

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 530S
Washington, D.C. 20001

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR BOARD MEETING

5:37 p.m. to 10:19 p.m.
Wednesday, November 16, 2016

One Judiciary Square
441 4th Street, N.W., Room 530S
Washington, D.C.

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PRESENT :

BOARD MEMBERS :

JACK JACOBSON, PRESIDENT

RUTH WATTENBERG

KAREN WILLIAMS

SHANA YOUNG

JOHN HAYWORTH

MARK JONES

MARY LORD

JOE WEEDON

LAURA PHELAN (Via Phone)

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. JACOBSON: Good afternoon. The time is 5:37 p.m. on November 16th, 2016, and this public meeting of the District of Columbia State Board of Education is now called to order.

The roll will now be called to determine the presence of quorum. Mr. Hayworth, please call the roll.

MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Jacobson?

MR. JACOBSON: Present.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Williams?

MS. WILLIAMS: Present.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Lord?

MS. LORD: Present.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Wilson-Phelan?

(No response heard)

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Wilson-Phelan?

(No response heard)

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Wattenberg?

MS. WATTENBERG: Present.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Anderson?

(No response heard)

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Anderson?

(No response heard)

MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Jones?

MR. JONES: Here.

MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Weedon?

MR. WEEDON: Present.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Jolly?

(No response heard)

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Jolly? Ms. Hall?

(No response heard)

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MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Hall?

(No response heard)

MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Dorosin?

MR. DOROSIN: Here.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you so much. My understanding is that Board Member Wilson-Phelan is in Denver and will be calling in for a vote. Board Members Jolly and Anderson will not be in attendance this evening.

A quorum has been determined, and the state board will proceed now with the business portion of our meeting. Members, we have a draft agenda before us. Are there corrections or additions?

(No response heard)

MR. JACOBSON: Hearing none, I would entertain a motion to approve the agenda.

MS. WILLIAMS: So moved.

MR. JACOBSON: Moved by Vice President Williams. Is there a second?

MS. LORD: Second.

MR. JACOBSON: Second by Ms. Lord. The motion being properly moved and seconded, I will ask the yeas and nays. All in favor please say aye.

GROUP: Aye.

MR. JACOBSON: Any opposed?

(No response heard)

MR. JACOBSON: The motion is approved.

Next on our agenda is the approval of the

minutes from our November 2nd working session. Are there corrections or additions to the minutes?

(No response heard)

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

MR. WEEDON: So moved.

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

MS. WILLIAMS: Second.

MR. JACOBSON: Second by Vice President Williams. The motion being properly moved and seconded, I'll ask the yeas and nays. All in favor, please say aye.

GROUP: Aye.

MR. JACOBSON: Any opposed?

(No response heard)

MR. JACOBSON: The motion is approved.

Good evening, my name is Jack Jacobson and I am president and Ward 2 representative of the State Board of Education. On behalf of the members of the District of Columbia State Board of Education, I want to welcome our guests and our viewing public to our Wednesday, November 16th, 2016 public meeting.

The state board typically holds its regularly scheduled meetings on the third Wednesday of every month in the old council chambers here at 441 4th Street, Northwest.

Tonight, I want to begin with a few words about the future of our beloved city and country. A week ago yesterday, voters across the country

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cast their ballots for offices at the local, state and national level. The results of those elections were not what many in the district wanted or expected.

I want to be clear to the public that the state board remains committed to promoting equity and achievement in all of our public schools. The election has shown us that supporting and protecting all of our students is more important today than at any other time in recent memory. We will not stop fighting for our children, period.

As elected officials, we will work with the mayor and our local agencies to protect homeless and immigrant families; to combat bullying of all of our students and to stand up to bigotry and hatred. We will aid and support our diversity across the nation's capitol.

We will begin our meeting tonight with a vote to promulgate regulations related to student residency. Our current system is unwieldy and puts our schools in the position of investigating their families in a way that can seriously affect the ability of a school to be a welcoming place.

The new regulations will not only ease the burden on families, but also, streamline the investigatory and review process. The state board is also continuing our work on a new school accountability system. Tonight, we have six panels of individuals that will be sharing their thoughts on three major topic areas.

First: The weight of testing. Our

current system overwhelmingly emphasizes test results. We are hearing that this focus on testing has had harmful effects on our schools. The OSSE discussion drafts adjust the new total weight of the tests to be 80 percent. The State Board Response memo suggests it should be much lower. We want to hear how the current structure has affected their schools and what residents think the weight on testing should be.

The weight of growth is second in relation to -- Second is the weight of growth in relation to proficiencies. Rather than only holding schools accountable for reaching specific proficiency levels, ESSA offers the opportunity for D.C. to reward schools for the progress students achieve each year.

We must determine the appropriate balance between students meeting college and career readiness standards and their educational growth. Tonight, we will hear from the community members and experts what the appropriate balance should be.

Finally, on safety engagement and environment indicators, the state board believes that it is important for all students, teachers and parents to feel welcome in their schools. This relates to many factors including equity, facilities, school discipline, attendance, bullying, parent engagement, teacher turnover, student re-enrollment and the like. We will hear what factors we should consider when assessing our schools.

If you are interested in learning more about ESSA and its potential for district students, please visit our web site at SBOE.dc.gov/ESSA. There, you will find a wealth of information about our work.

And before we move to public comment, I would like to invite Shana Young, the chief of staff at the Office of the State Superintendent of Education to provide opening remarks on behalf of the superintendent, who will be testifying before the Council Committee on Education this evening. Ms. Young?

MS. YOUNG: Thank you. Good evening.

Superintendent King sends her regrets and wishes she could be here, but as Mr. Jacobson said, she is testifying in front of the council hearing on services for students with disabilities.

We do appreciate being able to be here tonight and our ongoing partnership with the State Board of Education, particularly around ESSA and our ability to service students of Washington, D.C., and look forward to hearing the testimony and discussions tonight. We're also looking forward to presenting our residency regulations to the board. Thanks again.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you so much, Ms. Young.

Public comment period will begin now. This is not for the ESSA witnesses. This is our general public comment. The state board welcomes public participation in activities under our

authority. At every public meeting, we begin with testimony from public witnesses on education related matters.

If you are a member of the public and would like to speak at a future public meeting, please contact our staff at SBOE@dc.gov, or by calling (202) 741-0888.

Tonight, Ms. Adele Brown has joined us to speak about education, generally. Ms. Brown, would you come to the table, if you're in attendance?

(No response heard)

MR. JACOBSON: With that, we will close our public comment period and move to residency regulations for a quick vote before we move on to our ESSA conversation.

Before we begin our discussion on residency regulations, our Ward 1 colleague, Laura Wilson-Phelan, has requested to participate in the discussion and vote via telephone, as she is out of town. In order to do so, the board must vote to approve her electronic participation. We will do so by consent.

Members, is there objection to allowing Ms. Wilson-Phelan to participate by telephone?

(No response heard)

MR. JACOBSON: Hearing none, the request is approved. Our executive director is getting her on the telephone, and we'll indicate when she is part of the conversation.

Tonight, the State Board of Education will consider a resolution that will allow the

state superintendent of education to send new regulations that amend Chapter 50, Residency Verification for Public Schools and Public Charter Schools of Title 5, Subtitle A of the D.C. Municipal Regulations.

These regulations have not been updated since 2008, and the current regulatory framework simply does not meet the needs of our families or our schools. Mr. Hayworth, would you read the resolution? And bear with us. It is a bit lengthy. And I want to thank, in the meantime, our colleague, Mary Lord, our at-large member, for her edits to the resolution.

MS. LORD: Let me just say, subject and verb must agree. (Laughs)

MR. JACOBSON: We always count on you to have a keen eye.

MS. LORD: Otherwise, lots of parents would be enrolling in D.C. public schools (Laughter) and D.C. public charter schools.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you. Mr. Hayworth?

MR. HAYWORTH: State Board of Education Resolution to approve the promulgation of proposed residency rulemaking, SR16-7, whereas District of Columbia law requires State Board of Education approval of rules for residency verification:

Whereas to enroll a student in a District of Columbia public or public charter school, a parent, guardian or other primary caregiver is required to provide the school with original documents to prove district residency, including

the Office of the State of Superintendent of Education's residency verification form; supporting documentation as set forth in D.C. Code 38-309, and other primary caregiver documentation as applicable.

Whereas the current regulatory framework -- excuse me. The current regulatory framework for residency verification was last updated in 2008, and the education landscape in the district has changed since then, including the dramatic expansion of pre-K programs; whereas the current regulatory framework lacks clarity, particularly around the basic; a definition of residency and for custody situations.

Whereas there is an opportunity to improve residency verification by reducing burdensome practices, while making sure seats for district schools are first available to district residents.

Whereas the state superintendent issued an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking on September 8th, 2016, which intended to reduce burdens, lift barriers and improve clarity for both local education agencies and families in the residency verification process, as well as to ensure a rigorous process that discourages fraud.

Whereas the state superintendent solicited feedback on the advanced notice of proposed rulemaking during the public comment period open from September 8th, 2016 through October 26th, 2016, including receiving comments from the public and local education agencies

during engagement sessions at the Office of the State Superintendent on September 22nd, October 11th and October 18th, 2016, and written feedback from various education stakeholders across the district.

Whereas, the state superintendent and members of the State Board of Education have engaged in an extensive period of public engagement, including receiving testimony from the public and from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education regarding the proposed residency rules at a public meeting held on October 26, 2016, as well as working sessions held on October 5th and November 2nd, 2016.

Whereas members of the State Board of Education and the public underscored the need for more ways to identify fraud, other than through the tip hotline; reduced burdens for families and local education agencies, and augment protections for homeless, undocumented and adult students.

Whereas the state superintendent has thoroughly considered and amended the proposed rule based on the comments received, and therefore, sets forth proposed rulemaking residency rulemaking that includes the following:

A two-part test for residency which includes establishing a physical presence in the district and submission of valid and proper documentation; protections for vulnerable populations, including students experiencing homelessness; undocumented students; adult students; wards of the district and minor

parents; residency determinations in various formal and informal custodial situations; option of an efficient and streamlined residency verification for K through 12 students that meets the annual submission requirements, but allows district agencies to file on behalf of parents; a three-part test for when the student's residency may be based on other primary caregiver's residency; authority for OSSE to monitor the residency verification process, to offer further protections; guidelines for the enrollment and re-enrollment of non-resident students; detailed requirements around the investigation of a non-resident student, and two venues to obtain a final administrative decision on finding of non-residency.

Whereas the State Board of Education has reviewed the elements of the proposed residency rulemaking and finds that they embody the state board's commitment to balancing the ease of verification with ensuring that district students have first access to seats in district schools.

Now therefore, be it resolved that the state board advises that the state superintendent promulgate proposed and final rulemaking that includes the elements of residency rules as proposed in this resolution.

Provided that substantive changes are made to the final rulemaking, the regulations will require further review and action by the state board.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Hayworth.

Is there a motion on the resolution?

MR. WEEDON: So moved.

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

MS. WATTENBERG: Second.

MR. JACOBSON: Second by Ms. Wattenberg. Is there discussion on the resolution?

Ms. Lord, our at-large member.

MS. LORD: Thank you, Mr. President.

This proposed -- the resolution marks a very significant advance for those of us who have expressed everything from surprise to outrage at the numbers of cars parked in front of our schools without state plates.

We have improved our residency verification requirements over the years, but one of the major holes that we did not see has been plugged; and that specifically is the nature of our families. We have students who have families who are divorced or separated by time and space. They may end up living with a grandparent at one point. And this brings certainty for our children about where they can go to school, and I think that's a significant advance in and of itself.

More importantly, there are some significant protections for students who may be experiencing homelessness, and that can be a multiple experience. So just as you get settled, you're supposed to verify your residency, which is impossible to do. Significant protections for our undocumented residents.

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So in that sense, we move forward with a lot more juice and a lot more certainty, and we also unburden schools. So we're taking some of the burden off of the families and the schools. We're improving and tightening up our ability to verify residency, and there have been some significant changes since this board last was asked to approve these rules; to wit, the advent of NIEER Universal Preschool and pre-kindergarten.

There is no other neighboring jurisdiction that offers such significant early childhood education. The temptation to take advantage of that must be very great. I know it would be, had I had that opportunity.

And so I just want to convey my thanks to OSSE for working through this with us, and with a variety of stakeholders. I am still troubled by the lack of certainty around enforcement and investigation. That remains one of the major question marks. I don't think we should or could ask schools to be the cop as well as the teachers.

But that is still one of the areas that I hope we will see improvement on as the weeks and months move forward. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms. Lord. Mr. Weedon?

MR. WEEDON: Thank you. I'd like to start by thanking OSSE for all of the work on this. I think we've come a long way, and I think we have a much better system in place moving

forward, or will have, moving forward, than we do now.

I agree with much of what my colleague, my at-large colleague just said, and I'm not going to repeat the sentiment in the interest of time.

I do want to point out that the state board does not have jurisdiction over the documents that are used to verify residency, and I urge the City Council to take action in the new year to update those documents and make sure that they're not -- cannot be easily utilized to get residency, either in district or in boundary for a school where there is a high demand.

The example that I've come back to time and time again, driver's licenses combined with a utility bill or a lease can be used to prove residency. My driver's license, which is unexpired, was issued in 2012. So it's four years old.

I could have easily moved from that address, not updated my driver's license, print a lease offline and utilize that to prove residency. I could also have a utility bill from a property that I own but don't reside at, and use that to prove residency in boundary for a school that's more desirable than the one that I live in.

So we need to make sure that we tighten that element, and that's on the council to do, and I look forward to working with the council to tighten up those documents to ensure that we have

a system that meets the need of our residents across the ward.

MR. JACOBSON: Okay.

MR. WEEDON: And across the city.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Weedon.
Ms. Wattenberg, from Ward 3?

MS. WATTENBERG: Thank you.

I also really just want to repeat much of what has been said, so I will be super brief. But I really do want to thank OSSE. I think you guys were wonderful about talking to us up front and working through with us the need to simultaneously make this less burdensome for families, and simultaneously secure in terms of making sure that its residents are using the schools. And I think you guys did a great job and you worked well with us, and we appreciate it.

The two points I want to make; one are, I totally agree with Joe, and I hope that you guys will be going to the City Council, and that we can support you in making sure adequate documentation -- the right kind of documents are used.

And secondly, one of the things that's now in there which is terrific is that parents who choose to go this route will be far less burdened than in the past, because they will be able to establish their residency simply by allowing the district's tax agency to indicate that taxes have been paid here, thereby freeing them up from producing a lot of documents.

