal of the building.

9 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. Mr.
10 Weedon.

11 MR. WEEDON: So I'll echo that comment.
12 The LSATs at Elliot Middle School where my
13 daughter attends have not approved budget
14 expenditures this year. The process has been
15 skirted, and that happens regularly. So while
16 on paper there is a process, we're not
17 following the process. And I think that goes
18 for a number of things, spending, allocations.

19 To borrow from something that Emma
20 Brown from the post tweeted out earlier this
21 week for a system that claims to be data
22 driven, we're not using data well. And that's

1 where I'd really like to see something and I
2 would like to request for my colleagues that
3 the testimony that we get tonight and a summary
4 of our discussion is published and that we
5 ensure that this is public record and that we
6 are pushing for the data to be transparent.
7 We'll talk about other ways to do that to
8 encourage the council to make that. We don't
9 have authority here.

10 A couple of things I just wanted to
11 touch on real quick. Principal turnover has
12 been touched and I'd love to get your thoughts
13 on the impact that that has on teacher
14 turnover. In Ward 6, over the last two years,
15 10 of our 18 schools have seen 10 or 12 of our
16 18 schools have seen new principals. What
17 impact does that have on teacher turnover?

18 I'm open to feedback, especially with
19 teachers on the panel.

20 MS. BROKENBOROUGH: I'm not sure if I'm
21 the best one to answer this. I've been at
22 Ballou for two years and we've had the same

1 principal for the two years that I've been
2 there but we have seen changes within the
3 administrative team. Like one of our assistant
4 principal who was there last year, he is no
5 longer there. And then they brought in two new
6 assistant principals and I can see that one of
7 those was over the math department and special
8 education department. Most of our resignations
9 came from the mathematics and the special
10 education department. So there is definitely a
11 connection that needs to be looked at a little
12 more in-depth.

13 At Ballou, it did have an impact on
14 teachers because once we got in those two new
15 assistant principals, we saw an uptick of
16 people resigning within those specific
17 departments.

18 MR. GOLDSTEIN: So I can speak to that
19 as well. So this will be my third year. There
20 have been four principals from the time that I
21 first applied to the school. Under one
22 principal to during the summer the principal

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1 who interviewed and hired me, the school year,
2 once I started, there was a third principal
3 that was then in charge for that year who was
4 only given the ability by central office to be
5 principal for one year. That was his mandate.

6 And then there was a fourth principal
7 that came in the following year as they
8 relaunched the school in new building. So
9 there is no doubt that that has an effect. It
10 can be dizzying, right, for any staff person.
11 I think the main effect is the mandates and the
12 new initiatives that come down and how that
13 impacts your day-to-day practice and
14 instruction.

15 To go back to Ms. Wattenberg's point
16 from earlier, I think the main thing is central
17 office is not always talking to each other on
18 those mandates. So there are a lot of things
19 that come down onto our daily plates as
20 teachers and some parts of central office might
21 express a great deal of flexibility and have
22 great intentions with their initiatives and the

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1 school administration might not know that
2 central office has expressed that flexibility
3 to us. They're just not talking to each other.

4 MR. WEEDON: I'm out of time, but real
5 quick, I would argue that central office almost
6 entirely has great intentions. How that's
7 implemented at the school level can vary
8 considerably and have negative impacts.

9 MS. LEVY: And I would say there is
10 recent literature on that subject with this
11 which finds a definite correlation not only
12 between principal turnover and teacher turnover
13 but principal turnover and student achievement.

14 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. Dr.
15 Woodruff.

16 DR. WOODRUFF: Thank you for coming out
17 and sharing. Some of the things that concern
18 me as we're looking at the teacher turnover --
19 and Mary, I know you have gathered data on it,
20 I'm interested in knowing the data on teacher
21 turnover but that the teachers are leaving a
22 particular school and moving to another school.

1 That school movement that they are waiting for
2 the superman type of thing where they shift
3 from one school to the next.

4 So when new teachers are coming in, the
5 first three years, we know that happens around
6 the country that will lose a lot of student,
7 that if in D.C., do we have a rating in fact
8 happening in our schools where principals that
9 know that there are particular teachers that
10 are teaching are waiting to get them?

11 Is that also happening which means that
12 we're losing good quality teachers at some
13 schools because their relationship may be dealt
14 with another principal or they're waiting to
15 get to a school closer to where they live or
16 things like that?

17 MS. LEVY: I'm afraid I don't have the
18 numbers on that. I did notice in the 40/40
19 analysis that teachers who left one of the
20 40/40 schools sometimes showed up at another.
21 Anecdotally, I can tell you that I hear there
22 is sort of a general westward movement in the

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1 city.

2 DR. WOODRUFF: I have a few minutes.
3 In my second question, impact is something that
4 bothers me to the heart because of the fact
5 that I wasn't a teacher, I was an
6 administrator, I was scored with an impact.
7 And the principal at that time at the school I
8 was at didn't particularly care for me, so as a
9 result, he marked me down 10 points and then he
10 resigned and that score stayed on my record
11 without a validation because he left the area
12 and moved to another state.

13 So impact plays a big part in the lives
14 of our teachers and the lives of our
15 administrators and the lives of our principals
16 because they are being looked at as well. But
17 what bothers me more-so than anything is the
18 bullying. It can happen when accountability
19 isn't there. And so if you're having a scoring
20 system where everyone in that building is an
21 administrator or the scorers are the
22 administrators in that building, there is not a

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1 check and balance and I went through the check
2 and balance when I went to the attorneys. But
3 once that person left the system, that stain
4 stayed on my record. And so I think that's
5 something that DCPS needs to look at closer and
6 they need to have teachers on the development
7 of making that impact a better, useful process
8 of evaluating teachers. Thank you for sharing
9 this information with us today, and thank you.

10 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. Jacobson.

11 MR. JACOBSON: Thank you all for coming
12 here and thank you for your courage,
13 particularly for the teachers and school staff.
14 That is difficult to speak truth to power,
15 especially when you want to continue in your
16 position. And I take that very seriously. My
17 mother was the grievance committee chair for
18 her school union, so I've got a little
19 experience back here with this type of thing
20 and I know how difficult it is for all of you
21 involved.

22 I did want to raise a couple of points.

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1 I don't necessarily have any questions, but
2 I'll give anyone who's got something left to
3 say a minute at the very end. When we did our
4 work on Every Student Succeeds Act, we did a
5 lot of work around school climate surveys and
6 making sure that the school climate survey goes
7 beyond just the students that a school serves,
8 but also to the teaching staff and to the
9 support staff to make that school work and work
10 well.

11 We pushed and we got OSSE to agree on a
12 pilot program that will then come back to this
13 Board for implementation citywide. So I want
14 to make sure that you know that we are working
15 on some of these issues. Not all of them, but
16 some of them. We're working on it diligently
17 and we're working with the superintendent on
18 this because we heard this loud and clear
19 throughout our ESSA discussions over the last
20 year.

21 I also wanted to take a minute to thank
22 you, in particular, Mary Levy, for the

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1 information you provided to this Board and our
2 Closing the Achievement Gap Committee that was
3 shared by Tierra Jolly. As Chair of that
4 committee, her focus was on teacher and
5 principal retention and turnover and gave us
6 some valuable information on that. And we need
7 to continue to follow-up with that work that
8 Ms. Jolly started because we've been working on
9 it for a year and-a-half. We need more data.
10 You've been able to provide it to us. Some of
11 our other education partners have not been as
12 willing to work with us, but at the end of the
13 day, we need to respect our teachers. We need
14 to respect our staff. We need to create
15 environments that are healthy for our students.

16 So with that, I've got a minute left if
17 anyone's got anything to say that they haven't
18 already, you're welcome to the time.

19 MR. GOLDSTEIN: I just want to thank
20 you for your words of thanks and just
21 contribute to close that this is not an issue
22 that should be threatening to anyone, right.

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1 We all want to retain great teachers. And I
2 think your words about the intentions of
3 central office staff, about the intentions of
4 principals, this should be an issue that we all
5 want to solve together because we want to
6 retain great teachers to build better schools.

7 And so this shouldn't be an issue where
8 there is anyone up here that feels like it's
9 difficult to talk to a principal or it's
10 difficult to talk to someone at central office
11 because that should be our goal. And we have
12 to come to a consensus that retaining teachers
13 is the goal and not the shedding of our
14 effective teachers.

15 MS. BROKENBOROUGH: I'd just like to
16 say thank you, too, because there has been so
17 many times where teachers want to speak and
18 we're not given an opportunity. So I would
19 just like to thank all of you, especially
20 Marcus Batchelor, for listening to us and
21 allowing us to come down because, I mean, we
22 have a lot that needs to be heard because at

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1 the end of the day, it's not just our jobs,
2 this is the impact that is happening on
3 children, especially our poor babies in Ward 8.

4 MR. BUTCHER: I'd like to say thank you
5 too. I'd like to say one more thing; I think
6 the need has shifted to creating better
7 teachers -- there is no bad teachers. Good
8 teachers are created. They're developed. And
9 they don't develop in one year or two years.
10 It takes more than two or three years.

11 So to say someone is ineffective
12 because they scored low in one year and never
13 get a chance to develop, there needs to be a
14 shift to audit perspective, I think, to retain
15 better teachers.

16 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Last but not
17 least, I would just like to say thank you for
18 coming down. I was a DCPS teacher who left
19 under duress. So I understand the situation
20 and I also went Ballou High School, so I know
21 the potential of the school and where it is
22 when I went to school and where it is now.

1 So I fully appreciate your bravery and
2 honesty. Thank you. Please leave a copy so
3 that we can get these testimonies out to the
4 proper authorities. Thank you.

5 MS. LEVY: Thanks again.

6 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: I'd like to call
7 the next panel. Is Keisha Thorpe here?

8 Taunya Martin, Laura Fuchs, and Morgan
9 Williams. Morgan Williams? Is she here?

10 (No response.)

11 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Ms. Davis, would
12 you come forward? Thank you. Make sure you
13 talk into the mic. We're going to go from my
14 right, your left, starting with Ms. Davis. You
15 have three minutes.

16 MS. DAVIS: Three minutes. Thank you
17 very much. And I want to first say, I'm
18 Elizabeth Davis, president of the Washington
19 Teacher's Union. And I want to thank those
20 teachers that just left this table for their
21 courage to come up and speak about the issues
22 as they exist and not as we would want them to

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1 -- we would say that they are. And of course,
2 I just left 5-day conference at Harvard with
3 Chancellor Wilson and his management team of
4 six people. And at the heart of that institute
5 was a discussion about issues, the top three
6 issues that the chancellor would like to
7 collaborate with teachers. And teacher
8 turnover was right at the top of the list.

9 And of course, the first conversation I
10 had with Chancellor is the one I've been having
11 with you guys and councilmembers and everyone
12 else about the achievement gap in the District,
13 which is grown since 2007 to over 40 scale
14 points. It's absolutely outrageous. And he
15 agrees that that is the second priority.

16 The third is about some of those things
17 that create teacher turnover, the achievement
18 gap, principal turnover. And that is social
19 and emotional learning. And of course, I had
20 to include in that the social and emotional
21 health of teachers as well as students. School
22 climates that are toxic and lead to teacher

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1 turnover. And of course, I prepared a
2 statement that I wanted. As I listened to the
3 three teachers who sat here before me, I
4 reflected on my experience in three schools in
5 Ward 8, and 7, and 5.

6 I was a highly effective teacher in all
7 three. And my transfer from all three of those
8 schools came as a result of my reporting
9 unsafe, unsatisfactory, unhealthy conditions
10 for students and teachers in those facilities.
11 At one school, there was contaminated drinking
12 water with lead. The second school had toxic
13 fumes of tar that seep into the building all
14 day while kids were trying to learn because of
15 a roof that was being repaired throughout the
16 entire years.