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And the one thing I would hope, and I know you were thinking about this, was that you would only have to do that. If you did that, it would travel with your child through all of their schools, as long as they were in D.C., as opposed to having to renew this at every level. And I hope that that's something that will still happen.

And with that, thank you very, very much. And Shana, thanks to you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms. Wattenberg. Additional comments from board members?

(No response heard)

MR. JACOBSON: Hearing none, I would like to move to a vote on this resolution. Mr. Hayworth, could you please call the roll?

MR. HAYWORTH: The vote is on approval of SR16-7.

(Coughing - Mr. Hayworth excuses himself)

MR. HAYWORTH: State Board of Education Resolution to approve promulgation of proposed residency rulemaking.

Mr. Jacobson?

MR. JACOBSON: Aye.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Williams?

MS. WILLIAMS: Aye.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Lord?

MS. LORD: Aye.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Wilson-Phelan?

MS. WILSON-PHELAN: Aye.

MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Wattenberg?

MS. WATTENBERG: Aye.

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MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Anderson?
(No response heard)
MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Anderson?
(No response heard)
MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Jones?
MR. JONES: Yes.
MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Weedon?
MR. WEEDON: Yes.
MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Jolly?
(No response heard)
MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Jolly?
(No response heard)
MR. JACOBSON: Ms. Hall?
(No response heard)
MR. JACOBSON: Ms. Hall?
(No response heard)
MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Dorosin?
MR. DOROSIN: Yes.
MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. President, the
resolution is adopted.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you.

And thank you to our friends in OSSE for working with us through this process. We look forward to the final outcome, and if you need our help with counsel, please reach out.

The Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, as we will refer to it this evening, uses the words "meaningful consultation" to describe the outreach and engagement necessary to develop a new statewide accountability plan that will truly make a difference for students.

Parents, teachers, principals and our

students must be involved not only in the development of the plan, but also, should be at the very heart of every decision that we make.

Tonight, we are joined by a host of community members and education advocates who are eager to participate in our process. I want to thank them all for being here tonight, and I will ask them to help us get more people involved; to tell their neighbors, your students, your friends, your colleagues that the state board wants to hear from them.

Each of our panelists will have five minutes to provide their testimony, followed by a round of questions from board members. I would ask witnesses who have not already done so, to please email a written version of your testimony to sboe@dc.gov. Again, anyone with written testimony can submit it by email at sboe@dc.gov, so that we can add it to our official record.

Witnesses, please note that you must use your microphones when you speak. To activate your microphone, hit the button at the base and a green light will come on. The same button deactivates your microphone when you're not speaking.

You will also see on the upper right side of the witness table, a timer. And there's also one over at our staff table. Since we have so many witnesses this evening, we will ask you to do your best to adhere to the five minutes you're each allotted. The light will be green for the first four and a half minutes, turn yellow the

last 30 seconds, and will turn red after five minutes have elapsed.

Our first panel can come down. It will be Caryn Ernst, a Ward 6 resident; Losia Nyankale, a parent; Jeff Schmidt, a Ward 3 resident -- thank you, Mr. Schmidt; Suzanne Wells, a DCPS parent.

Ms. Wattenberg, would you mind if we filled the table with --

(Discussion off the record)

MR. JACOBSON: Valerie Jablow, a DCPS parent; Elizabeth Davis from the Washington Teachers Union. Let's start with Ms. Wells and move down the line if that's --

(Discussion off the record)

MR. JACOBSON: Let's start with Ms. Davis and just move the other way. So pleased to see you here, Ms. Davis with the Washington Teachers Union, and you can begin when you're ready.

MS. DAVIS: Thank you. I'm Elizabeth Davis, president of the Teachers Union, a 4,800 member organization, and I want to thank you for convening this meeting to talk about this very important issue.

So on the issue of the weight of test scores, it probably comes as no surprise that the Teachers Union regularly hears from teachers who are frustrated on the current session with testing. They tell us that this is -- overemphasis on testing is doing real damage to teaching and learning in their schools and in their classrooms.

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Parents and educators alike have consistently spoken out against the obsession with testing and the negative impact it's having on our children and the public education system. We must all remember that students are more than a test score. This overemphasis on testing and test scores is stressing out students, teachers and families.

Our members most frequently remind themselves, as well as their students, that there are things that are far more important than test scores, especially when it comes to producing well-rounded students capable of excelling in a global world. This obsession with test scores has led to a narrowing of the curriculum, and in many cases, a focus on reading and math instruction at the expense of other important subjects such as art, music and physical education.

The failed test and punish accountability system created by the No Child Left Behind Act has discouraged educational innovation, immortalized teachers, and most importantly, failed to address the needs of children, particularly our most disadvantaged students. And there is ample evidence showing that an overemphasis on standardized testing and test prep affects children emotionally and physically, leading to anxiety, frustration, low self-esteem, headaches and other physical ailments. And this needs to stop.

We're hopeful that the ESSA Act will

effectively lend the test and punish accountability system ushered in by No Child Left Behind, giving schools and educators the latitude they need to teach our children, and not simply require them to prepare students to take tests. It's essential that we put testing and test scores in perspective as one among many measures of a child's ability and progress, and focus instead on improving curriculum and ensuring that teachers and schools get the support and resources they need to give our children a well-rounded, rigorous but relevant education.

On the subject of weight given to relationship of proficiency, far too often we dismiss and overlook the outstanding work being done by our cities' teachers, schools and students by relying on a proficiency model that fails to recognize their achievement. It's a model that we often use to penalize and punish schools and teachers, and it discourages our students.

Under No Child Left Behind, schools were given credit for the percentage of students achieving the proficiency level, regardless of how far students progressed to get to proficiency. In recent years, policy discussions about school and teacher accountability, however, are expanding the proficient view of achievement by recognizing that some students have much farther to go to reach proficiency, even though it remained and should remain the minimum target for all students.

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But many educational policymakers are looking to ways to measure academic growth with growth models. A growth model provides a method for measuring the amount of academic progress each student makes between two points in time. That's very important, particularly as it relates to measuring the effectiveness of high poverty schools where a large percentage of the students often enter school already behind who have their peers who have greater home and community advantages.

ESSA provides an opportunity to recognize the progress that students and schools are making through the implementation of more useful and much fairer growth models. Under such a model, if students begin the school year well below proficiency but make above-average strides, the school, as well as student and teachers will be credited for that growth.

On the subject of qualitative indicators of quality, the importance of school climate to education can not be understated. We often take it for granted that our schools are warm and welcoming environments for students and parents, but this is not always the case. It's critical that we do what we can to make our school safe and nurturing havens for children, where they can focus on learning.

I would add that this welcoming environment should extend to teachers and other staff, as well. Most of all, we must work to ensure that our school buildings are healthy and

well maintained, and that the school environment is one conducive to learning. Fair and effective student discipline codes that minimize classroom disruptions are key to ensuring that our teachers have the environment they need to be effective.

It's a sad reality that a good deal of our school system's teacher turnover is directly tied to teacher frustration with ineffective school discipline policies. DCPS should take advantage of the ESSA provision that allows for funds to develop feedback mechanisms to improve a school's climate and culture, including through student-parent and educator support surveys.

The Washington Teachers Union is committed to joining with elected leaders, school administrators, parents and the community to continue to advocate for neighborhood schools that are safe, welcoming places where teachers and school staff are well prepared and supported; where schools have engaged in curricula that include project-based learning, the arts, music, physical education, social studies, civics, science, technology, engineering and math fields and career and technical education that connect to neighborhood pre-kindergarten programs, and that offer wraparound services to meet the social, emotional and health needs of students.

These are all essential elements in shaping a welcoming school environment where children and adults want to be, and where student success is a priority. Thank you for your time and attention to this issue, and I'm prepared to

answer any questions you might have.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms. Davis. Mr. Schmidt?

MR. SCHMIDT: Good evening. I am Jeff Schmidt, a D.C. resident and author of *Disciplined Minds*, a book about education. My daughter attended public school here in Washington, D.C. from grades K through 12 and is now a beginning student at the University of Maryland, College PARCC.

I'm here today to ask you to stop your academic racial profiling of the children of Washington, D.C. As you know, you set lower proficiency expectations for black students than for white students in the final years of the No Child Left Behind law. Please promise not to do that again in the proficiency targets that you are setting under the new law, the Every Student Succeeds Act.

It is okay to have a lower end of year proficiency expectation for a student because the student begins the year with a very low proficiency, but not simply because the student is black. How would you explain to a student that you are putting her into a low proficiency expectation group because she is black?

It would be easy to find a way to set unprejudiced proficiency expectations that are consistent with ESSA regulations, but only if you have the will to do so. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education would need to establish a working group open to all D.C.

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stakeholders to recommend a plan for equitable proficiency targets.

OSSE's ESSA stakeholder meetings and webinars did not address the issue of academic racial profiling, but rather focused on accountability measures. I have raised this issue with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, and they have expressed absolutely no interest in it.

It is obvious that they are planning to establish a system of academic racial profiling, so it is up to you, the Board of Education, to call for an equitable plan. Will you please direct OSSE to establish a working group of stakeholders to recommend a proficiency target plan that doesn't involve academic racial profiling?

Such a plan would probably also solve the problem of educational triage where schools focus attention disproportionately on students who are on the cusp of advancing from non-proficient to proficient.

Similarly, it would solve the big problem that the schools don't make much effort to improve the proficiency of students who are already somewhat proficient. For example, it looks like the board is getting ready to approve a plan under which schools would have absolutely no incentive to advance students from proficiency level 4 to level 5, even though students who perform at level 5 can gain admission to top-rated universities.

And of course, I will be happy to answer any of your questions.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you so much, Mr. Schmidt. Ms. Wells? Sorry.

MS. WELLS: No, I'll come back.

MR. JACOBSON: (Laughs) Ms. Jablow?

MS. JABLOW: Good evening. I am Valerie Jablow, parent of two DCPS students. OSSE's proposed model for school accountability gives PARCC scores an 80 percent weight. For all of the reasons that Ruth Wattenberg wrote in her November 3rd letter to Board Chair Jacobson, this is a bad idea.

Here's yet another reason. Students take tests, not the schools. Right now, OSSE combines scores of different tests from more than 80,000 different students to arrive at a school score for each school. Given the close correlation of test scores to income and the lack of socio economic diversity in our city schools, this exercise best measures school demographics; not how well each school is helping any of those 80,000 students.

Furthermore, different tests are used at the same grade without this being reported out explicitly and separately. So when 7th grade students at basic and latin middle schools take a basic PARCC math test, while seventh graders at my DSPC middle school take an advanced math test, guess which schools will have higher test scores and look better on the My School DC web site? And guess how DSPC modernization priority is

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affected?

These are all real ramifications of how we use standardized testing in D.C., and have absolutely nothing to do with assessing the quality of our children's education. Even parents cannot use these tests. This year, as in years past, I did not receive any test scores for one of my children and got the other child's scores more than six months after the tests were completed.

Who is going to follow up now, half a year later, and find out what the teachers at those schools did or didn't do, and what my children need or don't need, and what those schools and their staff need or don't need? And yet, tests that have no relation to any of those things, which actually do affect school quality, will be used to judge my school as well as its adult employees at an 80 percent weight.

Perhaps worst of all, OSSE's proposed model doesn't just use my children for non-pedagogical ends. It also omits important aspects of school quality, including teacher retention and absenteeism, training level of teachers and the effects of student mobility at each school and available supports including test taking infrastructure.

My PTA, for instance, has spent more than \$50,000 in less than three years on school computers. Tough luck for other students and teachers whose schools lack functional technology on testing day and don't have such good

fundraising.

To paraphrase a U.S. Senator, if this is going to be a time of accountability, we must first put responsibility for the perverted incarnation of accountability that is standardized testing where it belongs; not at the feet of our children and their schools, but at the feet of powerful companies, their associated political donors and school privatization promoters who have deep monetary interests in pushing standardized tests as stand-ins for true public accountability, all the while harassing children, teachers and principals into compliance and pretending the result enables school choice.

The fact that we need to know how our public schools are doing does not absolve our city of the grave sin committed against more than 80,000 of our children annually by presuming that a fake score created by the city agency for each school furthers the education of even one of those children or provides meaningful data for parents, teachers or administrators.

Please, stop using our children to further adult ends with these tests and ensure true accountability of our public schools. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you so much. Now, Ms. Wells?

MS. WELLS: Thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening on how the D.C. public schools are going to evaluate school quality under the Every Student Succeeds Act. The Act

provides us a welcomed opportunity to make meaningful changes in how school quality is assessed.

In D.C., with our ultra-choice culture, how schools are evaluated is very important to many parents making decisions on where to send their children. And as the saying goes, what gets measured gets done, so how schools are evaluated can have profound consequences.

In June, representatives from the State Board of Education came to the monthly meeting of the Capitol Hill Public Schools Parent organization. At that meeting, parents shared their ideas on what they think makes a great school. You may be surprised, but not a single parent at the meeting said that high test scores made a great school.

In fact, parents expressed concern that their children are being tested too much, and it comes at the expense of a well-rounded academically challenging educational experience. Parents wanted to see testing used by teachers to assess students so the teacher could better target the areas where a student needed to improve, rather than testing them primarily for the purpose of evaluating an entire school or evaluating teachers.

When parents were asked what made a great school, they spoke to issues that relate to the school climate and culture. Is there trust between the principal and the teachers? Do students feel welcomed and excited about their

school?

Are the parents encouraged to be involved with the school? Does the school offer a challenging curriculum in arts, music, science, history, foreign language, physical education and library studies? Does the school do a good job creating a social emotional climate that promotes conflict resolution, bullying prevention and social, emotional learning?

And how does the school work to support its most vulnerable students; the students who are homeless, those whose parents are getting divorced, those with parents who are incarcerated or have substance abuse problems?

I would like to give a specific example of the issue of measuring a school by test scores versus measuring growth. At the Elliott Hine Middle School where my daughter attends, the test scores from last year were very low, with few 7th graders scoring proficient in either reading or math. The reality is that many of the Elliott Hine students started at Ellicott Hine with limited reading and math skills.

For Elliott Hine to be judged primarily based on test scores discounts the efforts of the Elliott Hine teachers, because the learning levels of their students are primarily ones they inherited and not ones they created. It would seem measuring growth in these students' test scores would be a far fairer measure at this school.

In closing, I'd like to provide some

specific suggestions for OSSE to consider as it decides how to measure school quality. I encourage OSSE to place the lowest weight Every Student Succeeds Act on test scores to allow student growth to play a large role in the weighting of test scores, and to place a larger weight on school climate and culture and work to identify ways to gather objective data on student, teacher, principal and parent satisfaction. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you so much, Ms. Wells. We will now do a five minute round of questions. Board members will have five minutes each. In the meantime, as you're preparing your questions, let the record reflect that our student representative, Ms. Hall, has joined us. So, thank you so very much.