17 And the third was a removal of asbestos
18 from Stuart Middle School, for 18 months while
19 the kids remained in the facility. Of course,
20 eventually, after eight months of pleading with
21 various individuals and stakeholders in Ward 7,
22 the kids were moved Shad Elementary School.

1 But I have to think about what happens in
2 schools where teachers are afraid to speak out
3 about issues like that, where they feel that
4 they need to simply comply. The principals
5 feel that they need to do something to reach
6 the bar that's been set for them to increase
7 graduation rates, irrespective of how many kids
8 that push forward without being prepared.

9 And all of those initiatives that are
10 handed down to just local schools that force
11 principals and teachers to gang the system.
12 And how that ends up injuring so many of our
13 kids who graduate and are not prepared. I
14 mentioned some of that later. It's happening
15 in other schools as well.

16 We have data that we collect from our
17 members around teacher turnover, LEAP, IMPACT,
18 why teachers are leaving. We do exit
19 interviews with new teachers that are leaving
20 after one year, so that we will have own data
21 because a lot of the data, and even though we
22 say that we are a data-driven system, some of

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1 the data that we use is "feel good" data, what
2 we would like to believe is happening, even if
3 it does not really represent the successes of
4 schools and kids and all of them.

5 So I'll go to my point. My minutes
6 that was written by our communications person.
7 She said Elizabeth, you must cover these
8 points. And I must. But at the end of this
9 discussion, I certainly hope that this Board,
10 and I appreciate you having this hearing, would
11 allow time to get extended comment of other
12 teachers who have submitted into us, but we
13 have not prepared to have them ready today for
14 you.

15 And of course, when we talk about
16 teacher and principal turnover, I reflect on
17 the responses given to the Union, over 738
18 teachers who expressed their frustration, and
19 in some cases their anger as to why they feel
20 the need to leave the school system.

21 We conducted a survey among members who
22 are quitting the system this year, who quit

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1 last year and the year prior. And many of them
2 echoed an answer of one high school teacher who
3 wrote, "I'm leaving D.C. Public Schools and
4 moving to a district where the teachers voted
5 on a new curriculum to adopt and create a two-
6 year phase implementation plan. I'm excited to
7 be working somewhere that values and respects
8 teachers as true professionals."

9 She concluded by saying top down
10 initiatives lead to more bureaucracy and
11 actually hurt student learning. There has been
12 a lot written recently about the high turnover
13 rates among D.C. teachers, but reports differ
14 as to what the rate actually. Let's agree that
15 whatever the exact number is, it's too high
16 because teacher retention is key to producing
17 first-class education for the students in all
18 D.C. Public Schools.

19 One thing that has been widely reported
20 is that teachers leaving our schools don't
21 leave the profession. Like most teachers, they
22 are dedicated and basically want to serve in

1 schools that respect what they do. Teachers
2 who leave D.C. that are quickly hired by other
3 school systems is becoming the norm.

4 Let's also recognize the fact that the
5 highest levels of teacher turnover are in
6 schools that can afford the least, and of
7 course, school surveyed, with low-income, who
8 in order to succeed, need a wide range of
9 services. Many services in our schools are not
10 providing simply because we do not have it
11 integrated into our curriculum.

12 In our survey, our members leaving
13 DCPS, one teacher wrote that she to ensure
14 their longevity, teachers need three things
15 from administrators: support, support,
16 support. Most teachers see the lack of support
17 and lack of respect. Another system is in
18 fact, for five years, DCPS did not see fit to
19 negotiate a new collective bargaining agreement
20 with the teachers.

21 Teachers say they are frustrated with
22 the system because they are not given the

1 support they need to handle children who are
2 suffering from the effects of poverty, from
3 having parents who are forced to work two or
4 more jobs to keep food on the table. Classroom
5 teachers must take on this burden. But all too
6 often, they are not given the resources they
7 need to do the job.

8 When schools are asked to reduce their
9 suspension rates, students who commit Level 1
10 through 4 infractions are allowed to remain in
11 classrooms. And while I do believe that
12 schools should find a way to serve those
13 students without sending them home, the burden
14 should not be put solely on teachers.

15 So to provide the support that schools
16 need to provide in-school suspension counseling
17 is the way to go, not by reducing social
18 services or the providers of those services in
19 each school.

20 Most tragic, teachers do not receive
21 the training and orientation they need to serve
22 most D.C. students, especially children whose

1 everyday needs are desperate and wide-ranging.
2 And while they receive the tools, they need to
3 build first-class educational opportunities.
4 We've been demoralized into submission by
5 implicit threats of low-impact scores when you
6 don't manufacture the desired results. That is
7 a true story. And that's the story that could
8 play out in many schools.

9 If teacher had the courage to report it
10 -- some people are leaving simply because they
11 cannot and will not comply with those requests.
12 And others feel the need to try to make it
13 work. But in the end, the biggest losers are
14 the students.

15 One teacher wrote on our survey, "The
16 impact brings out the worst in many colleagues
17 and school teachers. Many are too focused on
18 manipulating impact scores to be concerned
19 about doing what's best for students."

20 Another source of frustration among
21 these new teachers, and the reason for the high
22 turnover is the fact that they feel drowned by

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1 paperwork, new initiatives and are not given
2 enough time to prepare effective lessons and
3 activities for their students. In most
4 successful school systems, teachers are allowed
5 to spend the time it take on instruction and
6 preparation of lesson plans. Here, they are
7 allowed to allocate less than 10 percent of
8 their time to preparation and are forced to use
9 more than 25 percent of their day carrying out
10 administrative tasks.

11 So members of the Board, here are just
12 a few of the points. I haven't dealt with the
13 solutions. Maybe we can. And I hear I'm being
14 called to close. So I'm going to wrap up by
15 saying, together, we can create a school system
16 that assures each and every student which deems
17 the highest quality education possible
18 regardless of their race, ethnicity, zip code,
19 and school climate that will facilitate teacher
20 retention and not turnover.

21 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you, Ms.
22 Davis. Yes, please remember that you have

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1 three minutes. Mr. Martel -- is anybody else
2 out here besides Mr. Martel who is here to
3 testify?

4 (No response.)

5 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. Martel, would
6 you join us at the table, please.

7 MS. MARTIN: Good afternoon. My name
8 is Taunya Martin. I just want to say that I
9 was born and raised in Washington, D.C. I went
10 to school in Ward 4, where I lived and then I
11 moved to Ward 8. I see a very big difference.

12 My daughter, she goes to Ballou. She's
13 in 10th grade. She'll be going to the 11th
14 grade and my concern is that the principal,
15 when you go up there, they really don't tell
16 you exactly what's going on in the school. You
17 have to actually be a parent who goes up there.
18 When they see me, they know I'm coming up there
19 for business. So everyone is like, "Here's Ms.
20 Martin. She's coming. What is she going to be
21 saying?" I ask a lot of questions. They never
22 have any answers.

1 The principal of Ballou, I'm really
2 disappointed in her. And I've called the
3 chancellor to tell him and I've emailed him and
4 I talked to Dr. Bay, which her supervisor, in
5 reference to how she acts at the school. No
6 one wants to respond to my questions. The
7 behavior of the children, I've been there when
8 they're acting almost like animals. They're
9 cussing. They're cussing out the counselors,
10 even in front of the parents.

11 I mean, when I come in they're just
12 walking through the hall, unsupervised. No one
13 is actually telling these kids to go to class.
14 I'm like, what's going on? These kids are just
15 walking around just like a free day or
16 something. I even saw a video where one
17 student, she was tearing off all the documents
18 off the bulletin board. And the supervisor --
19 I guess she was mad because she didn't have a
20 teacher, I guess it was for a whole semester, a
21 math teacher, and she was just walking around,
22 just ripping everything off and the kids were

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1 laughing. And the substitute teacher, she was
2 just sitting there looking. I mean, not even
3 saying anything, just sitting there watching
4 this child go crazy.

5 The chancellor, I have an issue with
6 him too. When a parent contacts you, you
7 should give them a response, not just some
8 general response, like something that's already
9 typed up. If a parent comes to you with a
10 concern about school, I want to hear some
11 results. I went to Ballou one day and there
12 were like, 20 police officers. I'm like,
13 what's going on? And I called the school and
14 they were like, "Oh, Ms. Martin. Nothing is
15 going on."

16 I said, "I just came out of the parking
17 lot and there are 20 police officers." But I'm
18 so scared, I just go ahead and leave because I
19 don't know what's going on. And it's like,
20 three or four times. This is my daughter's
21 first year at Ballou. I mean, it's just
22 unacceptable, the behavior of the schools.

1 It's like, out of control.

2 I want my child to be educated, no
3 matter if she's at Wilson, Roosevelt, Coolidge,
4 Cardoza. I want her at a school that's going
5 to have some structure. I don't understand why
6 -- to really tell the truth, Ballou needs a
7 man, a male figure. This woman, she's small
8 like -- she needs someone who is going to be
9 like we're not going to have this. They're
10 acting all wild and stuff. No.

11 Once you see -- they show you this
12 little picture like everything is okay, but go
13 there on a daily basis or a weekly basis like
14 me and you'll see a difference. That school is
15 out of control and someone needs to get
16 involved and do something before someone gets
17 hurt? What is it going to take for somebody's
18 child to get killed, somebody's child to get
19 shot or get stabbed or something to happen
20 before someone to come in and get some
21 structure in this school?

22 My child -- I told them this, my

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1 child's name is Skylar Aliyah Thomas. And if
2 my child does not have a teacher for a whole
3 school year or semester, that's going to be a
4 problem. And you know what? Because I come up
5 there so much, they all be like, "All right,
6 Ms. Martin. We already know. We know you're
7 going to come up here. We know you're going to
8 give us what we're asking for."

9 So my daughter, they're going to make
10 sure that for 11th grade that she's in a
11 classroom where teachers are strong, where the
12 teachers not going to leave the school and
13 teachers are going to teach her because they
14 know the type of mother I am. It's unfortunate
15 that kids, they don't have a mother like me.
16 They don't have those mothers out there. They
17 don't even have mothers calling them. Everyone
18 knows me. Matter fact, they even know my cell
19 number. If I go there, they say, "Ms. Martin,
20 how can I help you?" Because they know when I
21 come up there I mean business.

22 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you, Ms.

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1 Martin. We hear you.

2 MS. MARTIN: Let's get it done.

3 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

4 MS. THORPE: Hello. I'm Keisha Thorpe.
5 I'm also the building rep for my school. And I
6 also work with Tomorrow's Teacher Leader's
7 Project.

8 First and foremost, I've taught in PG
9 County before this. That's actually where I
10 started teaching. I didn't go to college to
11 actually become a teacher. I ended up falling
12 into that profession. My first of teaching in
13 PG County made me actually want to stay in
14 teaching because I saw the dramatic impact that
15 I could actually have on student's lives.

16 After teaching in PG County, I kind of
17 moved away for a while and then came back into
18 PG County. But when I came back, I really
19 wanted to teach in the city because I really
20 wanted to have that impact on students who were
21 economically disadvantaged. I wanted to really
22 help impact their lives. So I just wanted to

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1 get out of the suburbs and really teach
2 children that I can have that impact on their
3 lives, and especially their education.

4 So I was discouraged a lot coming to
5 DCPS, but I kept an open mind and I just kind
6 of like, pulled up my sleeves and said I'm
7 going in because I know it's going to take work
8 and I want to do the work. So even though the
9 percentage of retaining teachers that are
10 effective and highly effective teachers has
11 increased over the years in DCPS, as they have
12 reported it, there's still a great concern
13 amongst teachers, parents, and even community
14 stakeholders because of the vast impact it has
15 on student achievement.

16 The reported 82 percent this year
17 reflects teacher retention within the DCPS
18 system, but not teacher retention within
19 individual schools, which is actually the real
20 problem that is not being reported by DCPS.
21 Rather, we have to depend on the media for that
22 information.