Do board members have questions of the witnesses? We'll start with Mr. Weedon, then Mr. Jones.

MR. WEEDON: Thank you. Thank you all for being here tonight. I'd just like to respond to Valerie. We've talked. I haven't received my PARCC scores yet for my daughter, as well. It's not an excuse that they haven't been mailed home, but you can go to your school and they can access the sled system available through OSSE, and get those, and get those printed to you.

And I'd say that to any parent who has yet to receive those scores. We need to do a better job of getting them in the parents' hands, and this really leads to my first question,

probably to you, Ms. Davis.

How are the teachers using the PARCC scores? Are they getting them in a timely manner, and are they being utilized for further instruction?

MS. DAVIS: I'm glad to hear the process by which you were able to get the results. I will share that with our teachers. And they are not getting them in a timely manner. We get complaints, often. We're still getting complaints from teachers who are not able to have the results from school to school. It varies.

But having the time to even meet with colleagues or their peers to determine how the test scores will inform their instruction, they simply do not have that time. The new initiative, which has been rolled out in D.C. public schools called LEAP has consumed planning time, collaboration time for teachers, authentic collaboration, I should say.

But mandated collaboration where teachers meet in the morning is one stab that's from school to school. However, collaboration, time to sit together with colleagues and determine the outcome of the tests, how they could use it to shape their -- and inform their instruction, they simply do not have the time to do that while in school.

MR. WEEDON: Thank you. And that opens up a whole other can of worms about the amount of time that students are being -- amount of time that's being used for test prep; the amount of

time that's being used for testing itself, not just with PARCC, but with all of the other tests.

And again, the board has called on OSSE before. Let's do a true analysis of that and let's get the data. I don't think anybody truly knows what's going on in our schools, and we need to know that.

Suzanne, I know our daughters go to school together. The board has heard me talk about Elliott Hine and the challenges there for years. And what you said about the survey and the culture is so self-evident when you're in the schools. You see the students learning. You see the growth. But because of the test results, parents don't trust.

What in your opinion, can we do? What are the specific measures that you would like to see us use, whether it's in ESSA or the school report card that can better engage parents and the community to support their schools?

MS. WELLS: I think some form of a satisfaction survey can be done at schools, and do the survey from multiple perspectives; from students, from teachers, from principal and from parents. I think these type -- I mean, we've done these types of surveys. It's not hard to do. And I think that can give a much fuller picture either of problems at the school or how things are going well at the school.

MR. WEEDON: Thank you. And then the last point that I'll make, and Valerie, you brought this up; computer access. If students

are computer illiterate, they can't succeed on the test. They need to be able to type. They need to be able to not think about typing to get the thoughts and ideas out. And I really appreciate you bringing that up tonight. And with that, that will be all of my time.

MS. DAVIS: I just want to add, Mr. Weedon, that we did share with Superintendent King, a sample of a school climate indicator that could be used that digs deeper than some of the ones that we've used in the past. And of course, when Suzanne mentioned the individuals that would be take part in this survey, students, teachers, parents, the survey digs deeper, and you'll probably hear more about it from a colleague who is here, who will talk about that.

And I'm certainly hopeful that the system, OSSE and DCPS will take a look at that school climate indicator as one that would certainly get to the root of a lot of the issues and go well below the surface. Basically, it would shape them in a way that teachers would not feel intimidated about speaking honestly about conditions that exist in your schools. So I'm hoping that we'll have further discussion about that, because it is quite important.

MR. WEEDON: Yeah. No, I appreciate that, and thank you. I know that's on our agenda later from a couple of the witnesses, so we'll hold my questions, at least on that, for later.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Weedon.
Mr. Jones?

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. President.

MR. JACOBSON: And the floor.

MR. JONES: Thank you all for testifying today. My concern here is, I'm interested in seeing policy meet practical solutions, and too often in this city, it just doesn't happen.

And a couple of areas that President Davis, you suggested, and Ms. Jablow, I want to speak to you in reference to the computers, but my main focus is on the wraparound services and our homeless children in this city, and how this policy can support them and their education endeavors.

Too often, we're blind to what's going on. And I will say I have been, but of late, the last couple of years, I have spent some time following the homeless shelters and the children in our schools, and as you all know, we have homeless children not only in a number of locations in the city, but also in Maryland.

And on any given day, I would encourage you to travel those routes, and you'll see those homeless children, first of all, going to school late. Secondly, I know many of them don't have access to technology and computers.

In one homeless shelter in this city, there are two computers. But there are no chairs. They have to stand up and use the computers in the homeless shelter. And in this specific shelter, there are in excess of 400 children in this one shelter.

So, what I want to ask you all, because

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we have all the anecdotal examples and we talk about policy, and I don't have the answer. You all are deep in it. You're living it. I want to hear what you have to say, Ms. Davis and the other panelists on what we should consider, so we can have our policy meet up with solutions that are practical, that will create some true outcomes for our children.

MS. DAVIS: And I'm glad that you mentioned the number of homeless children that report to our schools each day. I'm really not aware that we have over 2,500 students reporting to public schools each day that are coming from shelters.

And for any policy that excludes poverty issues and the wraparound services that these students need, not only the students that come from shelters, but students that are in low income communities; to ignore the wraparound services that are needed to support students and schools; to make it easier for teachers to provide the opportunities in their classroom so that students are not focusing on clothing and food and some of the basic needs that we don't even think about from day to day.

And one of the reasons why the union advocates so strongly for community schools is because the community school addressed this issue in a very powerful way. And we had an opportunity two years ago to sponsor a tour of community schools in Baltimore that -- low performing schools that complete turnarounds;

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community schools, because they provided the wraparound services that students needed.

They had the partnerships. Families were in the building all day. They had courses for parents, and they served their ESL populations very well. And it's a model that we can look to, and I'm so happy to see that we decided to expand the number of community schools we have in D.C. It's not happening fast enough for me, however.

But all of the schools need to focus on wraparound services, nurses -- and I mention nurses because there has been recent talk about cutting the number of school nurses or reducing the amount of time, which in my opinion, is absurd. But focusing on those wraparound services when we talk about curriculum and instruction is critical.

MR. JONES: Yes. Do any of the other panelists want to speak to that in the next 35 seconds?

(No response heard)

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Jones. Ms. Lord and then Ms. Wattenberg.

MS. LORD: First of all, thank you all for being here. Terrific turnout, particularly from our teachers, our parents and our involved community members. So this, and I think what our members of Congress had in mind when they approved the replacement for No Child Left Behind, we really are in a great place to shape the next generation of school reform. And this is where it begins.

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I'd like to start with just exploring for a moment, the alternative measures. We spend a lot of time on test prep. The reality is, is that the only thing that is required is about 11 hours worth of testing. It's probably even less now, for the PARCC exam at the end of the year.

So that's something that is internal to the various schools systems or the charter schools, and that seems to me something that is fixable and addressable. But how do we encourage schools to do the kinds of things that President Davis talked about; the project-based learning, the career awareness, the arts and the science and the technology that has been sort of squeezed out of the curriculum over the course of No Child Left Behind?

Would social, emotional measures get there? What kinds of things would be proxies for the safety of a school or the health of a school? Some people have suggested measuring chronic absenteeism. But that to me, seems a very poor measure, and I'd sort of like to hear all four of you discuss what we might consider in terms of like school welcoming healthy climate.

MS. WELLS: I'll start. Well, I think that the whole idea of doing satisfaction surveys is certainly one way to get at that. Looking at measures like teacher retention, student retention from you know, year to year within the school -- those are some things that I think that start to get at it. But I think ultimately, it would be doing some type of satisfaction surveys,

would be the best way to get at it.

MS. LORD: As part of the state administered tests. So it would be kind of administered to all.

MS. WELLS: I think it would be available to all. I don't know if it would be part of the state administered tests. I think it would be an opportunity for everyone to take a satisfaction survey.

MS. LORD: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

I think if you can come up with ways in which we don't punish our schools in their assessments, that that would be very good. And I mean, the current regime, and pretty much any regime that has computerized tests is going to be punishing.

It's going to be punishing for children who can't type well. It's going to be punishing for schools that don't have enough computers for kids to practice. And that's why my school has all those computers; to practice, as well as execution.

There is an aspect of how these tests are used that is extremely punishing, whether it is in these single scores that appear on the My School D.C. web site or in how we talk about performance. We talk about schools as if they're racehorses, and I think that we need to dial that down eight notches, because schools aren't racehorses. They are public institutions.

We don't talk about our courts this way. We don't talk about high performance courts. We

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don't talk about high performance legislatures, but yet, we talk about our schools this way. So I think we -- just the sort of way we see our schools needs to change, but this is a huge undertaking, because nationally, of course, there are many jurisdictions that use PARCC or some other form of PARCC; whatever it is.

So I'm not sure how you might undertake that, but here in D.C., at least, if you can decouple the annual testing from sort of the work that goes on on a daily basis, however you can do that, it would be extremely valuable, in my opinion, because I think it was Ms. Davis who referred to kids being very stressed.

I can tell you the kids at my daughter's middle school are extraordinarily stressed, and it's November. It's November, and they're stressed already. So what are the stakes going to be in springtime, when they actually do take the tests?

MR. SCHMIDT: Well, I think we have to make a clear distinction between testing and test prep. We do need testing, but the real problem for the educational process is the inordinate amount of time spent on test prep.

I think test prep should be banned, actually, altogether. When I went to elementary school, we had an annual test. There was absolutely no test prep. And that's the way it is in the elite private schools in Washington, D.C.

So I'd say find a way to ban test prep,

but certainly, go ahead with the 11 or fewer hours that you mentioned, Mary Lord, of the PARCC exam. We do need that, and we do need to publish the scores, and we do need to publish the scores of subgroups. We can't go back to hiding that which was done before No Child Left Behind. You know what I'm talking about. Right?

(No response heard)

MR. SCHMIDT: And secondly, I would say a good measure for a good school is parent participation. My daughter went to Alice Diehl Middle School and Woodrow Wilson High School, and those are top rated DCPS schools, and there is a tremendous amount of parent participation.

MS. LORD: As an experienced teacher of 40 years, highly effective for all 40, I might add, I do know that when teachers are allowed to teach the content that the test takes care of it. So test prep becomes unnecessary. And it's really ironic that we acknowledge that students learn in different -- in multiple ways, yet we use one measure; that one measure of assessing what they learn.

We talk about the multiple intelligences, but we use a pen and paper or computer-based test for convenience. There are school districts, Washington State, that have been using various ways of measuring student growth and academic achievement for years, successfully, before your exhibits.

But to do so requires more work; requires more teacher support. It requires professional

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development, time, which some school districts are simply not interested in doing, because the focus is not truly on the student, but it's on making us shining examples of success. The test score.

And so we miss the mark by focusing our attention on that as opposed to when students are learning, how they learn and the ways they learn, and to ensure that they are successful learners, no matter what -- how they come to us and what mechanism they use to learn best.

So actually, we've got to get over the notion of wanting everything fast and convenient, and focus on what is working. Schools that are able to measure student success in so many different ways exist in Washington, D.C., but are they acknowledged for it? No. In some ways, they're punished.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms. Lord. Ms. Wattenberg?

MS. WATTENBERG: Yeah. So I want to start by saying, so many things were raised. I have so many questions and I have so few minutes. So I'm going to try to cover new ground and also ask some old ones.

But first, I want to start with Jeff, because you said something that I certainly have no idea about, and I wanted to ask you about it; this idea that there's academic racial profiling. And I wonder what you're talking about.

MR. SCHMIDT: Well in a way, it's shocking that you don't know about that. As I

said, the schools in the final years of the No Child Left Behind law, set lower proficiency -- lower end of year proficiency expectations for black students than for white students.

And on the second page of my written testimony, which all of you have, you will see an example of that from the school that my daughter attended, Woodrow Wilson High School --

MS. WATTENBERG: All right, let me try to interrupt you, because I think -- and maybe somebody -- maybe our representative from OSSE can confirm this. I think that was under the original rules of No Child Left Behind with the AMAOs, or whatever, and that that has not been part of our system; and that it is not required in the new ESSA law, and that there is nobody who would want to do that.

MR. SCHMIDT: Of course it's not required. That's why I'm here to ask you not to do it again.

MS. WATTENBERG: Yeah. No, and I --
(Simultaneous discussion)

MR. SCHMIDT: And also --

MS. WATTENBERG: It's not part of the proposal. That's what I'm saying.

MR. SCHMIDT: All of the indications are that that's the way that the Office of the State Superintendent of Education is going to go. They're preparing to do that. I've raised the question with them recently, six times.

I talked, for example, to Jesse Harteis, who is a deputy chief of staff at OSSE, and I

asked her outright, will you please promise not to do this again? And she was very direct. She said no. She's not going to make that promise.

And every indication I get is that they are going to recommend to you a system in which there are lower end of your proficiency expectations for black students than for white students.

MS. WATTENBERG: Well, thank you for raising that. I have not seen that in the proposal. We will -- speaking for myself, we will keep an eye out on that. My understanding is that was part of the original No Child Left Behind, and I have not heard anybody raise it, and I certainly agree with you that it should not be in there.

MR. SCHMIDT: It wasn't part of the original. The excerpt on the second page, the table that all of you have is not from the original No Child Left Behind. It is from the No Child Left Behind law waiver that you got Arne Duncan to approve. And you can see it covers the years 2012 through 2017. So it's not the original No Child Left Behind.

MS. WATTENBERG: We will look into it. Let me -- thank you.

(Discussion off the record)

MS. WATTENBERG: Okay. A question to everybody: Everybody talked about how tests alone are inadequate to show what's going on in the schools. What -- and we talked about some proxies for environment. I wonder if anybody has

ideas about appropriate ways, useful ways to encourage schools not to narrow the curriculum.

Liz Davis talked about one of the effects of the reading and math testing as the primary means of holding schools accountable. We need schools and teachers to narrow the curriculum away from social studies, science, arts and so on, and just to math and reading.

And I wonder if people have ideas about that. One thought that we had been -- that was proposed to us that we have talked about is asking for schools to -- or putting a minimum amount of minutes per week that you'd have to spend on these different topics, on these different subjects, and then maybe have it audited.

It's very imperfect, because self reports of that sort might not do the trick, but I wonder if other people have any other ideas.