1 So why is DCPS not publicly reporting
2 this? In addition, I know several scenarios
3 where teachers and other researchers have tried
4 to actually get the teacher attention there
5 from DCPS and they have been totally
6 uncooperative. One notable negative impact of
7 end-of-the-year school teacher retention is the
8 achievement gap that exists between some
9 schools, especially, for instance, schools that
10 are in Ward 1 and Ward 2, compared to schools
11 in say, Ward 7 and 8.

12 So take for example, a Ward 2 school,
13 School Without Walls, which is in Ward 2, in
14 the school year of 2015 to 2016, they actually
15 have over a 90 percent teacher retention with a
16 95 percent graduation rate and more than three-
17 quarters of their student population were
18 proficient in both English and math.
19 Conversely, Ward 8 school, Ballou High School
20 had over -- has had over the past five years, a
21 less than 50 percent teacher retention rate,
22 which only probably increased last year, I

1 think about 14 percent in the last school year.

2 Consequently, the school barely
3 graduated 50 percent of the student population
4 and only about half of the student population
5 was proficient in English and math. With the
6 highest District school turnover rates of
7 teachers in Ballou in the school year
8 2016/2017, who knows what their achievement gap
9 will actually be this time around.

10 When effective and highly effective
11 teachers leave these schools, they start the
12 school year either in the middle of the school
13 year or at the end of the school year to go to
14 more favorable schools. It helps to widen the
15 achievement gap. This is the price students
16 pay. So no wonder why a recent action research
17 that I actually conducted showed 100 percent of
18 high school students, even those from Ward 8
19 did not choose any schools within Ward 7 or
20 Ward 8 as an option because they know that this
21 is tied to their student achievement and this
22 is actually tied to teacher retention as well.

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1 So my ask is that the chancellor or
2 mayor at DCPS really needs to find ways to
3 retain teachers within in the system. Not only
4 that, but they also need to definitely pay
5 closer attention to specific schools and their
6 administration and to determine the root cause
7 of these turnover rates and address them
8 accordingly.

9 Just finishing up my time, this year,
10 after the impact scores came out, I actually
11 was very, very disappointed in myself. And as
12 the other teachers testified, as W2U building
13 rep, I know that I have been told not to be the
14 building rep in my building because usually,
15 building reps get low scores. At the school
16 that I'm at, I have never had -- I haven't
17 gotten highly effective, but last year my score
18 was such that I was pushing to become highly
19 effective this year. And this is the lowest
20 score.

21 So this year they actually scored me
22 "developing." And I have never had

1 "developing." Consistently, over the years, my
2 score has increased. And I'm trying to figure
3 out why I have a developing score when over the
4 year it has shown that I've done numerous
5 professional development to actually prepare me
6 and develop me personally and in the classroom
7 as a teacher.

8 My principal knows this because my
9 principal also gives me permission to leave the
10 building to develop myself and my craft. So at
11 this point, I'm trying to figure out why is it
12 that over the last four years I've had so much
13 development but now I'm actually scoring as
14 "developing." And over the year, under
15 developing, my scores have dramatically
16 increased. So I'm just thinking that this
17 bullying thing is actually real. I am a
18 building rep. Even this summer, I have one
19 teacher that has actually transferred and she
20 just actually emailed me and asked me what
21 should I do because I feel like I'm being
22 bullied because now that I told my principal

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1 that I'm leaving, they asked me now that when I
2 clear my classroom out that security has to
3 follow me around the building.

4 Several days ago when I was still an
5 employee at that school, it was okay for me to
6 come and go, because she was working on
7 projects there over the summer for the next
8 school.

9 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Ms. Thorpe, okay.

10 MS. THORPE: But as soon as she's
11 leaving, now she has to be escorted around by
12 security.

13 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. Ms.
14 Fuchs.

15 MS. FUCHS: Hello. My name is Laura
16 Fuchs. I'm a Ward 5 resident, D.C. Public
17 School social studies teacher for the past 10
18 years and an Executive Board Member of the
19 Washington Teachers Union, Chair of our
20 community education and I'm also on the Board
21 of the Ward 7 Education Council.

22 There are many elements that make a

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1 great school: hardworking teachers that care
2 about their students and their curriculum, a
3 culture that has excellence amongst everyone in
4 the building, provides opportunities for
5 students.

6 Our hope is that these factors will
7 lead to creating engaged citizens who are
8 participating as adults on their own terms.
9 All of these elements are severely undermined
10 by widespread teacher turnover. My entire 10
11 years of teaching have been at HD Woodson High
12 School in Ward 7. In my first few years of
13 teaching I was extremely hardworking, but I was
14 still looking at another community.

15 In the classroom I constantly asked,
16 what? What? Because I was still adjusting to
17 the chaos, volume, and word choice of my
18 students. I got along with the kids and I
19 developed deep bonds, but I still had major
20 incidents that occurred in my classroom that at
21 the time, felt out of my control. Over the
22 years, these incidents lessened and have now

1 dropped to almost zero.

2 In part, I've become a better teacher,
3 honing my craft. But there is something else
4 at play. When students walk into my room, over
5 half of them already know how to pronounce my
6 last name, which is a little surprising. Since
7 they've had friends, cousins, siblings,
8 teammates, neighbors and acquaintances who
9 taken my class, I have a reputation that I've
10 built up with the kids and I've also been able
11 to adapt to better serve them.

12 Beyond my day-to-day interactions with
13 students, being at Woodson for 10 years has
14 allowed me to develop programming that can
15 provide great opportunities to my students.
16 I've had the opportunity to teach AP U.S.
17 Government for seven years now and this has
18 allowed me the chance to develop deep
19 relationships and integrate outside
20 programming, such as D.C. Youth in Government,
21 which we do here, into my yearly coursework.

22 This course, has developed a reputation

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1 as one of the hardest courses in the school and
2 one that will be instrumental in preparing them
3 for college. I used to have to beg students to
4 take the course, but now students are actively
5 stopping by to request the course and tell me
6 they are ready for it. They know they can
7 count on me to be there and it gives them
8 something to look forward to and prepare for
9 their senior year.

10 So I know the importance of stability
11 in school. I live it every day, but despite my
12 deep commitment to the community-based teaching
13 and providing stability for my students by
14 simply showing up year-after-year, I often find
15 myself considering if I can keep it up. This
16 has not been easy and there have been times
17 where I wanted to leave and find a school
18 system where I am more respected and not have
19 my job constantly threatened by DCPS Central
20 Office on the evaluation system.

21 I was even told by my principal once
22 that I have Stockholm Syndrome because I was

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1 getting too upset about how the AP exams were
2 being administered because I was freaking out
3 about my impact scores. And he thought I
4 internalized a bit too much negativity being
5 here.

6 As the Board, what you can do to help
7 increase stability is to focus on ESSA and the
8 report card, and include measurements that
9 allow us to really focus on teacher attention
10 and not just on test scores so that we can
11 actually force DCPS to have a good reason --
12 they should do it anyway -- but let's give them
13 another reason to retain teachers. There's
14 lots of different measures we can have like how
15 long someone's at the school. That's what the
16 average years the teachers have been at the
17 school. What's the average year they've been
18 in teaching; how many people left from year to
19 the next. So there's lots of ways we can
20 measure these things, put it on their report
21 card so that DCPS and the charter schools have
22 a reason to try to make these numbers better

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1 because they're going to be seen and people are
2 going to know about them and compare schools
3 and act accordingly.

4 There is some other stuff that the
5 report card has with standardized testing that
6 you could also change so that maybe we can stop
7 stressing us out on that level too because I
8 think that also leads to people -- because
9 English and math at Woodson have the highest
10 turnover rates by far. No coincidence that
11 those are the two tested subjects and that
12 those teachers get extra burdens placed on them
13 that cause them to leave in higher numbers.

14 Thank you.

15 MS. DAVIS: I'm going to have to excuse
16 myself. I do apologize, but I'm in the garage
17 and they said I'll be locked in after 7:00.

18 MS. WATTENBERG: May I ask a question
19 that I was going to ask Ms. Davis?

20 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Quickly.

21 MS. WATTENBERG: You mentioned that you
22 were putting out a report. Are you saying

1 those exit interviews would be available to us
2 and data to be incorporated?

3 MS. DAVIS: The responses, yes.
4 Absolutely.

5 MS. WATTENBERG: Thank you.

6 MS. DAVIS: I mostly can produce them
7 to you. If there are any other questions, I'll
8 have to take them while walking.

9 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. Mr.
10 Martel, you have the floor.

11 MR. MARTEL: Thank you. My name is
12 Erich Martel, retired DCPS teacher, a high
13 school teacher. I wanted to address the
14 proposed graduation task force.

15 Earlier today I emailed you two
16 requests regarding the Graduation Requirement
17 Task Force. One, remove the three individuals
18 from DCPS, the Charter Board, and OSSE who did
19 not apply, but are listed as applicants.
20 Rather than task force members, they should be
21 considered resources to provide background
22 material.

1 Number two, remove the individual
2 listed as a student of Sidwell Friends. This
3 is a school that does not follow DCPS State
4 Board of Education graduation requirements or
5 subject standards. The Graduation Requirements
6 Task Force can only make constructive
7 recommendations if it has student data that
8 actually describe the impediments of
9 graduation, and that begins with first grade.

10 The task force members need to also
11 know what limits on recommendations the state
12 superintendent has set. In other words, what
13 are the de facto standards that they're going
14 to be working on. Will she permit only one
15 college and careers, graduation pathway or can
16 there be more than one aligned to non-college
17 vocational careers including apprenticeships?

18 If necessary, will the state
19 superintendent apply for waivers from the
20 Department of Education? And will the
21 Graduation Task Force be able to request from
22 OSSE, DCPS and the charters the data and

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1 explanations as to why the majority of students
2 entering 9th grade are unable to do 9th grade
3 work?

4 Let's be clear, that a student who
5 shows up only some of the time is functionally
6 illiterate and enumerate, has been socially
7 promoted to make school officials look good,
8 will not be accepted in college or in an
9 apprenticeship program or be able to survive if
10 enrolled in one of those to be a college or
11 even an apprenticeship quota. In short, is
12 this about addressing the real problems facing
13 student achievement or is it to make DC
14 educational officials find another shortcut to
15 make student data look better?

16 I'll just add a few comments about
17 impact. Impact was designed by think tanks
18 that were privately funded by foundations that
19 were ultimately designed to disrupt the D.C.
20 Public Schools. One way in which to look at
21 that is to think about a statistical problem.
22 How can you statistically evaluate teachers on

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1 the basis of tests that are taken by students
2 and then use an average based upon the random
3 assignment of students to a school? That is a
4 disruptive process that has no validity in
5 statistics.

6 Tests are designed to be used by -- to
7 evaluate the person who takes the test, the
8 student, if we're talking about schools. But
9 these tests are not used to evaluate the
10 student to determine how to improve instruction
11 or anything like that. They are then used to
12 evaluate those in the building, including
13 people who don't even teach the students who
14 take the tests.

15 Now, you have to think more broadly
16 about this because this is something that needs
17 to be challenged. And it would be nice -- and
18 the way you start to challenge something is to
19 ask the questions. Ask the questions and
20 demand answers.

21 Thank you.

22 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. We
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1 have come to our last panelist. He will be our
2 last.

3 MR. TANSEY: Hey, good evening.

4 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Good evening.

5 MR. TANSEY: My name is David Tansey.

6 I'm now a teacher at McKinley Tech High School.

7 I spent the previous seven years at Dunbar

8 Senior High School, both as a math teacher and

9 for five of those years as the Union rep. So I

10 can speak to some of the cases beyond my

11 classroom.