MS. WELLS: I would like to respond to that first. I actually think that would be the wrong way to go. I think that we just put more pressure on teachers, unnecessarily. And I think the simplest way to do this is to put less weight on the test scores. There's so much weight put on the test scores and teacher's evaluations are so linked to them, that of course they spend so much time on test prep, because they're worried about it, and we measure everything by it.

If you don't measure everything by it, then I think you will see more confidence in teachers and schools and being able to have very

well rounded curriculums and know that their students will do well on this test.

MS. WATTENBERG: Thank you. Any other thoughts on that?

MS. JABLOW: I would love to see on any of the city web sites that talk about schools, that list the schools in a comparative sense and they have their test scores, I would like to see something about not just the demographics of the student body or the test scores from one year to the next, but -- and/or what curriculum they have, but what the students themselves say, what the teachers say; something that shows the activity that goes on within the four walls of each of those buildings.

Right now, those web sites are pretty much you know, catalogs of test scores and never graphics. And I don't know how anyone is to choose a school that way. My kids went to their inbound school, and my son chose the high school he wanted to go to primarily on the basis of where his friends were going.

So, I don't know how informed other people are, but I know that if I were looking at other schools, I would want something that was larger than that.

MS. DAVIS: Yes, I'm reflecting on a session, one of our contract negotiation sessions on which two elementary principals sat. Both of them had similar student populations, but we asked them one day to write on the chalkboard or whatever board we had, their schedule; the

schedule for their students.

And one basically had a full day, two hours of reading, two hours of math, no electives, no science, social studies, writing. The other one somehow managed to develop a schedule for all students in that school to have art and music, time in the library. And the difference in the test scores proved that the one with the focus on test, as Suzanne mentioned, basically failed the students year after year. Year after year.

And it's a no-brainer that a well-rounded curriculum is what our students need. And Suzanne wrapped it up in one short statement: Less focus on tests and more on content instruction, a well-rounded curriculum. And that's not a new story. And the research has pointed to that.

And when you look at students who are in some of the highest performing schools in the nation and the curriculum; take a look at the curriculum the student is offered. And one of the reasons why, Valerie, on the web site that this is not information, because the test is the focus, is one reason that -- one of the reasons why parents find it so difficult to choose a school. They want to see what subjects are offered. And having bits and pieces of science taught by a teacher that is not certified to teach it, is not the answer, either.

MS. WATTENBERG: One last question for Valerie, which is, you mentioned that the low

test scores, I guess, from Hine led to -- had an effect on the modernization schedule.

MS. JABLOW: So right now, within the formula for determining prioritization of modernizations in DCPS, there is a bit about you know, enrollment and performance. So the performance, again, it's this loaded word. I wish we just would never use it in regard to schools, because they're not actors on a stage.

But that is, in fact, one of the things that's considered in terms of, wow, are we going to bump this school up to have a modernization now, or what are we going to do? I think I --

MS. WATTENBERG: In other words, the rating system --

MS. JABLOW: Right.

MS. WATTENBERG: -- that OSSE uses has an effect on what the school district --

MS. JABLOW: Absolutely.

MS. WATTENBERG: -- does in terms of the school.

(Simultaneous discussion)

MS. JABLOW: Yeah, absolutely. And DCPS.

MS. WATTENBERG: And that's something really important for us to keep in mind is --

MS. JABLOW: I have no idea --

MS. WATTENBERG: -- and it's not just the consequences we have, it's the consequences that other people may use with those scores.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms. Wattenberg? Any additional questions from board members? Mr. Dorosin?

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MR. DOROSIN: Hi. My name is Alex. I'm from Woodrow Wilson High School, and -- is the mic on? Hello? Get closer? All right.

So, I have a question for President Davis specifically pertaining to an incident I had at my school that I think was actually pretty widespread. So last year, I took Calculus BC, and I was surprised when I went into the PARCC and I learned that I would be taking a geometry test.

And I was even more surprised when I learned that my Calculus BC teacher would be graded on how I performed on that geometry test. So I would -- and this was an issue that was present in that classroom for -- I think every single student had to take that geometry test, despite the fact that they were all in Calculus BC.

And I was just curious whether you had any complaints about that from teachers, and if you did, what you think could be done to address that.

MS. DAVIS: Yes, we did. And of course, teachers are not really enthusiastic about asking the union to intervene in matters such as that, because they're fearful of retaliation. That's a reality. But we did get some concerns from your school about that.

We addressed it directly with your principal at first, but when we did not get any traction there, we decided to address it with the Chief of Schools. We have not -- that issue is

still in the pipeline for further discussion, because it is unfair to the students, number one, and certainly unfair to the teacher, because his or her evaluation is going to be impacted by a subject for which she or he is not certified; but at the same time, have not had time to either teach or plan for, for the course. So yes, that issue is a current issue right now, that it's in the pipeline for arbitration.

MR. JACOBSON: If there are no other questions for board members, I have just a really -- I'm sorry?

(Discussion off the record)

MR. JACOBSON: Unfortunately, we cannot have another round, as we have still got 20 more witnesses to go through, unfortunately. But I will yield you my remaining time.

Ms. Davis, has the teacher's union put together any sort of accountability framework that teachers think would work? We happen to be members of NASBE, the National Association of State Boards of Education, and I think it was last year at our meeting, we were presented different accountability scenarios.

And one of them was designed by teachers, and it was just fascinating. And I'm wondering if the Washington Teacher's Union has undertaken a similar exercise? Because I think it would be really helpful in helping us understand from a teacher's perspective what really is important and what really works, and what really should be counted.

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MS. DAVIS: You're absolutely right. And we have not completed it, but we have a task force of teachers testing an accountability task force that is working on schools that every D.C. deserves. One of the things that they are discovering is missing is the voice of parents, and they want to invite parents to their meetings before completing this document, because the parents in their discussions, they've discovered that a lot of the issues that are being raised by their students' parents are directly aligned with the issues that they want to focus on.

So that is something that is in progress, and of course, we are hoping to have it completed before the end of the year. And of course, members of the State Board of Education will be some of the first individuals to receive a draft of that.

MR. JACOBSON: We would love to see that, and certainly, direct it to all of us, but particularly Ms. Wattenberg who is heading up our action on this issue. With that, I'll yield my remaining time to Mr. Jones from Ward 5.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. President, but that was the exact question I was going to ask, actually. So thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Well, wonderful. Save a little time. So Ms. Williams as a round of five minute questions now.

MS. WILLIAMS: I just have one question for you, Ms. Davis. Is it possible that some of us get invited to your meetings, or would that be

intrusive?

MS. DAVIS: No, it would not. All of our meetings are open to the public.

MS. WILLIAMS: Okay.

MS. DAVIS: So we would welcome any of you. As a matter of fact, at one of our teacher leaders meeting this Saturday, I believe two council members, if I'm not mistaken, I think one of the board members from the state board was invited. But those meetings are always open to anyone who wants to come up, as long as they're not interrupting what is recommended.

MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you;

MR. JACOBSON: Ms. Hall? Anything?

MS. HALL: No.

MR. JACOBSON: With that, thank you so very much for your time, and we'll call up the next panel. Caryn Ernst has arrived? Please come down and take the farthest seat on your right, please. Losia Nyankale? I apologize for all of these names that I'm going to butcher. You can take the seat next to Ms. Ernst. Sarah Baldauf and Erich Martel.

And then we'll start on the right with Ms. Ernst and go down the line. A reminder: The timer is in the upper right corner, and we look forward to your testimony. Thank you so very much.

MS. ERNST: Should I go again?

MR. JACOBSON: You can begin.

MS. ERNST: Thank you for holding this hearing, and also, thank you for the thoughtful

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approach that the State Board of Education has taken to this issue. I read the entire set of recommendations, and I think you're very much on target on the issues you're raising.

One thing that we've learned from the No Child Left Behind is that what our children learn and how they are taught is directly related to how the school is evaluated. If you decide that 80 percent of the school's performance is based on standardized reading and math test scores, then you should expect that 80 percent of the kids' time will be spent, or close to that, on test prep for reading and math standardized tests, and the lower the income of the students served at the score, the more likely this rule will hold true.

And that's because as you know, test scores track with income and parent educational levels. A recent "Wall Street Journal" article on the subject suggested that the SATs should actually be renamed the Student Affluence Test instead of the Scholastic Achievement Test, and I thought that was very apt.

Evaluating schools based mostly -- almost entirely on proficiency levels means that we're primarily measuring the school's -- what income and the educational levels of the student's parents at the school, not the education that they're receiving at that school.

An over emphasis on proficiency levels creates perverse incentives for schools, principals and teachers to not serve our lowest

income students. And in a system where there is school choice, where most schools have the option to counsel out or discourage students from continuing at their schools, and this includes not only charters, but also DCPS schools that are serving out of bounds students are also doing that.

Our evaluation system has actually encouraged those schools to push out the students that are struggling the most academically. The over emphasis on proficiency on standardized test scores also creates disincentives for teachers or principals to stay at schools serving low income students. And that means that our most effective teachers and principals have a very strong incentive to upgrade and move to schools that are serving higher income populations, further disadvantaged those kids.

There is an entire ripple effect of this evaluation system and focus on standardized tests that in the end, hurts our lowest income students over and over again. I'd like to share with you what that has looked like at my daughter's middle school.

My daughter attends a DCPS middle school. The majority of the kids at the school are low income, and then there is a small cohort of middle income, upper income families there. Because of the all consuming focus on standardized tests, our kids are on computer test prep programs at the expense of genuine classroom instruction, project-based learning or

enrichment.

Once or twice a week, students spend a full period of science and social studies doing math test prep on i-Ready, instead of receiving social studies and science instruction. During advisory class, which is when they're supposed to be doing socio emotional community building work, the students instead, spend their full advisory period on i-Ready every morning.

In staff meetings, the principal refers to students not by name, but by PARCC score numbers. She'll say things like, we only need to worry about moving our twos to threes, or our threes to fours. And when she's asked what they're supposed to be doing for the other students, she responds focus on that 10 percent. Don't worry about the others, because she knows that's what she's getting graded on.

Because the school isn't evaluated on special education services, the SPED teachers are routinely diverted from providing Special ed services in order to do other administrative duties. Teachers that are gifted at building a level of learning, curiosity and an enriching learning experience have left the school in droves.

In the last five years, our school, which has only 25 staff members, has lost 35 staff members. Entire grade levels have left, and many of those teachers were rated as highly effective on their impact evaluations. And the irony in all of that is that the school's test scores have

declined steadily for the last four years, which gets at what Elizabeth Davis was saying, is test prep does not replace instruction.

You might say that the principal is ineffective and should be replaced, but she's doing exactly what the evaluation system has encouraged her to do. She is nothing, if not diligent, about meeting her school's performance metrics. And since her own performance metrics are also based primarily on test scores, she's doing exactly what she should do to get a good grade. In fact, she's one of the few principals that received a three-year contract.

So what does this mean for how we evaluate our schools? The metrics we use must reflect the educational objectives and learning environment that we want for our students. What you measure is what you get. Don't expect anything else.

So here's what I want the new performance measures to accomplish at our schools. Schools should be incentivized to meet students where they're at, regardless of their starting proficiency level and help them advance and grow.

Schools should not be incentivized and rewarded just for serving upper income students. This means that student growth should be measured from year to year, rather than comparing this year's third graders to next year's third graders.

Schools that have been identified as particularly effective at raising proficiency

levels for the lowest achieving students should be identified and rewarded. And just as importantly, schools should be rewarded for offering a well-rounded curriculum that accommodates a variety of learning styles and teaching approaches.

Schools should be evaluated based on how well they provide Special ed and other wraparound services. Schools should be rewarded for retaining highly effective teachers. Principals, in particular, should be rewarded. That's not a part of principal evaluations right now. They should be rewarded for keeping highly effective teachers.

Schools should be rewarded for creating a climate in which all students feel supported and welcome, are challenged academically and excited to learn. And schools, particularly principals -- I think I already said this -- should be rewarded for developing and keeping highly effective teachers. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you so much. And again, if witnesses could introduce themselves at the beginning of their testimony, that would be very helpful. Thank you.

MS. NYANKALE: Hi, good evening. My name is Losia Nyankale, and I am a Ward 7 resident, and I have two children currently attending CW Harris Elementary School.

One of my children has an IEP and has had an IEP with DCPS since he entered this system in pre-K3. Recently, his hours were reduced,

therefore moving us from Harriet Tubman back to our neighborhood school, which is CW Harris. Within that transition from the schools, I have noticed that the focus on testing alone at CW Harris is failing my child who has an IEP.

We recently sat through a meeting and went over his test scores and they mentioned that he was in crisis when he was being tested for his reading. And I didn't find that out until today, and he was tested on September 8th for this. I believe that with CW Harris is in a Ward 7, which is -- it's not -- I guess it's one of the schools -- the wards, excuse me, that don't receive a lot of support from DCPS, and it's very evident when you walk into those school doors.

There were some listings of the scores from the schools and how they've been progressing over the years, and there was about a 1 to 3 percent increase with that. And I can see where that would be progress within the neighborhood, but it's still failing my son, because with a 1 to 3 percent increase, where is the rest of that percentage coming from?

And I think that that can also factor in, in the fact that even with an IEP, my son has been suspended three times since the beginning of this school year. At Tubman, he's been there -- he was there since pre-K3 until last school year, he was only suspended one time.

The took the initiative to deal with his problem and work on his IEP to help further his education, as opposed to focusing on only test

scores. Now, the last three days, my son has been sitting at home; hasn't received any educational support, let alone any mental health support from the school, and he's expected to return tomorrow with no follow up.

This is a consistent behavior within CW Harris, and I feel that outside of the fact of the lack of training and a lack of proper leadership within the school, that their focus on getting Julian's test scores, rather than helping him improve on his IEP are really affecting his ability to succeed and move forward like he was doing with his education at Tubman Elementary School.

As a parent, what I'm looking for is accountability and ethics with how these Special education programs are being run. My son also started the school year with a social worker who is now his teacher. I am not sure how that is possible, let alone why he started off as a social worker to then, by the second month, becoming a teacher.

And with his suspensions are being -- he's being suspended based off of actions that are triggered off of his -- because of his behavior disorder and his acute ADHD which according to people that I've spoken with with the DCPS school board, that that is problematic with dealing with his IEP; what he cannot even be in class with the proper support systems for him to move forward.

So as a parent, I'm here today to put a

better, bigger focus on the accountability of our schools outside of the testing scores, and making sure that our children, especially ones with IEPs are receiving appropriate services that help them, not just the reputation of the school. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you so very much. Thank you for being here and sharing your story.

MS. BALDAUF: Thank you for this opportunity. My name is Sarah Baldauf. I'm a D.C. resident and a mother to two young daughters. Our four year old is at Tyler Elementary in D.C. Public School in Ward 6, and our one and a half year old is in day care here in the district. I also work at the Redstone Center for Prevention and Wellness at George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health.

I was at the State Board of Education Ward 6 meeting last spring, I think, or maybe it was the summer, in which you were collecting community input on the Every Student Succeeds Act, and I appreciate the State Board of Education memo drafted in response to the citywide meetings, and the comments on OSSE's ESSA straw man draft describing how D.C. might measure school quality.

I would like to draw attention to a very important gap that I noticed, and one that I hope will be addressed in this process; and that is the role of physical education and physical activity in supporting not only academic

outcomes, but mental health. So the stress, the anxiety, the depression that we've heard other folks testifying mention, and also, the behavior that supports classroom learning and other lifelong outcomes.

It's important to note that there is a distinction between physical education and physical activity. P.E., physical education is a class taught by certified teachers here in the District. Physical activity is recognized as movement that enhances health, according to the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.

So your heart rate is up and your breathing is heavier. A way to deliver this physical activity is through physical education, but also, reset as sport classroom activity breaks. People, I think, generally recognize the health benefits that come from physical activity; that is moving, including its role in preventing obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

But it is essential to also recognize that physical activity improves the cognitive development that impacts learning and self-control. A recent randomized control trial in pediatrics and randomized control trial being the gold standard study, way of studying, showed that seven to nine year olds who participated in an after school program that met the daily physical activity requirements not only improved aerobic fitness, so physical fitness, but also showed better brain function and cognitive performance; specifically executive control, compared to the

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children who did not participate in that program.

And why does executive control matter? Well, it helps us resist distraction and it helps us maintain focus, and it helps us multi-task and manipulate information. Executive control, executive function underpins academic skills, but also, the social emotional development that we're all hoping to support, I think.

Executive control also supports the self-control that can reduce disruptive or aggressive behavior inside and outside the classroom. A graphic visual of the effect of physical activity on brain function is in the pediatrics paper that I mentioned, and it's also here at the end of my testimony.

I think people can see the colors, the rainbow here is the fire-up brain. This is the brain that has been exposed to physical activity that meets the physical activity guidelines. The blue part, the blue brain, are the kids that didn't get that exposure, that intervention.

As a parent, I want our D.C. schools to value and implement policies that reflect this relationship between physical activity and academic success. In the District, we have data. There are several sources of data that point to the important opportunities that we have here as a city, as a municipality, as a state that are related to physical activity and our kids.

This year, the D.C. Early Developmental Instrument showed that pre-K four year olds tested below the national averages for language

and cognitive development, and I had to ask, why is that, and how can we capitalize on what we know about physical activity to build their brains and to build their executive function?

At Tyler Elementary, last year, where my daughter -- my older daughter goes -- she was a then pre-K3 year old -- she had 20 minutes of recess each day. Three and four year olds having 20 minutes of recess each day. And that is the DCPS minimum.

I am very pleased to say that we as parents worked with the Tyler Administration and we worked together, and now pre-K3 and four year olds have double that. They have 40 minutes of recess a day. But I believe that D.C. needs to support schools through resources, training, accountability measures, funding, messaging, that is, communication as a value in order to successfully implement physical education, as in the class, but also, physical activity as in the movement -- the bodily movement.

And this ESSA accountability process is an opportunity to ensure that we do that. Another piece of data from D.C. -- the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, YRBS, showed that more than one-third of high school students who reported getting mostly A's or mostly B's, got at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day on five or days of the previous week. On the flip side, of those students, high school students who reported getting mostly D's and F's, only about 22 percent, maybe a fifth got that level of physical

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activity. So that reflects the grades that we're so focused on.

Another point of data shows us that schools in D.C. are not meeting the physical education requirements in the D.C.'s Healthy Schools Act, and that is measured by minutes. So the Healthy Schools Act mandates that elementary schools deliver their students 150 minutes a week of physical education; that is about 30 minutes a day.

And the Healthy Schools Act also says that middle schools must deliver their students 225 minutes a week of physical education. That's about 30 minutes -- sorry, 45 minutes a day. Many students are -- separately. Many students are not getting the recommended 60 minutes per day of physical activity.

At the Redstone Center at GW School of Public Health, we believe that negative outcomes, these negative outcomes reflected in the D.C. data contribute to increased rates of obesity, unrealized academic success and diminished cognitive function. As a D.C. parent, I strongly recommend that physical education and physical activity be given more prominent representation in this value system that we are developing through this ESSA process. Our students --

MR. JACOBSON: Ms. Baldauf?

MS. BALDAUF: -- their health, their academic outcomes stand to benefit significantly. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you. I'm sorry.

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Hopefully, you can get to the rest of your testimony during questioning.

MS. BALDAUF: That was it.

MR. JACOBSON: Thanks so much. Mr. Martel?

MR. MARTEL: Thank you. My name is Erich Martel, a retired DCPS high school teacher. The ESSA is supposedly an improvement over NCLB, and that allows each state education agency the right to choose how it will hold schools accountable.

How can one hold any human group accountable? A school is an arbitrary social group. We don't think it is ethical or legal to hold a race, an ethnic group, a religion or a nationality accountable for what some or even many of its members do. Aren't we still reeling from some ugly suggestions of that in the recent election?

Yet, we routinely subject teachers and students to tests whose result is either collective guilt or collective virtue. A school is a building, so "school" is a really a euphemism for what; for students or teachers, principals.

It's really both, because if a school fails the accountability test, teachers and maybe principals are blamed. Students are not blamed, but do suffer their school being closed, taken over by a private or charter management organization, transferred to a charter or being individually to transferred to charter schools, at which point there's even less accountability

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in terms of knowing what's going on; how students are performing as a group in the school.

You can find criteria other than tests for accountability, but like the tests, they will all have an inherent bias. In short, you cannot find any method of group or collective accountability that is fair.

How is it assumed that the school system implementing the accountability measure will even do so fairly? The evidence is overwhelming that as school administrations, whether they wish to do so or not, ultimately gain the system and create situations where there is retaliation against teachers, and everything is distorted. It doesn't do what it portends to do.

Does OSSE, for example, do implementation or operational audits of accountability measures to ensure fairness? How do they know that the measures that they have passed, that you have passed, or that OSSE is implementing -- requires the local school agencies to implement are being done so fairly?

I mean, we know, for example, that the graduation rate is a joke, because how do we have so many students doing poorly on standardized tests, yet the graduation rate of some schools is up in the 80 percent and 90 percent range? And it is further assumed that each school operates independent of the school system as if DCPS' officials choice of curriculum, teaching materials, mandatory pedagogies, student discipline rules and prohibitions can be

dismissed as if they have no impact on student performance.

Do the school systems, including the charters, do they know how well students are ready to learn when they enter the school, at whatever grade level? The only fair accountability is individual. Individual accountability. And that begins with students. Students should not be promoted until they have achieved the minimum passing criteria in some key areas. Until you do that, no matter how you couch it, with all the optimistic talk about closing the achievement gap, it's not going to happen.

So it's time to consider something that probably has not been considered, and that is to reject the whole notion of an accountability system. And you know, right now, we're at sort of a moment of uncertainty in a lot of ways in the school with what's happening nationally, and there are lots of states where there is a revolt against accountability.

Maybe the best thing to do would be to reject accountability and to give good reasons why. And we might just find out that being freed from these arbitrary measures of accountability might free us to create a school system that is - - or a school systems that actually can make more progress with both the high performing students as well as the low performing students.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Martel, and thank all of you for testifying here this

evening. We'll do another five minute round of questions for board members. Ms. Wattenberg and then Ms. Lord?

MS. WATTENBERG: I'll go back to the beginning to Caryn. You talked about how the current system creates incentives for teachers to leave low income schools, for principals to leave low income schools, and for Special ed students to be discouraged from enrolling. And I wonder if you could talk a little bit about how you think that happens; how that works? How does the system create that?

MS. ERNST: Yeah. Well, if you're -- as a school, if you're going to be evaluated on the test scores, obviously, the more students you have that come in achieving at lower levels to start, the harder it is going to be for you to raise the test scores at school; have higher test proficiency levels at the school.

And we actually just talked about this on the Cross-Sector Collaboration task force. We had a couple of representatives from DCPS and OSSE talk about how families are being counseled out of schools. Kids who are struggling academically, the parents are told this school may not be the best fit for you. And they're encouraged, then, to go to a different school, rather than that school that they're at, trying to actually meet those kids' needs.

And a lot of them, maybe a mobility they talked about is happening as a result of that; of kids being counseled out from schools, or the

school is just not working to meet that child's academic needs or the family's needs, and the parents then leaving in protest.

So I think that's fairly common. It happens at schools that are schools of choice, so that's charter schools, or DCPS schools that are serving out of bounds kids. So our school has a good chunk of kids that come in out of bounds, and the school has the option to say, maybe our school is not the best fit for you.

And what that translates to is, you might bring our overall test scores down, or you're going to be a challenge for us to serve, so therefore, we'd rather you just shuffle on and find another place to go.

MS. WATTENBERG: Because it's often discussed in terms of the charters, but it's interesting that you're talking about it in terms of DCPS. So it sounds like that is largely caused by the focus on the proficiency score, because you have to get your kids to this level. But if you could focus it more on the growth score, it might be mitigated?

MS. ERNST: Yes, I think that's exactly right. That's why I think it's really important to be focusing on growth and student growth from year to year. Even if you just growth, or if you just look at proficiency levels of the third grade this year, and then you look at the proficiency levels of the third grade next year, that doesn't tell you if the students are actually growing. It just tells you if the

school might be bringing in a greater population of higher income kids.

And I know our principal had specific strategies, and a lot of school leaders do have specific strategies to try and bring in kids of a certain demographic to raise their test scores. But if you look at if they're graded on the growth that those students have, the student from year to year and what their academic growth is, if that's the primary measure they're having, then it eliminates the incentive to try and attract a higher income demographic and push out a lower income demographic.

MS. WATTENBERG: I mean, I've heard it said many times at some of our meetings that probably the easiest way to raise your test score profile is to change the students that are in your school --

MS. ERNST: Absolutely.

MS. WATTENBERG: -- which has nothing to do with improving the quality of the school.

MS. ERNST: Absolutely.

MS. WATTENBERG: So that's what we're trying to get at, is how do we make sure that the incentive is towards building that quality. So, that's very helpful to know.

Losia?

MS. NYANKALE: Yes.

MS. WATTENBERG: Is that right?

MS. NYANKALE: Yes.

MS. WATTENBERG: So you talked a lot about the quality of Special education and the

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implementation of the IEP. We heard a lot about that at our meetings. Do you have any thoughts about how that could be included in an accountability system?

And let me just raise this. This is similar to the question I raised earlier about how do you actually -- how to hold the school accountable for say, having a rich curriculum. And so partly, I'm just genuinely looking for what are some ways to do this. And then I'll just throw out, you know, there are other places that do their accountability in much more qualitative ways with sort of school inspection reports where you might have someone who would come in and audit a number of these different questions in a more qualitative way.

In fact, I think the charter schools do it. If someone is here from a charter, they could talk about that. And that might be a way to get at some of this. But if there are sort of proxies for it or specific ways of getting at it, I'm interested across all these issues.

So to you, how would you encourage us to try to incentivize schools to do better at providing quality special education?

MS. NYANKALE: That's a very good question, because that was actually a question that I posed to some people that I was meeting with, with the school Board of Education earlier today, because you necessarily can't track that unless you're getting feedback from either parents or the students on how that works.

So, I mean, I would personally say that even with my experiences and all the negative experiences that I've been through with trying to get his IEP implemented and getting him the proper services, is that I was not offered any -- to provide any feedback to when we did have a conflict and there was a resolution; how we came about that resolution and what were the things that worked and what didn't work.

I think I've done a lot of surveys within being in the IEP, but only for my son, and never really for the services that he's been receiving. The only one I did receive was the outpatient service program that was built into the school. But that was one out of the four years that Julian has been within the DCPS system.

So I think that there's a lack of communication as to when there is conflict and how we resolve that. Because if I feel that if that was in kind of some of the documentation, that could have helped with the transition from the old school to the new school, so they could have set a standard. And there wasn't a standard set.

MS. WATTENBERG: So some of that is sort of at the school level. But let me just throw out, when we talk about the surveys, the satisfaction surveys, it may be that there's a way to do some special set of surveys that talks especially to --

(Simultaneous discussion)

MS. NYANKALE: Yeah, OSSE does send out

them (sic), but I feel that again, conflict resolution. When we find out what the problem is, and we actually do consider it solved, what were the steps taken? I think outlining that help, and then it would also -- kind of figure out where are the problem solvers at within the special education program, and hopefully use them in the leadership role.

MS. WATTENBERG: Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms. Wattenberg. We'll go to Ms. Lord and then Mr. Weedon.

(Discussion off the record)

MR. JACOBSON: Ms. Mary Lord and then Mr. Joe Weedon.

MS. LORD: Okay. Well first of all, I want to just say thank you. The individual experiences at the classroom level, at the teacher level, at the parent level, at the student level are so important to this discussion, because otherwise, we are just sailing up there at 30,000 feet, and the implementation of it kind of gets left in the dust until it becomes a real problem. So I just want to say thank you so much for coming here and sharing these experiences.

I sort of feel like we know No Child Left Behind and can't really imagine life without it. And while we are still obliged or required by federal law to test in math and reading and science and report those scores, we seem to feel that that's all that we have.

So I've heard a number of suggestions.

And help me think about what indicators we could use that would, for example, incentivize physical activity. Would it be a measure of minutes, for example? What would incentivize schools to do well by their special ed populations?

Some people have suggested a combination of suspension data, but that doesn't really get at the quality of the services and the teaching and the learning that's going on with those special ed teachers. And then teacher churn or turnover has been another measure. On the other hand, if you say we're going to measure you on teacher turnover, you could also have the reverse incentive of keeping teachers in classrooms to which they really shouldn't be teaching. You know, they may have better fits elsewhere in or outside of education.

So I'm just going to throw it open to you. And then finally, should we measure science in this mix, because we're testing it; we're reporting the scores, but there is some disinclination to actually count that in the accountability.

MS. ERNST: Yeah, to get back to what the previous panel had said, I think one big driver is if you were to really reduce the influence of the test scores overall, that would just open the door for a lot of other -- for a much more well-rounded approach.

But I also think that the idea of doing surveys with parents and teachers and students, really good thorough, deep surveys is an

important way to go. I would love to see what the Washington Teacher's Union has developed. I think that the surveys that have been done so far are frankly pretty lame.