12 So at Dunbar, I learned the reality of

13 the crisis of teachers pretty quickly. By my

14 third year, I was the second-most senior math

15 teacher. And three years later, I realized I

16 had again, I outlived all but one other math

17 teacher. So the kids recognized this, my very

18 first year at Dunbar, I remember. One kid

19 exclaimed when I gave him some advice, he said,

20 "Why should I care what you think, you won't be

21 here next year?"

22 He wasn't right about me, but he was

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1 right about a lot of other teachers. Last year
2 -- this year, I don't know what the turnover is
3 immediately, but the year I left, something
4 like 70 percent of the staff Dunbar.

5 MS. WATTENBERG: Seven zero?

6 MR. TANSEY: Seven zero. So there are
7 a lot of causes of this. Some of it -- and
8 I'll speak especially to my early time at
9 Dunbar, is we had a lot of young teachers and
10 they were not properly prepped for the task at
11 hand and the stresses involved that both means
12 managing a classroom of kids with varied needs
13 at some of our schools like Ballou, where the
14 special ed population is past 40 percent. So
15 handling that in a concentration of a classroom
16 can be difficult teaching kids generally who
17 are, you know, behind grade level, et cetera.
18 It's a lot of work.

19 Some of it is pressure from state
20 accounting system, as I heard Laura speak to
21 earlier, the teachers who were in the testing
22 subjects, mainly English and math teachers who

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1 taught in the classroom were under a lot of
2 pressure to get those numbers up or else. And
3 one of those jobs, it was often the first-year,
4 second-year teacher who was placed there. So
5 they compounded that.

6 Some teachers left. Obviously, I'm
7 close with my colleagues and some people left
8 just because they didn't feel like they were
9 doing the right thing. Either they didn't have
10 the capacity to or the structures that were in
11 place that limited them from doing what they
12 felt was the right thing to do, made them feel
13 like they weren't really serving the proper
14 role as a teacher. I can give you two clear
15 examples of people who were really excellent
16 teachers who left because of that.

17 And then finally, I heard the term
18 "bullying" as I walked in, there was some
19 element of that. Like, it depends on what kind
20 of leadership you have, but there are times
21 where it's my way or the highway. And I know
22 one example, there was one person who reported

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1 to me of the teacher who showed me that they
2 had a 3.5 something before they took a two-week
3 break after a car accident and then the next
4 time they came back they were affected.

5 So that was obviously a shock to them
6 and it's not how you retain a teacher that had
7 been rated highly effective who had committed a
8 faux pas by your standard by taking off after
9 an accident.

10 And finally, I just wanted to say we
11 often hear of retention numbers shared.
12 Obviously, they primarily come from DCPS since
13 it's the largest LEA, but they're misleading
14 because I'm considered a retained highly
15 effective teacher even though I left Dunbar.
16 And Dunbar is the type of school that needs
17 teachers in highly effective, specifically,
18 highly effective in that kind of setting. And
19 when we say we retain them in the system, we're
20 not really being honest. And the average isn't
21 representative, but not all schools are like
22 our neighborhood high schools. Those are the

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1 neediest places. I would say our neighborhood
2 secondary -- I'm sorry, our middle schools are
3 next and then some parts more challenged
4 elementary. But the aggregate makes it seem
5 like we keep most of our people, it's an easy
6 number to manipulate. If you just don't give
7 them highly effective or effective a year
8 before they leave, that hasn't affected your
9 status. So that is some of the stress. And I
10 only heard part of the story, but how was I an
11 effective teacher or a highly effective teacher
12 for years and then somehow I became worse? And
13 that's definitely disingenuous. I've already
14 put in 110 percent. I can't do this and not
15 feel like I have support of my administration.

16 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. All
17 right, three-minute rounds. We're going to
18 start at the other end with Dr. Woodruff. Do
19 you have a question?

20 DR. WOODRUFF: I don't have a question,
21 but I'd like to say thank you for coming out
22 and sharing. It's something that a lot of us

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1 know that is going on, but we need constant
2 reminders so --

3 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Could you speak a
4 little louder?

5 DR. WOODRUFF: -- we know things that
6 are going on that can make a difference and
7 start the motion moving toward change so that a
8 lot of what was discussed today can end up with
9 positive results because that's what we need,
10 we need results that are going to impact our
11 children, that are going to impact our
12 community, our teachers and our administrators
13 in a positive way. And school closure is at
14 the top of that. If you are in an environment
15 where you feel you're coming to school every
16 day or to work every day and it's stressful,
17 you can't teach, you can't learn, you can't
18 administrate.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. WEEDON: I want to thank you all.
21 First, I'll pledge to use my role on the ESSA
22 Task Force to try to get some of this data.

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1 We've heard time and time again that the data
 2 is not there. The data is bad. I certainly
 3 believe that. So my pledge to you is that we
 4 will try to make the report card, make the
 5 other measures that we can work with as strong
 6 as they can.

7 But beyond that, I think just as a
 8 Board and as policymakers, we need open and
 9 transparent data. I want to thank Ms. Davis,
 10 for bringing up facilities. And as my
 11 colleagues know, I never miss an opportunity to
 12 talk about facilities. When a teacher is
 13 sweating to death, you can't teach. When you
 14 can't hear the teacher, you can't learn.

15 Far too often our facilities don't meet
 16 the basic requirements. And again, we don't
 17 have data around those. What are the acoustic
 18 levels in the classroom? What is the lighting?
 19 There are objective measures; we refuse to
 20 collect and publicize those.

21 The other thing I just wanted to touch
 22 upon around is we talked about a number of

1 different ways, but culture within the school.
2 And I think that comes from the leadership from
3 the teachers and filters down to the students.
4 And I'll commend Chancellor Wilson for his
5 recent efforts and lots of conversation around
6 implementing some new cultural programs in the
7 schools. I would like to see some data behind
8 those and some tangible goals.

9 For the last several years, we've had
10 annual chancellor initiatives. What were the
11 impacts? What were the cost of those
12 initiatives? Are they effective? And whatever
13 we can do to learn from the teacher experience,
14 what impact did those programs, those
15 initiatives have on the classrooms. And most
16 importantly, learning, we want to hear. So I
17 don't really have a question about it, but we
18 did hear you on these things and we will
19 continue to push and advocate for you.

20 MS. WILSON-PHELAN: I just want to say
21 thank you, also, for coming tonight.

22 MR. JONES: Thank you, Madame

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1 President. I have a couple of concerns. The
2 two teachers from Ballou are still here, the
3 parent and the other young lady that spoke
4 about some numbers in reference to Ballou. But
5 it's widely known, the media reports spoke this
6 last spring about the great success that we're
7 experiencing at Ballou, with 100 percent
8 college acceptance; 100 percent graduation
9 rates. And I could go on and on, but -- and
10 I'm not prepared to discredit the principal and
11 those reports yet, but we have raised a serious
12 flag of concerns. And I'd like you to speak to
13 that in a moment, if you will, but I also want
14 to speak to Ms. Davis' concern about the
15 achievement gap.

16 In 2011, I wrote a letter to the city
17 in reference to the achievement gap after the
18 then mayor spoke so highly about the graduation
19 rates and the improvement of our schools. And
20 I looked at the numbers and I said well, yeah,
21 you're progressing, but our boys of color are
22 still testing 25 percent lower than their white

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1 counterparts. And our girls of color are still
2 also not as -- though the achievement gap is
3 not as broad, about 15 percent at the time.
4 But if you look at those numbers today, we
5 haven't moved the needle much at all.

6 I'm just going to say this right here,
7 right now, we've got to get past "happy talk"
8 in this city. If we are going to move the
9 needle in education in those more brighter,
10 better gorgeous buildings, it's not about the
11 building or the four walls, it's about what
12 goes on inside those four walls.

13 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Yep.

14 MR. JONES: But I have a serious
15 concern about Ballou and I'm glad our council
16 member at large, Mr. White is here, so he can
17 hear it. But you've brought up the flag of
18 concern for me, after hearing all those reports
19 because I was one of those people cheering the
20 progress that was going on at the school. And
21 now I'm hearing that it may just be smoke in
22 mirrors. I hope not.

1 MS. BROKENBOROUGH: Yes, it is. It is.

2 MS. WATTENBERG: Thanks. I actually
3 wanted to pick up with what my colleague Mark
4 Jones has said about the happy talk because it
5 seems to me that when we're in a system, what
6 I'm hearing is where there is no
7 accountability. There's no school board.
8 There is not a newspaper that goes after it and
9 you combine that with the need for everybody to
10 have high scores so that everybody looks good,
11 you have a lot of problems.

12 And this Board, we don't have
13 governance or administrative authority over
14 DCPS schools or over the charter schools. We
15 do have the authority -- and I was just,
16 unfortunately, my computer left me, but I was
17 looking at omission and it includes providing
18 leadership in advocacy. I mean, that's really
19 where we can fit in.

20 Mr. Weedon has talked about the
21 transparency. I'm going to raise a few things
22 and then I want to perhaps, pose a question or

1 a challenge to the councilman. There are a
2 number of issues that have come up around
3 transparency; one, of course, we've heard all
4 about the turnover numbers. And I was aware of
5 some of those turnover numbers because I had
6 heard from Ms. Levy. I must say, I have never
7 heard this 70 percent number. It's shocking
8 enough that 33 percent is the average at the
9 high poverty schools, but 70 percent is just
10 shocking. And the idea that this is not well
11 known, it's staggering.

12 Another issue of transparency; I've
13 always heard lots of sort of complaints about
14 how impact worked. But the idea that a lot of
15 people are saying that it is systematically
16 used to bully people, now, again, I don't know
17 that that's true, but that deserves somebody
18 looking at it. We can't be in a system where
19 maybe that is true.

20 Climate numbers; those are numbers that
21 could be transparent. And as a couple of
22 people mentioned, possible climate indicators

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1 could go into the ESEA report card.
2 Eventually, perhaps the turnover numbers could
3 go into the report card. It's something that
4 the State Board recommended to OSSE, both of
5 those things. I know the task force will be
6 pushing that as well. So all we have to do is
7 convince OSSE and the mayor.

8 Another issue that hasn't come up so
9 much today because we've been focused on this
10 other issue that relates to transparency, is
11 the suspension issue. Again, it was in the
12 Washington Post. So here, people have said
13 suspensions are going down, down, down. Well,
14 it turns out the reporting of suspensions is
15 going down, down, down.

16 So I want to make a point here, which
17 is if you ask for a certain goal and then you
18 don't monitor at all how it's taking place and
19 you don't support people in implementing it,
20 you're going to get bad outcomes. And I think
21 on the suspension issue, there's really two bad
22 outcomes and we've heard them both. One is you

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1 have people pretending. Pretending that
2 they're not suspending people and they are.
3 But the other thing you have in a lot of
4 schools is you have an effort to stop the
5 suspensions, but not an effort to help the
6 schools figure out how to teach the students
7 who have the issues that are leading to the
8 suspensions.

9 I want to very quickly raise one
10 example around that, that will get to my
11 broader point, which is the University of
12 Chicago, as some of you may know, runs a big
13 research program and part of what it does is it
14 really goes to the school level to sort of see
15 how initiatives are being implemented. And in
16 Chicago, like D.C., had a proposal that
17 suspensions were going to go down to "x" level.
18 And so you know what? All the schools lowered
19 their suspension level to that level. But what
20 they went in and found out is in about half of
21 the schools, the achievement was up. Morale
22 was up. Climate was up. Achievement was up.

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1 Kids were coming to school and they were
2 learning. And in half of the schools, roughly,
3 achievement was down and morale was down
4 because they got the suspension number down,
5 but they didn't get the climate right. So they
6 found a shortcut to the number that didn't
7 solve the problem.