The student climate surveys are just, I mean, kind of pathetic. I've never been surveyed as a parent. Teachers are not part of the evaluation system for the school or for the principal. And I actually think this is another issue; that we need to be looking at this separately from -- there's principal evaluations, and principals have a huge influence over what happens at a school.

But they're evaluated based on test scores. You skip over the entire thing of how they're doing as managers with teachers, and you're just evaluating them on their students' test scores. So that's a whole other issue that's separate, to some degree, from the school evaluation.

But I really think we need to be getting at what, in most professions, you would call a 360 degree evaluation, which is evaluating your principals and your schools comprehensively on what the experience is for the students; what the experience is for the families that are engaging, and the teachers that are working there -- what's their experience?

And I think a lot of these things that we're talking about with making sure that special ed services and PE is offered, you could get a lot of that by just doing more of a 360 degree

evaluation.

MS. LORD: I mean, it's interesting you bring that up. One of the suggested accountability systems, I think it may have been the one the teachers developed that was referred to by my colleague, Mr. Jacobson, was an inspectorate system, much like the Brits have, where you go out and it is that 360 degree, and along with it is a plan for improvement.

Here's where you're strong. Here's where you're weak. Here's some resources to do better. So thank you for putting that out there.

MR. MARTEL: I would just say one thing. It blows my mind, this idea that you have a requirement for a certain amount of physical education each week, and it's not being implemented. Why not?

DCPS has the highest ratio of instructional superintendents, which is another word for assistant superintendents to schools in the whole country; like 1 for every 10 schools. They're breathing down the principal's necks. How come they're not enforcing these things? That's worth asking. That's something that OSSE should be following up on.

MS. BALDAUF: If I could just add in terms of physical education and incentivizing -- so the Healthy Schools Act, I think we have mandated minutes. And so the question then, is why aren't -- you know, where is the value? And you know, you think about this in any given organization; is the top down leadership

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messaging to everyone that this is actually a value?

And I agree with your statement, Ms. Lord, that we don't -- or maybe we have PTSD and we're stuck in this No Child Left Behind world, and we have an opportunity to expand beyond that, and we have research and data that supports the value of physical education. We have D.C. law that says we need to be doing this.

And you know, I suspect that sort of not only the value system, but also perhaps the funding that is available -- I know that not every school, perhaps, has enough physical education -- it does not -- it may not have the funding to support physical education teachers to support all those minutes to give to their students. I've heard that space is an issue; the gym and cafetorium situation.

So I mean, perhaps that's a question for the school modernization acts. I mean, someone at DCPS mentioned that roofs should be used for physical education. We are in an urban environment. I know that's a little bit out there sounding, but actually, my kids -- they were too old, but that was where the outdoor play space was, was on the roof of the school.

But it's sort of like Stockholm Syndrome more than PTSD, but perhaps if we talked about competencies as opposed to reading and math performance. I mean, there's opportunities to kind of reinvent what we mean by success. So competencies and outdoor education or physical

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activity; harnessing some of our partners.

If you don't have a space for a gym, there's a Boys and Girls Club or a Y down the street that could easily be recruited as a partner.

(Discussion off the record)

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms. Lord. Mr. Weedon from Ward 6.

MR. WEEDON: Thank you. Again, thank you to the panelists; some very enlightening discussion, especially around narrowing of the curriculum, special ed issues, both from the student and the teaching side.

Most of my questions have already been brought up, but I do want to say a couple of things, and then I've got one question here. I do want to say proficiency is important. We can't be pushing students out of schools, as Mr. Martel alluded to, who aren't ready to succeed in college or career.

But growth is also important. We can't rank and evaluate schools for end of the line results when they're making remarkable progress with students, but those students came in so far behind. We've got to find a happy medium and move to a point where all of our schools are teaching the kids what they need to learn and we're truly serving them.

And I think that gets to the crux of what I'd like to see in the evaluation. How do we effectively measure whether or not these special ed services are being provided and those students

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are growing; that's individual growth?

And with that, we've already talked a little bit about that, but I want to get back to the PE issues with Ms. Baldauf. What would you say would be an effective measure, something that we could implement into ESSA or a school report card to effectively measure and report our students meeting the physical ed or physical activity requirements?

MS. BALDAUF: It's a difficult question, because we have -- I mean, I think I think it goes back to this value alignment. In our district, we have the Healthy Schools Act. We say what we need to be doing. We have the minutes. We have the -- I think you can measure the minutes that are scheduled for the students, and you can also --

I mean, I think that's a logical metric. I can tell you that what has also come up as a potential -- I know that data is collected on FitnessGram, which is a level of fitness. I know that heart monitors have been distributed throughout the district, which is you know, a measure of actual individual fitness.

I mean, these measures have their limitations, but there's data that's already being collected. We collect data on what schools are and are not providing the physical education minutes through the OSSE school health profiles. So my understanding is that there is also funding opportunities in terms of professional development.

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I mean, the physical education teachers -
- my understanding is that it is not a lack of
training there. I think perhaps professional
development on perhaps the principal level --
because I see this as not being a value from the
top and maybe even higher. I mean, we have the
means to do this.

MR. WEEDON: Yeah, I largely agree. I
think we can measure the minutes, and I don't
know if that's necessarily effective. Getting
into some of the other measures creates
additional challenges. But I'd love to see
something that's effective that's truly getting
at the value added. Are students living healthy
lives and are they moving in the direction that
we want --

MS. BALDAUF: I do think that
professional development at higher levels, both
for teachers who don't deliver physical education
and for principals.

MR. WEEDON: Right. And then kind of --

MS. BALDAUF: And administration.

MR. WEEDON: And I'm kind of wondering if
this is something, because of the difficulty in
truly measuring, it's a hybrid, where we're
looking at those minutes, but we're also looking
at a school survey or a culture survey, and is
this valued, and what the responses are there and
ensuring that it's incorporated into that type of
tool.

Thank you. I've got nothing else.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Weedon. Do

other board members have questions? I have -- I'll take my five minutes, and I will not use all of it. But I had a couple of pieces that we're working on that I wanted witnesses to be aware of. Ms. Nyankale?

MS. NYANKALE: Yes?

MR. JACOBSON: One of the indicators we are discussing with OSSE is attendance and days in school and focusing on having students in the school would give schools a disincentive to suspend students. So just be aware that that's part of the discussion, is if a school out of -- suspends a student out of school, the school then, would not get credit for days in school for that student.

So we're looking at attendance as one of those indicators, and that could help with some of the challenges that you and your son are facing in terms of suspensions. Also, on mental health supports, we hear you completely. This board takes that very seriously, and late this spring, approved new health education standards that deal with mental and emotional health, and those are in classrooms for the very first time this school year.

That helps from the education side from the student, so that a student can make good decisions. It doesn't help from the support side that I think you're talking about and looking at. I also wanted to raise with you, our next panel of witnesses will include the ombudsman for public education.

I don't know if you're familiar with her, but her office helps with IEPs, helps with bullying, helps with suspension and helps families navigate the system, as does our student advocate. Those are resources under the Board of Education.

MS. NYANKALE: I appreciate those resources, and I was actually -- she was actually -- accompanied me to the school board meeting that I was at earlier. But I feel that when we're talking about my situation specifically with him being suspended, there is nobody that I can speak to right now to get him back into school.

In those three days that he's been gone, I've only spoken to people outside of the school to try to remedy the problem, when the problem is going on inside the school. Yet all of these meetings have happened outside of the school. Nobody has gone inside the school to really dig deep and figure out why is this happening.

And I feel that if we -- we're going to keep going in circles, even with the attendance situation, because we talked about in-school suspension with him. They can't accommodate him in an in-school suspension setting. So he's safer and better off at home, is what I was told.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you for that additional context and information. I know it's personal, and we appreciate you sharing that with the full board. I don't know that we can do a lot more than the ombudsman has done, but your

story helps us formulate better policy for all students, so thank you.

I'm just looking through my notes to see if I've missed anything. Mr. Martel, you had a very interesting concept about rejecting accountability fully. My concern with that, which is an interesting concept, is that if this becomes a trend in states, we have states that do not treat students of color particularly well -- economically disadvantaged students well, students with disabilities well.

And accountability plan is supposed to put in safeguards for students, no matter where they live that are federal standards to prevent that. Could you, in the next 45 seconds, speak to some of that?

MR. MARTEL: Well, it would be interesting to know what the statistics are for say, the District of Columbia public schools over the last 20 years in terms of meeting those needs, because we still have a high dropout rate. You know, we get very few statistics.

I mean, just since 2007, it's been something like close to 30,000 students have left DCPS when you look at the cohorts. Okay? Does anybody know why? I mean, some of them went to charters. Some of them went out of state -- I mean, all different places. And they have those records, but they're not reporting them. Okay?

You know, Mary mentioned, you know, the school inspection system. I mean, the problem is when you have an accountability system and you

attach consequences to it, and without having really a thorough evaluation of -- I wanted to say this before.

Those two students that Suzanne mentioned that were doing very well -- I mean, proficient or advanced or whatever; do we know why? If we don't know why, if the school system cannot say, oh, these two students are doing so well in math or reading or both, we should know why, because maybe there's something that could be applied on a wider basis.

Do we know why students are doing very poorly? If we can't even answer those questions, then it's impossible to put together an accountability system that is fair and that will achieve the goals that we want it to achieve.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you for that perspective, and thank all of you witnesses for coming here this evening and spending so much time with us. We greatly appreciate it. With that, this panel is dismissed and we will move on to panel three, which includes our ombudsman for public education, Ms. Joyanna Smith, and Khadijah Williams, also from the ombudsman's office, and Tiffany Brown, a special education teacher.

Is Ms. Brown here, as well?

MS. BROWN: I am here.

MR. JACOBSON: Wonderful. If you could just sit, Ms. Smith, Ms. Williams, Ms. Brown, that would be wonderful. I think you all know the drill in terms of our timing schedule.

MS. SMITH: Should I start?

MR. JACOBSON: Absolutely. Thank you so much.

MS. SMITH: Good evening, state board members. My name is Joyanna Smith, and I am the ombudsman for public education. I am also joined this evening by Khadijah Williams, our program associate. I am going to briefly speak to the additional indicator of school quality or student success required under the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA.

We know it can include measures of student engagement, educator engagement, student access and completion of advanced course work, post-secondary readiness or school climate and safety. We have focused on the last measure, which is school climate, defined as the product of a school's attention to fostering safety, promoting a supportive academic disciplinary and physical environment and encouraging and maintaining respectful, trusting and caring relationships throughout the school community, no matter the setting.

We recently presented our Ombudsman Annual Report to the D.C. State Board of Education, and we discussed school climate and safety based on our work in the school year 2015 - 2016. We know that ESSA requires states to include multiple measures of student achievement, including academic performance measured by proficiency on ELA and math tests, academic growth and graduation rates.

But we also know that there are districts

that have developed such as the CORE district, which includes California's largest school districts such as Fresno, Garden Grove, Long Beach, L.A. and some other cities, and they've developed their school accountability approach based on three key principles, one of which I'd like to highlight.

They have focused on -- one of the principles is that it would be driven by equity and a focus on eliminating disparity and disproportionality. For the CORE school districts, the social and emotional and culture climate demean includes a chronic absenteeism rate, suspension and expulsion rates, school climate survey responses and student self-responses on surveys that ask about their social and emotional skills.

In this case, suspension and expulsion is measured as the percent of students who are suspended and/or expelled at least once in a given school year. We know that minority students are disproportionately suspended and expelled resulting in decreased academic achievement.

As a city within the District of Columbia, we have offered the equity reports to better address the disparities in supporting students based on their race, disability status and economic status. Some school districts such as Oakland, California and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania have adopted equity policies because well, let's be honest, they've been sued in the

past.

Oakland has eliminated willful defiance, suspensions and involuntary transfers, and Pittsburgh measures equity based on teacher quality and retention, disaggregated student data to evaluate inequity and developed and implemented equity initiatives.

The District of Columbia has an opportunity to address inequities in a proactive rather than a reactive way. There is a definition of equity provided on the OSSE web site which provides equity and education refers to all students receiving the same caliber of education regardless of their race, ethnicity, economic status, special education status and other factors.

The equity reports were designed to give our schools and families and communities transparent and comparable information related to equity across all D.C. schools. It was a collaborative effort with a number of partners such as OSSE, DCPS, PCSB and others to create these annual equity reports.

We did a cursory review of the equity reports in a select number of wards, and we offered the following observations in our most recently issued annual report. It is important to note that 87 percent of schools with a suspension rate of 20 percent or more are in wards 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Additionally, these schools also tend to be at least 95 percent African American and have

an at-risk student population of more than 60 percent. As indicated in our most recent annual report, 51 percent of disciplined students in our cases have a disability, and 11 percent of our special education cases involve students who were out of school the same percentage as our discipline cases.

I am going to hurry up, because I actually do want Khadijah to say a few things about school climate. We found that in our cursory review of the data presented in equity reports, African American students continue to be disproportionately disciplined when compared with students.

Given the disproportionate impact of discipline upon students of color and students with disabilities, we believe there should be a minimum threshold of due process protections that extend beyond what federal-local law and best practices provide. But we also think that some of that could be included in our accountability system.

I'm going to turn to Khadijah -- you really have no time, but you can say a few things.

MR. JACOBSON: She can have her own five minutes.

MS. SMITH: Oh, she can? Oh, wonderful. Well go ahead (Laughter).

MR. JACOBSON: But you don't have to use it all (Laughter).

MS. WILLIAMS: All right. So many of the

cases that our office has addressed could be better addressed with the focus on school climate. In one case, for example, a student was given a 90 day suspension after being suspected of smoking marijuana on school grounds and administratively withdrawn from his DCPS out of boundary school and referred to Choice, the alternative placement for suspension.

When the student tried to reenroll into the school, he was discouraged from reenrolling by his principal and encouraged to enroll in his in-boundary school, even though he had a right to reenroll into that school. Rather than encouraging a black male student's desire to continue his education, the student was considered a nuisance.

This child had parents who were not very involved in his life, and he tried to advocate by himself to remain in school. In another case, a child with level four disabilities, that's the highest level of disability, was expelled from his charter school after he was transferred to a program that was meant to better support his needs for bringing a BB gun to school.

Even though this child needed significant support throughout behavior and decision-making, it was determined that he needed to be removed from the school to ensure the safety of other students. This decision was made, despite the fact that the school acknowledged a need to better support the student's behavior problems. This child's parent had difficulty communicating

her needs throughout our work with her, and she lived in the most economically distressed area in the district.