8 And it seems to me that in a high
9 accountability, data-driven system like we
10 have, we are really, really missing that
11 monitoring research, transparency piece that
12 has to be associated with it. And I think it's
13 a role that somehow the Board can play. I
14 think it's something the city council ought to
15 be interested in. And I just wonder if there's
16 a way that together we can figure out a way of
17 taking some of these issues and actually
18 commissioning serious reports on it. Whether
19 we can stand up, something like a University of
20 Chicago research center that would look at
21 these things systematically over time. Whether
22 there's a report that can come out on a regular

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1 basis that looks at these kinds of issues.
2 Maybe that's supplementary to what is going to
3 go in the ESEA report because we need so many
4 other sign-offs on that, but some of this ought
5 to be public record and I think we can insist
6 that it become public record, especially with
7 the support of the council and then we in the
8 council or somebody can publish it. And I
9 think that --

10 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you, Ms.
11 Wattenberg.

12 MS. WATTENBERG: -- is really a job.
13 And I thank you all so much for coming out.
14 And as others have said, especially the
15 teachers, for whom this is a bit of a risk.

16 MS. CARTER: Thank you all. I have no
17 further questions at this time, but I do
18 appreciate your comments tonight. And if I do
19 have any further questions, I will reach out to
20 you directly.

21 Your information is with the Board of
22 Ed, correct? The administration. Thank you.

1 MR. BATCHELOR: Thank you. Well, one,
2 I want to thank everybody who came out tonight,
3 including our panelists here at the table. I
4 think to my colleague, Ms. Wattenberg's point,
5 our authority, unfortunately, is very limited
6 in terms of direct oversight to some of these
7 issues, but she made an even more important
8 point in that our mission includes advocacy.
9 And that in the big bureaucracy that is
10 education, here in the District. The fact that
11 we are your only independently-elected
12 representatives means we need to take extra
13 seriously our independent voice. And I thank
14 my colleagues for indulging that mission today.

15 Your testimony will definitely make us
16 better advocates. Obviously, we need more info
17 and we need to hear other sides of the stories
18 to get the full picture and really make some
19 meaningful recommendations, but I think that
20 this was a very good start.

21 Very quickly, and I'm going to try to
22 do a very quick marathon here, Ms. Fuchs, you

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1 talked about some of the school-level
2 challenges and some of the District-level
3 challenges, but you also mentioned that you've
4 been at your school quite a while. And I think
5 we've talked about a lot of issues. I know a
6 lot of it has been you kind of rolling with the
7 punches to a certain degree. But could you
8 tell us very briefly, there had to have been
9 some reasons you stayed. What worked that we
10 could replicate, system-wide, that would help
11 our teachers stay and be as dedicated to our
12 students as you've been for the past 10 years?

13 MS. FUCHS: Really, I think it's kind
14 of blind luck. I've had five principals. And
15 my joke is I'll be there until they fire me.
16 Every year it gets real close. And I always
17 ask the question, am I going to get to be here
18 next year?

19 So I think a lot of it is just luck. I
20 mean, I believe in community-based teaching.
21 So that's why I'm not going to let DCPS's
22 initiatives push me away, but I'm also someone

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1 who has got sort of war-like mentality. I
2 mean, I like to fight. So I like to fight, but
3 by staying I'm leading that fight. Like,
4 they're trying to push me away and I'm refusing
5 to go.

6 So fortunately, I don't consider myself
7 a resister of DCPS, if anything, my principals
8 make a conscious choice not to do that, to
9 their credit. Five of them have not seen me
10 out the door. They have not done anything to
11 try to retain me, I've just been lucky where I
12 didn't get Dunbar's amazing principal; I got
13 Ron Brown. And if it had been the other way, I
14 might be sitting in another school, like I
15 don't know. So that was luck getting to stay.
16 I don't know. I mean, it's luck.

17 MR. BATCHELOR: Thank you. And my
18 final question is just a general one and we'll
19 do yes or no down the panel. Would these
20 issues get more attention around teacher
21 attention and disparaged teachers if these
22 disparaged teachers would concentrated in more

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1 affluent school communities.

2 (Chorus of yes.)

3 MR. BATCHELOR: Thank you.

4 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you.

5 MR. WEEDON: One thing. Maybe you can
6 request audits. Audits of records, grade
7 records and so on. Independent or whatever,
8 such as the ones that I was able to request.

9 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you. And
10 thank you all for your testimony. I would like
11 to say before you go that although the State
12 Board does not have authority over the hiring
13 or firing of teachers at D.C. Public or charter
14 schools, we know that keeping good teachers in
15 the classroom is vital to eliminating the
16 achievement gaps our students face.

17 I will ask the staff of the Board to
18 summarize all of your testimony that we heard
19 today and attach each individual testimony --
20 excuse me, I lost my place. And once the Board
21 has reviewed the summary, I will ask my
22 colleagues to approve sending it to the Council

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1 Committee on Education for inclusion in the
2 upcoming hearings. Thank you all for being
3 here and please keep us apprised for inclusion
4 in the upcoming hearings.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. DAVIS: Thank you.

7 **EVERY DAY COUNTS - TRUANCY TASK FORCE UPDATE**

8 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All right. Every
9 Day Counts Truancy Task Force. It is vital for
10 students to be in the classroom each and every
11 day. The Truancy Task Force Strategy is three-
12 fold.

13 The task force is to collect a report
14 on key data points: measure, analyze, and
15 review these data, monitor and craft
16 information-backed policies and response and
17 act.

18 Tonight, we are joined by three
19 panelists who will be providing an update on
20 the task force's measure, monitor and act
21 framework. Aurora Steinle, Senior Policy
22 Advisory for Equity and Opportunity, Office of

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1 the Deputy Mayor of Education; Andrea Allen,
2 Director of Student Attendance, D.C. Public
3 Schools, and Hedy Chang, Executive Director for
4 Attendance Works.

5 The panel will be presented as a group.

6 MS. STEINLE: I'll start. I've got the
7 slides.

8 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Okay. Go ahead
9 and present. Thank you.

10 MS. STEINLE: Okay. Great. I'm Aurora
11 Steinle; I'm with the Deputy Mayor of
12 Education's Office. I'm sorry that one of the
13 members of my panel has left due to the time,
14 but I am the only one of us, I think, that had
15 a specific ask of you all, actually. So I'm
16 glad that I could go ahead and present.

17 Several of the members of the Board had
18 the opportunity to participate in our meetings,
19 our ongoing task force meetings occur on a bi-
20 monthly basis. We welcome all participation.
21 We also have committees that dig in and do some
22 of the work together as well.

1 So today, I wanted focus in on what
2 we're thinking about for this next school year.
3 So I'm going to briefly talk about some of the
4 work we've been doing, but I'm not going to dig
5 deep on either some of the policy, the data
6 works and the things that we've spent time on
7 so far. I want to talk about what's new, in
8 part, because I would like to seek the help of
9 the Board in implementing that.

10 So I did start with a few background
11 slides. For some of you this will be very
12 familiar, but just to make sure that we're on
13 the same page of why we're talking about
14 attendance. Student attendance is a
15 significant challenge for all of our students,
16 citywide. So we do see some bright spots in
17 some schools that are really nailing it on
18 student attendance. They're doing a great job,
19 but on the whole, our student attendance is
20 something that's a challenge. Starting in the
21 early grades, particularly kindergarten when
22 there is a transition from noncompulsory to

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1 compulsory and then it improves a bit and you
2 see another sort of uptick in the transition to
3 sixth grade, higher and middle, and then quite
4 high in high school.

5 So there is a very significant jump, I
6 think it nearly triples between eighth and
7 ninth grade. So this is a challenge that is
8 really impacting a lot of our students in all
9 of our wards. So again, there is some
10 disparity across wards, but there's really not
11 a ward that has admirable attendance rates.

12 So the next thing to know, again, you
13 may be familiar with, but absenteeism is
14 associated with a number of negative
15 consequences in terms of student outcomes in
16 other city investments. So missing school in
17 early grades can predict struggling throughout
18 elementary school. By sixth grade, if you're
19 missing 10 percent of the school year, you're
20 at risk of dropping out in high school.

21 So it's one of those indicators that
22 not only tells you something about the present

1 moment, but can be very indicative of sort of
2 what's to come. And so we really see this as
3 something that if we get a hold on early, we
4 know there is going to be, if we improve it,
5 some positive consequences down the road. And
6 if we don't, some continued negative
7 consequences.

8 So what I would also like to highlight
9 is that absenteeism also has a disproportionate
10 impact on our at risk in disadvantaged youth.
11 So for our economically disadvantaged youth,
12 there are 2.3 times more likely to have been
13 truant than wealthier peers. Our students of
14 color are at higher risk of truancy and the
15 same for absenteeism. I can talk about the
16 difference. There is also disproportionate
17 impact on our homeless students and over-aged
18 students. So this is an issue that has a
19 disproportionate impact, which means we really
20 want to focus on the issue of equity.

21 The next slide, maybe I'll spend a
22 little more time. This is a really important

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1 slide. So when you look at the severity of
2 absenteeism, what we're talking about is we
3 know we have a lot of students who are meeting
4 the threshold for chronically absent. That
5 means that they're missing more than 10 percent
6 of their school year.

7 So about half of our students, from the
8 positive perspective, have satisfactory
9 attendance. Twenty-eight percent are at risk
10 of becoming chronically absent. So they're in
11 sort of a 5 percent up to 10 percent of their
12 school year is being missed. So we're worried
13 about them, but they're not crossing the
14 thresholds.

15 In about a quarter of our students are
16 either in the moderate or severer or profound
17 category. So what that tells us is that we
18 should be worried about the 28 percent and also
19 that we have about 10 percent of our students
20 that have really severe absenteeism. So this
21 probably isn't small stuff that needs to be
22 addressed. This is like, significant parts of

1 their school year. Something is causing them
2 to be not in their classroom.

3 So we'll circle back to this because as
4 we think about the level of severity, that's
5 usually important in how you think about what
6 the solution may be.

7 So again, I'm going to be pretty brief
8 on this, but to date, the Truancy Task Force,
9 which is the Every Day Task Force, which I'll
10 just briefly mention why we're doing that.
11 It's a shift from talking about just truancy,
12 which is unexcused absences, to talking about
13 chronic absenteeism as well, which is for
14 absences that may be excused. So you can
15 imagine we're still worried about a student's
16 attendance and impact on their academic
17 outcomes. If they're missing school because of
18 health reasons or other barriers that might be
19 excusable but are still causing them to be at
20 risk.

21 So that's the Truancy Task Force.

22 Again, we meet bi-monthly. Folks on the Board

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1 may be aware of this, but we have agencies from
2 education, the justice cluster, health
3 recovery, everybody together and we've been
4 focused on reviewing data and proving some of
5 the quality of the data.

6 So for instance, it came to light that
7 we didn't have a common definition of truancy.
8 So we're doing a lot of accidental apples to
9 oranges comparisons. And so we've standardized
10 that. We've worked on improving some policies
11 that govern attendance. We had a legislation
12 amendment to the Attendance and Accountability
13 Act that we worked on with counsel and with the
14 task force. Started down the road of making
15 some improvements in policy; a lot of room to
16 go. And we're also just coordinating agency
17 activities and investments. So because we
18 looked at that pie chart together with the task
19 force of the severity, we wind up with the
20 different investments that we make as a city in
21 those types of absenteeism and we identified
22 that we really could use more support in that

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1 very profound absence category.

2 So in the FY18 budget, there's an
3 increase in slots for Ace and Paths (ph), if
4 folks are familiar and also an expansion of the
5 Stand Up Show Out Program, which is a little
6 more in the at risk to just before
7 profound/moderate absenteeism, where some
8 lighter case management can be helpful.

9 So those are the types of thing we've
10 been working on. But the thing we've been
11 thinking about is what can we do differently?
12 We had set a target of improving attendance,
13 reducing absenteeism by one percent this last
14 quarter and two percent this upcoming school
15 year. We don't have final numbers yet, but we
16 actually don't anticipate making that target.
17 So we want to do not only anticipated goal, but
18 go a little above and beyond this next school
19 year to get us back on track and we think we've
20 laid some groundwork, but we want to be as
21 strategic in their focus from this next school
22 year.

1 So I'm getting to some of Hedy's slides
2 here. If you want to check out her work on
3 Attendance Works, she collaborates with school
4 districts and cities and jurisdictions all
5 across the country. She's a national expert.
6 We're fortunate to have her here with us today,
7 had a number of conversations that will
8 continue.

9 I'm just going to go to take one of her
10 slides and just focus in on it. This is the
11 way attendance works and it's in tiers. So
12 when I mentioned that there's different levels
13 of severity of absenteeism, there's also
14 different tiers of responses.

15 And she's turned this over into a file-
16 like shape where Tier 1 is what you can do for
17 everyone. These are things like the school
18 climate, positive relationships, common
19 messaging, incentives that recognize good
20 attendance. And the idea is that if you do
21 enough of Tier 1, you have fewer kids hopefully
22 that are reaching Tier 2.

1 By Tier 2, you probably need some
2 personalized outreach. There's probably some
3 planning that needs to happen and an ongoing
4 mentor relationship.

5 And then finally, by Tier 3, that's
6 where the most severe absenteeism, you're
7 possibly talking about coordinated interagency
8 responses. This could be child welfare
9 response. It could be other partners needed
10 under the table. So it's costlier and more
11 individualized as we go down, and so just given
12 the limited resources, we're really trying to
13 maximize the impact of Tier 1 and Tier 2 before
14 you get to Tier 3.

15 So I'm going to skip a slide ahead to
16 the slides that are specific to D.C. Hedy was
17 planning to present some information about
18 Grand Rapids, Michigan. You can find all this
19 on Attendance Works. They're a really good
20 model for us because like us, they also had
21 really high absenteeism rates, and they were
22 able, through a citywide effort and a lot of

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1 families, we have some myths about attendance
2 that we need to do a little myth-busting,
3 attendance adding up. It's very common for
4 families either to not have the information
5 they need about how many absences their student
6 has or to not be clear on how those absences
7 add up over time.

8 And then finally, there's no that many
9 incentives out there where everyone's saying,
10 oh, yeah, if I have great attendance this week,
11 this month, this semester, this is what's going
12 to happen for me or my family or my school.

13 So we're going to be continuing to do
14 the earl stepping up work around these three
15 components: the campaign, Ed Stats\, which is
16 really a version of when you look at data
17 together. And again, various members of
18 experience, but our push is going to be towards
19 being more action oriented. I think if you
20 look at some good data together, it's not
21 always clear on how agency behavior changes as
22 a result.

1 And then finally, we'll continue to
2 convene a taskforce and think about what are
3 the other policy and legislative tools we might
4 want to use.

5 Our goals, we kind of broadened --
6 we're planning to broaden some of our goals to
7 not just focus on the end result, which we want
8 to be reducing absenteeism. We're still
9 figuring out how we might focus that on
10 specific target populations. We're seeking
11 input from a number of different bodies,
12 including the cross-sector collaboration
13 taskforce and the Every Day Counts Task Force.

14 But we also want to set a few goals
15 that has to do with changing the community
16 awareness. This is more of the communication
17 side, and increasing the number of youth with
18 an adult mentor. I will say this is hard to
19 measure, but we have come back to that and
20 heard that again and again from families and
21 youth and from schools and from the national
22 researchers, having an adult who's checking on

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1 your attendance and who has a caring
2 relationship, is encouraging you to go to
3 school. So it's a difference-maker

4 So I don't want to dig too deep on the
5 messaging because I can talk through this but
6 you have it all in front of you. But in short,
7 we're trying to shift from a current level of
8 awareness and type of attitude and behavior to
9 a new state where we've raised awareness so
10 people actually understand what the impact is
11 of missing school, change their attitude from
12 it's not a big deal to actually it is kind of a
13 big deal and changing their behavior to
14 attendance being something they just don't
15 spend time thinking about and monitoring to
16 something that a lot of families are actively
17 thinking about and monitoring.

18 So we're still not quite ready for
19 prime time, but we've been thinking about these
20 attendance messages. The first one is
21 addressing the method. We often heard that the
22 absences do add up, the myth being that they

1 don't, it's just a couple days a month, it's no
2 big deal.

3 The second one is that everyone can
4 make a difference. As you can hear, this
5 message is actually more oriented towards
6 anyone who's youth-facing, be it a community
7 member, business leader, and then also our
8 agency staff who interact with youth and
9 families.

10 And the third message would be care,
11 and again, that's just going back to when there
12 are adults that care, students will likely show
13 up at school.

14 So we have a number of different
15 audiences that we're seeking, and there'll be a
16 little bit of nuance for each. It's not enough
17 to communicate to parents only when we're
18 talking about high schoolers absenteeism.
19 They're really making decisions for themselves.
20 It's not enough to just have a student message
21 when we know that family choices are often
22 impacting attendance in earlier grades.

1 We have a great website,
 2 www.attendance.dc.gov. We're going to continue
 3 to have that be a hub for resources as we roll
 4 them out. And so this last piece is -- I think
 5 this is the part where I ask for your help.

6 So as we focus on Tier 1 and Tier 2,
 7 it's going to be really important that we're --
 8 we'll develop messaging and materials and start
 9 to identify those incentives and supports we
 10 can offer, but not every school may need the
 11 same incentives. Not every school may have the
 12 same champions. There may be business leaders
 13 that are important in one community because
 14 they're currently incentivizing students to
 15 come to their business instead of attending
 16 school.

17 In another community, it may be a
 18 different issue and there may be a different
 19 set of stakeholders. Being in the State Board
 20 and being representatives of different areas in
 21 the city, I would love to see the Board support
 22 in taking the generic stuff that we developed

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1 and then really tailoring it to the different
2 parts of the city and the different schools
3 that you have concerns about.

4 And I know as we work on talking about
5 attendance data and attendance data becomes a
6 conversation through the school report cards
7 and other cases, there's going to be a lot of
8 ways of see how different schools in your wards
9 are doing and we want to be a part of helping
10 and supporting those schools.

11 In our focus, the taskforce, isn't as
12 much on what exactly the LEA does but how we,
13 as a city, are helping them do what they do and
14 how we're helping students and families. So
15 certainly we're talking to them about their
16 work. And I know there's interest in sort of
17 taking a more LEA-based approach as well,
18 possibly through the work of the cross-sector
19 collaboration taskforce. So we're excited
20 about that. But our focus right now and our
21 ask is really what can the city do, what are
22 the other possible messengers out there who

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1 aren't just the school staff. We want that.
2 There's a lot of other folks in the city who
3 could be talking to students and families.

4 So some examples of what our agencies
5 are thinking -- I know this is kind of a heads
6 up -- but Parks and Recreation, there are
7 conversations about them. They talked about
8 they're a great resource for incentives.

9 So they have fairs and they have pool
10 parties and they have all these fun things.
11 Why don't we connect those to our attendance
12 initiatives and using those rewards
13 strategically?

14 The public libraries have an excellent
15 selection through their Books From Birth
16 program and they're willing to push out our
17 messages through some of their reach there.
18 And then, of course, we're still thinking about
19 mentorship. We'd love to have -- there just
20 can't be enough youth to mentor. We're
21 thinking about how to work on that. And we're
22 not giving up or lessening our value that we

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1 place on the Tier 3 dimensions as programmatic
2 interventions. But we're -- we are looking at
3 the gap that we've had around Tier 1.

4 So with that, I'll take questions or if
5 anyone wants to volunteer for how they're going
6 to take this on in their ward, that would be
7 great.

8 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All right. We'll
9 just have a round of questions. Okay. We'll
10 start in the middle this time. Ms. Wattenberg.

11 MS. WATTENBERG: I'm actually let
12 Ashley ask questions.

13 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Okay, Ashley.

14 MS. CARTER: I just have a couple quick
15 questions. This is a topic that I actually
16 care a lot about. And you know, except for
17 specific circumstances, if you're not in
18 school, you're not learning.

19 I wanted to know, I know other states
20 have programs where there's a threshold a
21 specific student must meeting, a percentage of
22 attendance that they must hit to even pass a

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1 grade or to graduate. Is there a threshold in
2 D.C.?

3 MS. STEINLE: My understanding is that
4 I think that's an LEA-level policy at this
5 point. I don't believe there's attendance
6 threshold, but I can check that for graduation.
7 I'd have to ask OSSE, but I don't think that's
8 the case.

9 MS. CARTER: Okay.

10 MS. STEINLE: Individual LEAs may be
11 setting thresholds that I don't know about.

12 MS. CARTER: Okay. And then also,
13 homelessness specifically, that is an at-risk
14 group that -- and there are specific reasons
15 that go into that, why they are chronically
16 absent. Are there any special programs for our
17 at-risk group students such as our (inaudible)
18 and our rehabilitation programs for chronically
19 absent students that are currently being used
20 right now?

21 MS. STEINLE: Do you mean specific to
22 those populations or that might be impacting?

1 Because I'm thinking of like --

2 MS. CARTER: Well, both our at-risk
3 populations such as our homeless students,
4 because there are specific reasonings that
5 obviously tie into why they are chronically
6 absent, but also for our other chronically
7 absent students who may not be in part of the
8 at-risk category are in rehabilitation programs
9 that are currently being worked on right now.

10 MS. STEINLE: Yes. And some of the --
11 I can speak to some of the city-wide programs.
12 And then, of course, the individual LEAs may be
13 making investment that I can't speak to. But
14 one of them is the Stand Up Show Out Program
15 which is based on Check and Connect and is in
16 our public charter and in DCPS schools, and
17 we're excited they're going to be expanding to
18 high schoolers next year, which has been kind
19 of a place they hadn't been and some of the
20 same strategies around an adult checking,
21 connecting, and planning, which we think can
22 work in high schools as well. Probably some

1 tweaks needed too.

2 And of course, homeless students should
3 be hopefully on the radar. The liaison in
4 their school is administering those key
5 supports, but we still do see things like
6 transportation come up even when there
7 shouldn't -- should be a barrier. And
8 sometimes it seems like what we need to work on
9 is just connecting all the dots around some of
10 these students.

11 And I think one thing we've seen as a
12 best practice is that when you have some kind
13 of an early warning system where you're looking
14 at students maybe even before they hit five
15 unexcused absences, at which point the district
16 requires, the city requires a student support
17 team meeting to occur. Even before that, if
18 you know a student is homeless or you know a
19 student is at risk for other reasons, or they
20 just had poor attendance last year, there's
21 probably a reason to start the year with some
22 kind of planning around that and doesn't really

1 matter which category put you there. But that
2 can be found out by having a conversation at
3 the beginning of the school year. And that's
4 something we'd like to see more of.

5 MS. CARTER: And that's something that
6 we're doing not just with the student but
7 obviously with the parents and all of those
8 surrounding the student, teachers, making sure
9 that everyone, certainly the student's, aware.

10 Obviously, we talked about community
11 engagement. Parental engagement is number one.

12 MS. STEINLE: Yeah, that would be the
13 best practice. Right now, it's the requirement
14 that we know to exist is the required student
15 support team meeting, which parents are
16 recommended if not required to attend along
17 with other school staff.

18 MS. CARTER: Okay. Thank you.

19 MS. WATTENBERG: Thanks a lot. This is
20 very interesting. My question actually relates
21 to the past panels as well as this one, which
22 is we have as a goal lowering truancy way, way

1 down and raising attendance way, way up.

2 And so how do you -- and with the
3 attendance and chronic absenteeism now being a
4 part of what will be the ESEA score for all the
5 schools, presumably there will be more and more
6 pressure on schools to have good numbers.

7 So per the discussion that was in the
8 Washington Post today and the discussion that
9 was here earlier, how do you guys -- what is
10 your role or how do you sort of make sure that
11 what's going on in the schools is lowering the
12 numbers in the ways that we see here for the
13 purposes that we have that are helping?