And one final example: A parent tried to advocate that another diagnosis be added to the change child's IEP. The special education coordinator did not add the additional diagnosis at first to the child's IEP, and told our office that some children are D and F students.

This black child was in first grade. This school staff member looked at this child and saw not potential, but a black child who was already a failure. These examples highlight a need to hold schools accountable, not only on how they interact with students, but how they support children experiencing numerous challenges.

Many of these children have experienced trauma, live in economically distressed wards and qualify for public benefits. School climate is critical to address, because we have not held schools accountable on how they treat their most vulnerable students. This is because we are not publicly reporting data at a level that is granular enough to understand where inequities exist.

For example, schools with the most vulnerable populations are bearing the brunt of punitive discipline practices. While the Office of the State Superintendent of Education issues equity based data in its yearly equity reports, this data is not presented in a way that fully highlights the inequities discussed in some of

the cases I highlighted. Further, by leaving the definition of school climate up to LEA's discretion, schools are free to define their own measures of school climate with mixed results.

Many of these unaddressed disparities are illustrated in what parents have communicated to our office and within the district's own data. We have addressed cases in which families feel that their concerns about their children's safety are left unheard.

We have heard that parents do not feel that schools care about them or their children. Fifty-six percent of these families bring issues to us impacting students in the early and elementary grades, which means that a child's impression of school for better or for worse, is being shaped at a very young age.

While DCPS has tried to capture these concerns through their annual stakeholder survey, we found through our cursory analysis that feedback from the most economically distressed wards are under represented, while feedback from the wealthiest and least populated wards are over represented.

While the DCPS stakeholder survey can be improved, no such district-wide school climate data exists for charter LEAs. The schools that are the least represented are also schools with the lowest academic outcomes and the highest rates of suspension.

Given that research has found that a child's negative impression of his school climate

adversely impacts students on a physical, social and academic dimension, it is critically important that a standard measure of school climate is implemented so that we have a complete understanding of how all of our students are faring.

The research makes it quite clear that a focus on improving school climate is important. We must also understand that it is critical for our students, in particular, our most at-risk students. Joyanna spoke to this population earlier in the testimony.

So some of these indicators that could be used to address school climate are ones that our district already collects. Some suggested indicators that should be focused on include the areas of discipline, school push-out and enrichment and engagement.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms. Williams. Ms. Brown?

MS. BROWN: Sure. Good evening. My name is Tiffany Brown. I'm a proud graduate of DCPS, a parent of two DCPS children who are back there sleeping, and a 19 year veteran teacher of DCPS. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on this important issue of testing.

When I started teaching in DCPS, the high stakes tests the students were required to take was the SAT -- excuse me, the SAT9. Back in those days, testing didn't have the same emphasis as it has now. Then, students were tested in the fall and then in the spring. The tests seemed to

measure growth. There was baseline data to determine if a student made adequate growth.

Back then, I did not feel the weight of testing daily. As school reform happened, teachers were not a part of that equation or conversation. If someone asked me, I will tell them that testing students in this manner does not work. It causes stress and anxiety for the best of them.

Assessing or testing a child in this -- oh, I'm sorry. I said that already. Let's face it. Some students will perform better than others. Fast forward to 2016. Students are not only tested at the end of the school year for high stakes testing, but also given benchmark assessments at the end of each unit of study in math and English language arts; this coupled with the fact that DCPS does not have a curriculum in English language arts for elementary schools.

Units of study without proper materials are not curriculum. Testing in school has taken over instruction in most cases. Teachers are not given any voice when it comes to assessment. What is missing in this testing culture is what's being done with the testing data. Now that we have the results, what are we going to do with it?

Are we going to create reading curriculums that are research-based to help struggling readers? Are we going to create research-based mathematics curricula to teach our students, or are we going to continue to test and

punish teachers for the results? These unanswered questions create a stressful work environment for teachers as well as students.

With ESSA, it is critically important that testing and test scores are not only measures of students' abilities. The students of the district deserve better. A better model to consider is a growth model. A growth model provides a method for measuring the amount of academic progress each student makes between two points in time.

DCPS did this before with the SAT9. It is important that we compare apples to apples and oranges to oranges, and that is not currently happening in DCPS. As a special education teacher, there is not a high stakes assessment that is aligned to my students' IEP goals.

To assess my students that perform below grade level is not fair and inhumane. My students would often just bubble in any answer to complete the assessment. They would sometimes just sit there and do anything, because they have to take a test at their grade level and not at their performance level. This is unfair.

Last year, my son, who is sleeping, took the PARCC assessment in reading and math at Capitol Hill Montessori. He freaked out. He couldn't understand why he had to take a test on a computer, because at Montessori, they do different types of lessons.

He could not understand how to drag and click the information to answer the question.

See, my child, like many others, is a tablet child. To him, a mouse is just a rodent. My son, who is usually mild-mannered, came home in tears one day when I asked him about the PARCC testing.

He said he couldn't do it. "What," I said, "read the test?" "No," he said, "work the computer. I don't understand. Why do I have to do this?" This broke my heart as a teacher and as a parent. There must be a better way to test students.

We must come up with a better way to use the data we receive from testing. Testing, when conducted correctly, can yield true data to broad instruction. We cannot continue to test our children in this way. The students that I teach are more than a test score. My children are more than a test score.

Thank you for your time.

MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Ms. Brown. Any questions? Board members?

(No response heard)

MS. WILLIAMS: Any questions? Ms. Wattenberg and Ms. Lord.

(Discussion off the record)

(Pause)

MS. WILLIAMS: Ms. Lord, are you ready? She looks -- thank you.

MS. LORD: Speak now or forever hold your peace?

(Off mic answer)

MS. LORD: Okay. Well first of all,

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thank you very much, and the sleeping beauties in the back room testified to the ability of teachers to rise to every occasion, even at the great personal sacrifice, and I really appreciate my colleagues from the Office of Ombudsman for Public Education for being here.

Social emotional health is huge. A couple of indicators were mentioned. Would we be wise to report each indicator separately or to do something as sort of an overall indicator? And then secondly, to Ms. Brown's point, how do we use this data?

And I'm thinking that we are, again, locking ourselves into a standardized test measure rather than other kinds of performance measures that would tease out some of the competencies. For example, a project-based learning or a portfolio.

So let's put that on the billboard too, and give some flexibility, particularly for special education students. If the standardized test doesn't fit the -- if we have a lot of square pegs and we're trying to shove them into round holes, let's flip that equation.

And finally, from Ms. Brown, I'd like to know; teachers are assessing their students all the time. You know exactly where they are. What do you do as a matter of practice that might help inform the indicators that we choose as our next accountability system? So, a lot of questions.

MS. WILLIAMS: So I think that it is important to measure social, emotional

indicators. I think that what we first must do is we must understand what we're dealing with. We do have the data. It's just not publicly available, such as the schools that have you know, suspension rates and comparing that to their at-risk numbers, race and other indicators.

And so before we can really analyze how schools are doing in terms of social and emotional learning, we need to understand what is actually happening with our students. For instance, DCPS needs to break out the response rate by ward and communicate why it is that there are these disparities in response rate.

I found, for instance, that -- our office found, for instance, that 60 percent of Ward 3 schools were surveyed, versus only about 20 percent of wards 5, 7 and 8. And so we need to understand why that's the case. And we need to understand what it is that these schools are doing in terms of disciplining certain populations.

We do know the overall rates of suspension, and we know the overall rates of attendance by race, but we don't know about our most vulnerable students; our chronically truant, our chronically absent, our chronically suspended, our special education students who are shuttled from school to school.

We need to understand what is happening with these students so that we can then be thoughtful about figuring out what social emotional indicators to address.

MS. LORD: Just to jump in on that, the Maryland State Board of Education and State Department of Education did a study of discipline, and they did find very clearly, disproportional discipline being needed particularly to students of color, particularly to males, and they redid the discipline policy that is now statewide. Sounds like that might be something that the state board and state agency should -- OSSE should look into.

MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, definitely, because we have these discipline rates, but we have schools that suspend 60 percent of their students. And right now, there's nothing really that happens to them. And we need to change that.

MS. SMITH: Yeah, I was just going to say that certainly in our equity reports, which you mentioned earlier, some of this information is already captured. So the question becomes what are we doing with it? And I mean, certainly OSSE has considered whether they were going to have really, a minimum threshold by law where everyone -- you know, there's certain protections, due process protections that would happen across charter LEAs as well as DCPS.

Instead, they came out with the non-regulatory guidance, which is actually a great document, but it doesn't require schools to do certain things. And so I think the question becomes, you know, should we do that, you know, in the accountability system? We know there are

other districts who have included things like suspension and expulsion data as part of their accountability system.

MS. BROWN: You asked me what do I do, since we do testing all the time. I just teach. I teach the content. I don't worry about test data, because oftentimes, there is not a large enough population of special education students where the test data will count; where their high stakes testing will count.

But in cases where there is, teachers in schools are discouraged from doing alternative assessment for SPED students. We're given a lot of requirements, and just kind of told, no, you can't do that. We're not going to do that. And it puts the school in higher scrutiny that you wanted to use a portfolio assessment or alternative assessment. And so it puts more scrutiny, and a lot of times, principals don't like that at all.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms. Lord. Ms. Wattenberg?

MS. WATTENBERG: So the question I wrote down, but it may have gotten answered is, when you talk about maybe -- that the equity reports don't fully report what you would like to have reported, I think what you are -- it's about that the equity reports include this information, but the schools aren't held accountable for it.

So specifically, the expulsion and suspension information, is there other information included in the equity reports that

you would specifically recommend including in the accountability formula as part of the environment climate?

MS. SMITH: There are a few indicators to consider, and I'm going to let Khadijah give some of them, which we did talk about in our earlier testimony.

MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah. So some of these indicators -- and again, these indicators are based just on what we've seen in our case work. We're not school climate experts. But some of these indicators include percent of students who are chronically placed out of school by demographic indicators such as gender, race and disability and at-risk status; percent of those students chronically placed in in-school suspension, because even if they're not suspended out of school, placed out of school, they're still taken away from the learning environment.

And then after the first year, the percent by year and by three year change in chronic and overall suspension rate. And what's important about that is that then we can see how schools are improving or not improving on their chronic discipline rates.

And finally, percent of uses of alternatives to suspension, such as trauma informed and positive behavior intervention support, compared to punitive discipline.

MS. WATTENBERG: And the surveys that you're talking about that are returned heavily from one part of the city and not heavily from

another part, are those the DCPS --

MS. WILLIAMS: Yes.

MS. WATTENBERG: -- staffing surveys that you're talking about?

MS. WILLIAMS: Mm hmm.

MS. WATTENBERG: So if we did this kind of survey, we would really have to pay attention to how do we get broad --

MS. WILLIAMS: Yes.

MS. WATTENBERG: -- use of it.

Otherwise, it wouldn't be a help. Question for you -- two things: One: I wondered if you could just talk about -- and I know you're teaching special education, so I don't know if you can speak to your school broadly, but I'm curious how much testing there is in terms of the test prep and so on, if you have an answer to that.

And also, if you could talk a little bit about -- expand on what you were saying, that you don't actually have a curriculum in the elementary grades.

MS. BROWN: Okay. D.C. Public Schools does not have a reading curriculum. They don't have a research-based reading curriculum. What they have is units of study which some teachers have had input in on what to teach, how to teach based on the Common Core standards.

They're placed onto our web site -- our canvas web site where we are to download them. Some of them have articles. Some of them have books that are recommended. The books aren't necessarily in the school, and there are not

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enough books for each child.

Before, in the past, we used the Houghton Mifflin curriculum to teach reading. That has been gone for, I want to say about eight years. There is not a reading curriculum in D.C. Public Schools on the elementary school level.

MS. WATTENBERG: So if I'm understanding it, you're saying you get kind of the direction and the guidance about what should be done, but not the materials with which to do it?

MS. BROWN: Yes, that's exactly what I'm saying. As far as testing, our students are tested, like I said, at the end of every unit, third through fifth. I'm in an elementary school. As far as test prep, our students are placed on Lexia daily, and also, ST Math. And they're pretty good learning programs, but there is an emphasis on test prep.

That is, if they do so many minutes of this a week, that it will help them on the PARCC later on. If they do so many minutes of ST Math, it's a better indicator of how they will perform on the PARCC. That's what teachers are being told.

MS. WATTENBERG: Do you think that's true?

MS. BROWN: It's hard to say.

MS. WATTENBERG: Okay.

MS. BROWN: Thank you.

MS. WATTENBERG: Mm hmm.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms. Wattenberg. Ms. Williams?

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MS. WILLIAMS: I'd like to thank all of you for testifying, everyone in this room who has testified. I think this has been eye opening for a lot of us, and so what I hear is that rather than a proficiency base that's --

SPEAKER: Test?

MS. WILLIAMS: -- that we were looking for a school safety or school environment way to rate our schools. Is this what you all are advocating for; that type of accountability system versus an accountability system based solely on a test?

MS. SMITH: I think we're saying that there should be an additional indicator where we're looking at other measures. But we're not saying that there shouldn't be proficiency, obviously, as part of --

(Simultaneous discussion)

MS. WILLIAMS: No, no, as part of --

MS. SMITH: Yeah, yeah.

MS. WILLIAMS: -- as part of the test. And I know you mentioned some of the common things that we should be looking at. Are there any others that you found in your work or Ms. Brown, when they finished, any other indicators that you would think would be important to be included in the assessment system?

MS. SMITH: Not from our office (Laughs). I don't know if you have any.

MS. BROWN: A lot of times, they talk about school attendance and their free and reducal (phonetic 02:39:10) at staff is, but it's

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not taking into account when we're doing the impact evaluation score, however it's scored. Those things aren't really taken into account. It doesn't take into account teacher turnover at a particular school.

I'm at a new school this school year, and I want to say more than half of us are new to the school; not necessarily new to the school system or new to teaching. And the school where I am had -- my understanding was a difficult time last year.

So, I think those sort of factors need to be looked at. You can't have a staff that is almost turned over or has turned over for the past three or four years, and look at where there is a high suspension rate or a high in-school suspension.

You have to look at also the income levels of the parents and how the students are living. We have a lot of students who are living in poverty, and it's just unacceptable that these students are being asked to perform at the same levels as students who come from "stable households."

And so I don't think that's being considered. They say, yeah, we know that, but -- you still have to teach them. We know that, but they still need to do so many minutes of ST Math or Lexia. We still need them to perform at this rate.

MS. WILLIAMS: And this is another question. Since you are a special ed teacher and

your children have special needs, are the services that they need available to them now? I mean, the wraparound services that would benefit them?