14 How do you -- do you have a way of -- I
15 mean, do you go in and talk to other staff or
16 parents and make sure the numbers are --

17 MS. STEINLE: Yeah. I see the data
18 quality question as really one that we expect
19 is OSSE's role and I think that will be engaged
20 in that. They've had the opportunity to have
21 the daily attendance feed, which is daily, but
22 then it's verified every month.

1 I don't know -- I think that's more of
2 a quantitative sort of verification, not like
3 they're going around visiting schools.

4 But I would be interested to very well
5 have a conversation with OSSE about what it
6 means to continue the data quality on an
7 element of data that we know that there will be
8 an increased spotlight around.

9 MS. WATTENBERG: Well, I would highly
10 recommend that because that's exactly what was
11 in the Post article today. It talked about
12 schools turning over -- it was essentially
13 attendance day, but the people were -- it was
14 reversed. The people -- what was it -- that
15 they were in school when they were really out
16 is what was being reported. And I've heard
17 that in a number of different conversations.

18 So I think figuring that out and making
19 sure that it -- there is a real qualitative
20 check I just think it seems. So I leave it at
21 that.

22 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. Jones?

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1 MR. JONES: Thank you, Madame
2 President.

3 Homeless children, have you been to any
4 of the homeless shelters yourself?

5 MS. STEINLE: I have not.

6 MR. JONES: Okay. I want to commend
7 the mayor for offering free transportation for
8 the children. That helps. However, even the
9 worst parent will not put a small child on a
10 bus that they have to transfer two or three
11 times to get to school. And that's one of the
12 dilemmas in the homeless shelter. We talk
13 about D.C. General.

14 But what we don't talk about on New
15 York Avenue, every motel has 80 to 100 percent
16 occupancy of homeless children. That doesn't
17 include the hotels. And during hypothermia
18 season, even the exclusive hotels take them in.

19 So you have these families from all
20 over the city, not to mention Maryland and
21 Virginia. Transportation is one of the key
22 things to help those families get their

1 children to school. One of the answers is
2 maybe they need to subsidize the transportation
3 for those parents to get those children to
4 school.

5 I'm here to help you. I'll offer help.
6 I have other men and women in my ward who will
7 help. Sometimes it's a matter of knowing the
8 people in the community.

9 Spangling (ph), which is closed now,
10 had a big truancy issue. One of their -- and
11 absenteeism issues. One of it -- their
12 problems was the golf Course. They have a
13 cafeteria there, and the children loved the
14 food there. So they would just go and hang out
15 all day long until the principal -- Mr.
16 Washington said, "Mr. Jones, what can we do
17 about it?" I just simply went over there and I
18 talked to the people because I play golf there
19 and I know a lot of people there.

20 And I asked them. I said don't serve
21 these children. Do not serve them. And then I
22 asked some of the older gentlemen that go and

1 play cards. I say help me police it. And they
2 did it. And they changed. But the DME and the
3 administrators, you've got to get to know the
4 people in the communities that can do those
5 things.

6 Quite frankly, you're not going to be
7 able to do it. In some community you might be
8 able to, but in other communities, you won't.
9 There are communities I can't do it, but you
10 have to ID those stakeholders in those
11 respective communities that can do those
12 things.

13 But transportation is a big issue for
14 the homeless families. Find a way or consider
15 a way to talk to our legislative body or the
16 executive about transportation because that's
17 one of the biggest issues I see every day on
18 New York Avenue. Those children are going to
19 school late or not at all. And if a family
20 doesn't have the money to take that small child
21 to school -- and most of those children in
22 those homeless shelters are small children.

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1 They are elementary school children.
2 They have some high school children, but most
3 of them are elementary and middle school
4 children. They need transportation. That will
5 help tremendously.

6 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr.
7 Jones.

8 MS. STEINLE: I appreciate that, and I
9 added the transportation issue even for those
10 that are old enough to be riding the bus.
11 There are safe passage issues that go beyond
12 that, too. So transportation is a hot topic
13 attendance, and it's definitely on our radar.

14 MS. PHELAN-WILSON: Great. Thanks for
15 your time and for staying as late as you have.

16 I'm curious about whether you've
17 disaggregated the rate of truancy between
18 charters and DCPS, and if so, what is the
19 difference, if any?

20 MS. STEINLE: We have. Right now, we
21 report out on quarterly -- on truancy by
22 sector, and that's a part of the reporting that

1 classes are identified if the methodology
2 hadn't been the same. I don't want to misstate
3 the number, so what I can do is send you the --
4 the information is actually all public to you.

5 We post the quarterly reports on
6 attendance at dc.gov and it's the data tab. If
7 not, it's under Truancy Task Force Documents.

8 What we're hopeful is that we can
9 actually start looking at quarterly data around
10 chronic absenteeism. Right now, we look at
11 truancy and ISA, but at least that allows us to
12 look at the two sectors.

13 My general summary would be that there
14 wasn't too much good news in either sector.
15 But that -- and there was also some different
16 patterns by grade band, which is something else
17 to kind of look at when you see that, which
18 hopefully means that if one sector can teach us
19 something about what we do in one grade and
20 another can teach us something about what to do
21 in a different grade, it'd be ripe for some
22 crosspollination of ideas.

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1 MS. WILSON-PHELAN: I guess I would ask
2 the same thing related to specific schools.
3 I'm sure you've looked at whether there are
4 schools who are breaking prediction associated
5 with attendance and what you're doing to
6 capture what's happening at the schools that
7 are beating the odds.

8 MS. STEINLE: Yes. We had a few of
9 those schools come and speak to the taskforce.
10 I think it's been a bit. I think it was made
11 last fall. And then we've spotlighted a few
12 schools based on the data to see what they've
13 been doing.

14 What we've seen is usually it means
15 they have an explicit focus on attendance.
16 It's not half day by way of some other thing.
17 Although, school climate generally improving,
18 it's clear attendance will probably improve.
19 Those things are definitely related. But
20 usually the principal is actively thinking
21 about attendance.

22 In the same way that the taskforce
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1 looked at data and said, hmm, we know based on
2 every other school year before that there's
3 going to be a huge uptick in absenteeism, you
4 know, before a long weekend or after a long
5 weekend or on Fridays, we know these things, so
6 let's have, you know, celebrations on these
7 days.

8 Let's schedule some schedule school
9 pictures on those days. Like, take the things,
10 the tools you have and use them strategically.
11 And schools that are seeing results are being
12 really thoughtful about how they do that.

13 MS. WILSON-PHELAN: Thanks. And I also
14 wonder what you have learned about the role of
15 students actually feeling engaged, especially
16 in high school. And this relates directly to
17 the work at the high school, requirements
18 taskforce will be taking on and thinking about
19 what are some of the requirements themselves
20 are presenting a disincentive to students to
21 stay in school because they aren't things
22 they're most interest in.

1 They might be interested in a different
2 set of subject areas that aren't -- you can't
3 graduate if you don't pursue a very specific
4 and somewhat regimented set of credits in
5 Washington, D.C. So I'm wondering what you've
6 learned about student satisfaction and its role
7 in attendance.

8 MS. STEINLE: Yeah, so there definitely
9 is a role. When you said satisfaction, I think
10 maybe you said the word "engagement" which is
11 something we think about a lot because what I
12 have heard a lot of is that students --
13 sometimes this is a bit painful to hear, it's
14 painful to say it, but it is not said
15 infrequently, students don't feel like there is
16 an adult at this school who wants them there.
17 And so they don't feel that school has
18 something to offer to them, whether that's an
19 adult who wants them there or content that
20 engages them.

21 MS. WILSON-PHELAN: It's not just the
22 students. It's the parents, also.

1 FEMALE SPEAKER: I thought the
2 conversation was with students. So when we
3 hear that, it definitely makes us think a lot
4 about how the school environment can draw
5 students in and give them a reason to be there.

6 Just one thing I'll note is we had a
7 student design challenge last year. We're
8 actually having the next one next week on the
9 25th. Task force members have been invited and
10 I think a couple folks are planning to join us.

11 These are -- last year we did city-wide
12 teams. It was kind of a mix. It came from all
13 over the city. We paired you with different
14 citywide officials.

15 This year, because we didn't really
16 have an implementation path for the great ideas
17 that came out, which was really disappointing
18 to us and caused us to revise our thinking,
19 this year a school-based team city
20 implementation path because they'll be working
21 with their schools to implement the ideas they
22 come up with. So now we have a clear path with

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1 student voice in solving this problem.

2 And so these teens from Ballou,
3 Anacostia, Washington, Cardozo, Wilson and Paul
4 Public Charter School. And they'll be joined
5 by other SROs and then work task force join in
6 supervising kind of give some feedback once
7 they get to the point of the day where they're
8 --

9 MS. WILSON-PHELAN: You mean they're
10 designing solutions to --

11 MS. STEINLE: Yeah. The focus is on
12 absenteeism.

13 MS. WILSON-PHELAN: I just -- because I
14 looked through your packet, and I feel like --
15 I don't know if we're really getting at the
16 root cause, right?

17 I understand there's awareness
18 challenges and there's some low-hanging fruit
19 that's moved the needle a tiny bit, but I mean,
20 even the goal of three to five percent, there's
21 data out in LA about how just media campaigns
22 that are very targeted through mass mailings

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1 have improved attendance at least in college
2 classes that I'm sure is relevant and you all
3 have looked at.

4 But that is like -- after hearing what
5 all the teachers just said about environment
6 and that being a challenge and knowing that
7 kids are dropping out because they're just not
8 engaged, they're not interested, I mean,
9 there's a number -- I'm not trying to
10 oversimplify it, but it feels like we're
11 dancing around the edges of a massive issue
12 related to whether our schools are preparing
13 students in a way that's engaging for 21st
14 century.

15 And I guess that would be my parting
16 thought. Like, incentives to get a pass to
17 something or another might work once for one
18 student on occasion, but if they're chronically
19 absent, there's something fundamentally
20 happening there, and all the money that's going
21 into this, I wish it would be going toward
22 things that are, like, deep, deep, deeply root

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1 causes of the reasons we have truancy.

2 And I'm sure if there are two (ph) --
3 and I don't know enough about your work, but
4 that would be like my takeaway out of reading
5 the presentation.

6 MS. STEINLE: If I could respond to
7 that. So yes. And one thing I fear with this
8 presentation and I've become increasingly
9 conscious of as we start to put it out there is
10 it's not -- the campaign is not the thing in
11 itself and does not necessarily exist alone.
12 And the assumption is that we're doing the work
13 around poverty and around school quality that
14 needs to happen that's a lot deeper and a lot
15 more challenging that we have a lot of
16 investments already in.

17 But that doesn't mean that we leave
18 schools out to (inaudible) saying please attend
19 Attendance Matters and no one else in their
20 community is talking about it and we have maybe
21 some incentives that actually cut the other way
22 coming from what's surrounding the schools.

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1 And so I definitely -- this is not simple, and
2 this is not about messaging alone.

3 MR. WEEDON: So thank you for that
4 comment. I completely agree with my colleague.
5 I would love to be briefed on the deeper
6 efforts that you're doing. You know, hearing
7 about the efforts giveaway, Chipotle gift
8 cards, that's just there for five minutes.
9 That's not going to change behavior.

10 And I don't really have a question
11 here. It's really more just a comment again.
12 When we talk about the difference between
13 truancy and chronic absenteeism, I'm pretty
14 sure my daughter was in that latter category
15 last year.

16 But the way it gets reported back to me
17 as a parent, I get a report card, the quarterly
18 report card and it says my daughter missed
19 class, you know, six times this quarter, 12
20 times this quarter. So but yet she's doing
21 fine and her overall absence or unexcused
22 absence was zero.

1 So we're sending mixed messages with
2 the documents, with the report cards that we
3 get. Now, why was she absent so many times? I
4 kind of feel I shouldn't put this out --
5 because of sports. You know, she's on the
6 cross-country team. She's doing a club, Model
7 U.N., whatever it is. But within the school
8 and within the tracking system, she's reported
9 as not being in class.

10 So I think we need to really focus on
11 in-seat attendance and explain that, you know,
12 or be able to convey to parents that it's not
13 okay that we're missing class, but we are
14 sending mixed signals here when we're pulling
15 students out for a day-long cross-country meet,
16 when they're missing class for a field trip and
17 other things. What's okay and what's not?

18 I'd also say I think there's some data
19 problems. Like I said, my daughter, I think,
20 had zero or one absences last year. That's not
21 accurate. There were a couple extra days she
22 missed because she was either sick or for a

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1 visit to grandparents. That somehow got
2 excused that really shouldn't have been. So
3 there is a data problem coming back to my theme
4 of the night, the data I not accurate. We need
5 to do a better job of getting data.

6 And I would love to see data on a
7 truancy, un-chronic absenteeism and really
8 looking at what some of those chronic
9 absenteeism or chronic absences, what are the
10 causes of those. Are they legitimate
11 educational things or are they not?

12 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr.
13 Weedon.

14 DR. WOODRUFF: Yes. I'd like to thank
15 you for saying this. I do feel that we need to
16 dive deeper into the reason why truancy happens
17 or absenteeism is there or isn't being avoided
18 or maybe that there needs to be a different
19 breakdown of why children may be absent because
20 my colleague, I was just sharing with him that
21 I know of a person where their -- a family
22 where their child has been absent at least 25

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1 times, but it shows zero absents and basically
2 because of sports and that the school
3 acknowledges that they're that good, that
4 they're Olympic material. So they're allowing
5 this to happen.

6 So having categories is important to
7 you have a better idea of why it happens. Is
8 it because it's homelessness? Is it because
9 this individual child may be doing something
10 that is exceptional? And we need to have a
11 different category for that particular kid
12 because home schooling within school are
13 important, too. And if we have children that
14 are homeless that can't get here because of
15 transportation, well, is a teacher assigned to
16 go in to make sure that that child is getting
17 what they need?

18 We can give them that if we have
19 categories within a way to look at truancy and
20 absenteeism within the schools for reasons why.
21 So diving deeper would help us get to that.
22 But thank you for the information that you have

1 shared.

2 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. Batchelor.

3 MR. BATCHELOR: Thank you, Madame
4 President, and thank you for your patience and
5 for your presentation. Obviously, this issue
6 is very important to me as the students in my
7 ward bear the largest brunt.

8 I think I'll echo a little bit of what
9 my colleagues said earlier is that I think the
10 root cause of the issue and I think somewhere
11 where we can think deeper about this campaign
12 is that for a vast majority of those who are
13 chronically absent, there's no necessarily an
14 ignorance to the consequences of being absent.
15 The unfortunate part is that the absence is a
16 consequence to something else, right, something
17 deeper.

18 And I think that that -- this campaign
19 I think can be an integral of really pushing
20 our schools towards addressing some of those
21 issues. And I noticed school climate is one of
22 those things, right, making sure the students

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1 want to come to school, that they believe that
2 it's an inviting and productive place for them
3 to be.

4 And as much as I think we want to
5 encourage our LEAs and our individual schools
6 to look inward, I think it's also an issue,
7 again, also an important piece of this campaign
8 to encourage our schools to look outward. You
9 mentioned earlier, right, the Show Up Stand Out
10 grants that in a lot of schools in my ward are
11 doing phenomenal things, right?

12 You know, there's a concerted effort to
13 partner with nonprofits, to engage families,
14 right. And we're seeing the dividends to, you
15 know, to show for it, right. You know,
16 absenteeism is down, student satisfaction is
17 up. And so we need to encourage schools to
18 also look outward and build those partnerships
19 that will make a world of difference and
20 accomplish some of the things that, quite
21 honestly, both you and I know the state
22 government can't do, right. We can't do

1 everything.

2 But I think our biggest leverage is the
3 community around us. And so my hope is that
4 that's also an important part of this campaign.
5 My colleague, Mr. Jacobson, is really excited
6 about this campaign and, as chair of the
7 Outreach and Public Engagement Committee, it's
8 something I pledged to him that we would take
9 up and figure out both how us as individua
10 members but collectively as a board promote
11 this campaign, and like you said, individualize
12 its messaging to the communities we represent.

13 So we really look forward to working
14 with you and making sure that this plan really
15 touches the needs of all of our students and
16 all families. So thank you very much for being
17 here. Madame President, thank you.

18 MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madame
19 President, and thank you so much for being here
20 today. I want to commend Mayor Bowser and her
21 team for their laser focus on attendance from
22 including attendance metrics in the ESEA

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1 requirements. I think it's really, I think,
2 important and really creative the way that the
3 Superintendent Kang, went about that by not just
4 focusing on straight attendance numbers but on
5 improving existing conditions and getting
6 credit for growth within the attendance metric.
7 I think that's really terrific, and I
8 appreciate. And I hope you will bring that
9 back to your boss and her boss as well.

10 The Truancy Task Force -- and I want to
11 go back to my colleague, Ms. Wattenberg's,
12 question on data, and some of the other
13 colleagues hit on that as well.

14 The Truancy Task Force has a data
15 committee. Is that data committee developing
16 business rules on how schools need to report
17 attendance numbers?

18 MS. STEINLE: So historically, that
19 committee has been led by the Criminal Justice
20 Coordinating Council, which is sort of a
21 product of how the original Truancy Task Force
22 came to be and their leadership around specific

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1 truancy, which again, was focused on unexcused
2 absences.

3 As we now begin to incorporate
4 attendance into our citywide thinking and we're
5 moving our thinking towards the attendance and
6 towards chronic absenteeism and incorporating
7 it into things like our school accountability
8 framework, I think I anticipate that role. It
9 might be better positioned for OSSE.

10 I will say we had had the conversation
11 within the data committee around the truancy
12 definition. That was something we worked out
13 the business rules there, but then it was OSSE
14 that sort of made those into, you know,
15 official. They would have been only
16 implemented from the CJCC which isn't really
17 doing the analysis. The LEAs were passing on
18 that data and the CJCC is just kind of
19 collating it.

20 And so as we are now using metrics and
21 the same things that we would like to check in
22 on quarterly is the task force are something

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1 that's being used citywide, which is exciting.
2 I kind of think it will make sense at some
3 point pass the baton especially since we're not
4 just talking about truancy. We're talking
5 about in-seat attendance, which really falls
6 into the education camp, not the CJCC camp. So
7 that's something I can imagine evolving over
8 time.

9 But we've been kind of waiting,
10 watching, giving space for the ESEA process to
11 roll out, so we haven't had that conversation
12 yet with CJCC.

13 MR. JACOBSON: I encourage you to get
14 ahead of the curb on this, and I know that
15 you've got a lot of balls in the air and you're
16 working on this from a lot of different angles.
17 But getting those business rules in place and
18 getting them right is going to be really
19 important to have hard data so that we aren't
20 penalizing the wrong schools or reporting the
21 wrong schools on the attendance metric under
22 ESEA.

1 I just have a couple seconds left, but
2 what will a three-point improvement on
3 attendance from a 90 percent general attendance
4 rate to a 93 percent attendance rate, what does
5 that actually mean to our students?

6 MS. STEINLE: So one thing is just
7 we're actually trying to reduce absenteeism by
8 three percentage points. So our ISA is 90
9 percent on average, but our chronic absenteeism
10 rate is more like -- it's about a quarter of
11 students.

12 MR. JACOBSON: And you just want to
13 bring that down by three points to a fifth of
14 students --

15 MS. STEINLE: To --

16 MR. JACOBSON: -- give or take.

17 MS. STEINLE: Yes. That's correct.
18 And truancy's kind of lower than that. But
19 what data I have, I looked for students --

20 MR. JACOBSON: Like, what's the --
21 what's that mean at the end of the day? Like,
22 why was that goal picked and what do we think

1 that that number will do?

2 MS. STEINLE: Yeah, I think we were
3 trying to be modest in our initial -- or we
4 know we're still on kind of an onramp here and
5 some of the work that we're doing in
6 coordination and collaboration doesn't impact
7 students yet.

8 So we can change the definition of
9 truancy. That's helpful in how we have a
10 meaningful conversation about it. But that
11 actually is not going to change the impact
12 students day-to-day experience with their
13 school.

14 And so we know there's kind of an
15 onramp here and we looked at the improvements
16 that were made by other jurisdictions. The
17 example that I know Hedy was going to share
18 about with Grand Rapids, Michigan, they
19 actually didn't see improvement in their first
20 year of their initiative, but then they saw
21 this crazy jump, and I don't want to make our
22 figure look small, but I think it was over the

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1 course of two years they saw a 9 percent
2 reduction.

3 Their numbers were actually even higher
4 than ours, which is hard to do because we're
5 actually quite high. So we kind of looked
6 across at what other improvements have looked
7 like and we were hoping to set something that
8 we could be successful with.

9 At this point, three percent we
10 actually think is ambitious given how we see
11 attendance look more like this lately. Seeing
12 it go like this would be exciting. Thank you.

13 MS. WATTENBERG: Since I only asked a
14 quick question last time, I've been allowed to
15 ask one more quick question or make one quick
16 comment. As you have said and as everybody has
17 talked about, making a dent on the truancy and
18 chronic absenteeism, it's a combination of a
19 lot of big things and small things. And I just
20 want to throw one out that may be relevant.

21 It's my understanding -- maybe some
22 heads can nod back there if I'm right -- that

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1 under the new DCPS grading system, absence
2 really is no longer a leverage point for grade.
3 I'm getting nods.

4 So that is a cross-message, right, that
5 it used to be, you know, as when we grow up,
6 coming to school actually mattered, coming to
7 class actually mattered. But now, teachers
8 are, as I understand it, prevented really from
9 using that and the way the grading works, it
10 doesn't count. And that might be something to
11 look at.

12 And again, the main reason you want
13 kids to come is because they have something to
14 come to. So I don't want to suggest that
15 that's an answer, either, but these things work
16 together. And as you point out, the messages
17 need to connect. So it's something to keep in
18 mind.

19 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Thank you, Board
20 members. Anything else?

21 MS. STEINLE: Thank you.

22 I want to thank you for being here

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1 tonight. I appreciate all your hard work on
2 this issue and I've got a -- yes?

3 MS. STEINLE: No, I was just saying
4 thank you.

5 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: We had a -- well,
6 I was present at the presentation they did
7 earlier today on -- and we had more in-depth
8 concern that we went so long that we could not
9 get the input from the other people. But maybe
10 at a later date we can come back and find that
11 part again.

12 MS. STEINLE: Yeah, I think we can
13 because this is an ongoing conversation for
14 OSSE, so I know Hedy's going to be engaged with
15 us.

16 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: That will be
17 great. So that was a good part of the
18 presentation to see what they did in the other
19 cities. Okay.

20 So with no further business before the
21 Board, I would like to entertain a motion to
22 turn in.

1 MS. CARTER: So moved.

2 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Second?

3 DR. WOODRUFF: Second.

4 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All in favor?

5 (chorus of ayes.)

6 PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: All opposed? The
7 meeting is adjourned.

8 (Whereupon, at 8:13 p.m., the State Board
9 Public Meeting was adjourned.)

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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIPTION

I, GERVEL A. WATTS, the officer before whom the foregoing hearing was taken, do hereby certify that the testimony that appears in the foregoing pages was recorded by me and thereafter reduced to typewriting under my direction; that said proceedings is a true record of the proceedings; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this deposition was taken; and further, that I am not a relative or employee of any counsel or attorney employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

GERVEL A. WATTS

Notary Public in and for the
District of Columbia

My Commission expires: February 14, 2019