MS. BROWN: So, the district has pushed and mandated that most DCPS schools do inclusion, if they're not in a self-contained full-time placement. So to that extent, I think the district -- DCPS needs to look at that a little bit more carefully.

Some students cannot be included. Some students need to be pulled out to get their services. Just to make sure that they can maintain a level of proficiency, even if it's -- it is two grade levels behind. I mean, there are students who cannot be in their classrooms to be educated with their peers full-time.

MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Vice President Williams.

All right. Thank you all so very much for being here and spending your evening with us. With that, we have reached the halfway point and we'll move on to Panel 4. We'll start with Gary Ratner, executive director of Citizen for Effective Schools. You just sit in that farthest chair to the right. That would be terrific.

Lauren Lowenstein Bauer, a visiting fellow with Brookings Institution.

Kristen Harper, senior policy specialist at Child Trends, and Shakera Oliver, grade 4 math teacher.

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(Pause)

MR. JACOBSON: Terrific. And we will start with you, Mr. Ratner. You have five minutes.

MR. RATNER: Thank you. Good evening. My name is Gary Ratner. I'm the founder and executive director of Citizens for Effective Schools, a national citizens school reform advocacy organization, and I have an education blog on Huffington Post.

I was heavily involved for many years in lobbying Congress to overhaul in CLB, including urging adoption of a school quality indicator for accountability similar to what was enacted in ESSA.

I'd like to testify about all three main issues. Since the statute governing how much weight should be given to tests and growth indicators treats them together, I'd like to do the same.

I agree with the state board's response to OSSE's initial ESSA straw man draft; that growth in a school student achievement should be given substantially more weight in D.C.'s accountability system than the percent of students who are proficient. Not only would this wisely reward schools for improving student learning, but it should help to reduce the destructive impact of focusing on raising test scores as an end in itself.

If low achieving schools are recognized for being on a positive trajectory, it will

relieve pressure on principals and teachers to drill and kill to reach a fixed and artificial test score goal. It will better enable them to focus on making the changes at low achieving schools which district support need to make to turn themselves around. See the common elements of successful school turnaround paper.

If schools make the necessary changes in the elements of leadership, instructional improvement, curriculum, school climate and parent and community involvement and support, they will become much better schools. Children will be engaged in challenging curriculum and the test scores will take care of themselves.

For the same reasons I would oppose the proposal to have test scores both proficiency and growth together constitute anything like 70 percent or 80 percent of a school's total accountability rating. The total weight given the test scores and graduation rates school be the least it can be and still comply with the statute's mandate; that these factors "in the aggregate, be given much greater weight than the school quality of student success indicators."

Maximum weight, perhaps 45 to 46 percent of the total rating, should be given to school quality indicators. If well chosen, these indicators would provide valuable insight into how much and what kind of support each school needs. Moreover, they would help guide each school toward making the concrete changes in expectations, beliefs and practices it needs to

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make to significantly improve student learning.

Well, I agree with SBOE that there should be a broader set of metrics for determining quality. As it recognizes, the question then becomes which metrics? To answer that first requires determining what purpose are these metrics to serve?

Here, ESSA itself provides a critical answer. Accountability indicators, including school quality must be used to "inform comprehensive plans for improving schools under 111D."

That is, under ESSA, indicators are not just for the purpose of more carefully differentiating between low achieving schools to identify certain ones for intervention, but for the purpose of helping the identified schools improve. That congressional purpose for indicators has profound consequences, I believe, for which metrics the board should select.

There are many potential school quality metrics that could help to differentiate between schools, but there is one school quality instrument that was specifically designed for the purpose of helping schools improve and in multiple respects, it is the best indicator for this purpose. It is the School Climate Assessment Instrument, SCAI, from California State University, Los Angeles.

SCAI is unique among school climate surveys in three major respects that make it so useful for school improvement. Unlike Likert,

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for each question, it describes three different conditions from least to most educationally effective.

Two: It has the highest predictive validity correlation with student achievement; about 0.7. Three: It embodies a comprehensive conceptual framework for what works to improve schools.

SCAI is valid and reliable and satisfies the other ESSA requirements for quality indicators. Its student surveys meet the disaggregability (phonetic) requirement for accountability measures. Its teacher/staff survey also needs to be administered to gather essential information on leadership and teaching, and the parent survey, to get parents' vital perspectives.

SCAI is a comprehensive indicator covering eight categories; physical appearance, faculty relations, student interactions, leadership decisions, discipline environment, learning assessment, attitude and culture and community relations. It not only gathers key information on each school's strengths and weaknesses, and allows differentiating between schools, but guides stakeholders to make concrete changes to improve their school.

In conclusion, I strongly support the board's belief that it's vital to include metrics of "school culture climate" that promote learning. While I understand that the board is considering also adopting various ad hoc metrics

such as evidence of career preparation, I'd encourage it to evaluate first whether collecting such data would help schools develop and implement their comprehensive plans as Congress intended.

I believe there would be a substantial advantage in focusing all stakeholders on a comprehensive indicator for school improvement, rather than diverting attention from it to other ad hoc measures that may not directly help schools improve. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you so much. Ms. Lowenstein-Bauer?

MS. LOWENSTEIN-BAUER: Thank you. Again, my name is Lauren Bauer, and I'm a visiting fellow in economic students at the Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to testify on broadening school accountability under the Every Student Succeeds Act.

In a Hamilton Project paper that has been distributed, we look at which of the so-called fifth indicators can withstand accountability pressure and meet the technical requirements. Based on this work, I recommend that the district adopt chronic absenteeism as its measure of safety, engagement and environment.

Chronic absenteeism is a serious problem here in the district. In the 2013 school year, almost 30 percent of students in traditional and charter schools missed more than three weeks of school. The problem is widespread. More than 98

percent of schools had chronically absent students.

Chronic absenteeism is related to lower student achievement and rates of high school graduation. Chronic absenteeism not only affects students who miss school frequently, but also has harmful spillover effects on their classmates, because teachers may have to delay moving on to new material or spend more time remediating when students are chronically absent.

Our analysis also shows that chronic absenteeism is the strongest measure available to continue to provide meaningful information under accountability pressure, and that a chronic absenteeism best fits the technical specifications laid out in ESSA and under the draft regulations.

In the OSSE straw man and in the Board of Education's response, two indicators were raised that I would discourage you from including: Reenrollment and school climate surveys. School choice is the essential theory of change for D.C. Attaching accountability stakes to rates of reenrollment would undermine the choice process. Parents should be free to make the decision as to where to enroll their children without undue pressure from schools.

Under accountability stakes, it would be straightforward to influence responses on a school climate survey, potentially inflating scores while undermining the capacity of these surveys to provide meaningful information. I

underscore that these surveys which collected without accountability stakes provide useful and usable information.

In fact, these surveys could help administrators identify school-specific responses to improve on rates of chronic absenteeism. Attaching stakes to school climate surveys would produce the capacity we use in a formative way and create a situation that is like how we talk about test scores now.

Thank you for the opportunity to share new research and contribute to a process critical to the success and well-being of district students.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you. Ms. Oliver.

MS. HARPER: Members of the board, I'm grateful to sit before you to discuss the importance of creating safe and supportive school climates for our youth. I'm Kristen Harper, senior policy specialist for Child Trends, the nation's only non-profit research institution dedicated to improving outcomes for children.

Over the last 5 to 10 years, we began to see a sea change in how we think about, how we talk about and how we ultimately address conditions in which teaching and learning takes place. The approach schools have historically taken to promote order and safety has been to focus on removing negatives. How do we stop violence? How do we keep weapons out of schools?

However, it's only in the last 5 to 10 years that there has been a real conversation

about conditions for learning or school climate; that is, about the relationships between students and their peers; between students and their teachers and about a child's perception that they are valued, and that the system in which they receive instruction treats them fairly.

So what is school climate? Before I answer that question, it's probably appropriate for me to address what school climate is not and what school climate measures are not. It's not whether children like their school. School climate measures are not about satisfaction.

It's not about whether or not your school is aesthetically pleasing. It's not about whether or not students like their homework. To be fair, there is no consensus definition, but many of the definitions that you'll find speak to very similar domains. The U.S. Department of Education has used a three-pronged definition for purposes of its 2010 Safe and Supportive Schools survey to states.

Those domains include school engagement, children's participation in school activities, school safety, thinking about yes, drugs, violence, bullying and harassment, but school environment; the disciplinary environment, academic environment. It includes physical plans and the availability of health support.

So why does school climate matter? I'll give you two reasons. First, school climate is a critical line of defense, keeping children safe. Oftentimes, in our attempt to address school

violence, we jump directly to how do we keep weapons and drugs from entering our school? In doing so, we miss the critical question of how do we keep children from bringing weapons to school?

Let's go back further. How do we create environments in which children do not think to bring weapons or feel a need for them in the first place? We know from a study of over 250 national representative secondary schools that a substantial portion of the differences in school disorder and school crime are explained by school climate, controlling for our school and community demographics.

And how do they measure climate? Student perceptions that rules were fair and whether teachers felt their voices were heard within a school. There are also a number of student connecting climates to -- school climates to academic achievement. So yes, we are talking about perceptions and experiences, and we know from the research that these perceptions and experiences matter.

So knowing this, what does it mean in the context of school accountability, and specifically, the fifth measure for the Every Student Succeeds Act's accountability requirements? So, I'll give three options about how to incorporate these measures, you know, into accountability.

One would be survey measurement. The U.S. Department of Education School Climate Survey ED schools was developed by the National

Center for Educational Statistics to provide a freely available valid and reliable tool to measure school climate. The ED schools is a comprehensive Internet based survey platform designed to collect data on the perceptions and experiences of students, of staff and of parents in the three key domains I mentioned earlier.

ED schools is currently, I mean, as we speak, being collected across 30 middle and high schools in the district, both public and public charter as part of two overlapping initiatives. One is really focused on the use of school climate data, using it to promote by and through school community in engaging students, families and community members.

The second is a suicide prevention and school climate measurement act of 2016 which requires OSSE to pilot school climate measurement in D.C. middle schools and high schools with the anticipation that all middle and high schools will be required to participate by school year 2021.

There are important considerations though, in using ED schools for this purpose. First, the current protocol for ED schools is only appropriate for students in grades 5 through 12. A comparable tool is not yet available for younger kids.

And second, there are a number of states across the nation that do have experience using a number of these measures and using them in conjunction with incident data to develop

composite measures that have been used to just make funding decisions. So we do have instances where states have actually used this kind of data to drive funding decisions.

The second option is school discipline data. There's been a lot of talk already about the hazards that out of school suspensions and the like can pose for our kids, so I won't repeat them again. I will say that while I definitely think this is a measure that could be considered, it would need to be paired with some relatively strong audit procedures. This is a measure that is incredibly vulnerable, and I say this with no ill will -- it is vulnerable to tampering.

We don't have a lot of information about the prevalence of that sort of tampering, but we do know of too many anecdotes where children are simply sent home and it's not documented, or students, particularly children with disabilities are placed within protective settings as opposed to being suspended out of school. So you definitely would need to consider audit procedures if you select suspension.

The last measure I'll talk about has to do with absenteeism. It was mentioned earlier. It was mentioned by my colleague. But I do want to distinguish between absenteeism and chronic absenteeism. It is possible for a school to have an ADA of 90 percent. Basically, most the kids in the school from day-to-day are there, but you have a chronic absenteeism rate, meaning 10 percent of the school, the children are not there

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of 40 percent. So chronic absenteeism, not absenteeism -- absolutely a measure that is absolutely up for consideration.

So I appreciate your time and the opportunity to share my thoughts.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you so much. And I'm going to do something that I very rarely have done. I'm going to take the president prerogative and I'm going to go first for this round, if my colleagues won't object.

And I really want to talk about, particularly Ms. Bauer and Ms. Oliver, about this school climate issue and why that should not be an indicator; that it would provide meaningful information, but that it should not be used. Can you peel that onion a little bit for us, because this is something -- I'm a member of the LGBTQ community, and you know, having really safe schools and understanding how those schools are operating is very important to vulnerable populations.

And additionally, what gets measured -- you know, the old adage. So could you both just take a couple of minutes and speak to that? Maybe two minutes each would use my time.

MS. HARPER: Sure. So Kristen Harper.

MR. JACOBSON: Harper. Sorry.

MS. HARPER: No, no. No worries at all.

So one thing, you know, to speak to the issue of validity, and you know, will these measures sort of hold up under accountability. The measures are valid. You're talking about the

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results of -- you're talking about an aggregate of a number of students within a school, you know, putting their vote down.

This is not at all the type of measure that should be used to track a single student over time. They're not designed for that. They're designed to be used in the aggregate. All right? You'll contrast that with what I just said about you know, the potential dangers of using something like out of school suspension. Great measure, but you do have to really think about you know, auditing.

Back in 2010, again, the U.S. Department of Education launched a grant program called The Safe and Supportive Schools Grant Program, and one of the hallmarks of that program was encouraging states, working with a collection of school districts to use school climate measurement; use it to develop these composite scores. It was done in either 10 or 11 states.

And those composite scores were to inform which schools within the department or districts would receive funding to implement programming in order to improve. All right? So I mean we do have there an example where stakes, not the same stakes, but stakes were tied to this type of measurement. I have not heard of situations in which school climate measurement could be tampered with, because it's been tied to accountability.

I could see folks being concerned, you know, could that happen. It's absolutely the

right question to ask. I have not heard of it actually happening.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms. Harper. Ms. Bauer?

MS. LOWENSTEIN-BAUER: Sure. So I think that a commonality that I heard in the testimony of this panel is that we all like school climate surveys and we want schools to use the data. And I think there's a possible disagreement as to whether or not attaching high stakes to climate surveys will continue to empower schools to use the data or use it as a measure against themselves, and it loses its formative purpose.

In terms of the technical specification, we don't believe, I and my co-authors don't believe that school climate surveys will be valid, reliable and most importantly, comparable, which are the three statutory requirement for the fifth indicator because of reference biased. And the people have talked more about reference bias in terms of social and emotional indicators, and so there is this great study from Boston that Marty West and Angela Duckworth did where they saw that really high quality charter schools were rating themselves really poorly on social and emotional skills.

And why were they doing that? Because they held themselves to a very high standard, and because they had embodied that standard, they saw that they were failing against it. And so that same reference bias follows with the characteristics of any survey, including school

climate surveys.

I think also, we're worried that high stakes is going to destroy the surveys. They're very good and they're valid in a low stakes environment, and they're usable and they're formative and they provide good information, and we have reams of research about how and when to use it. And I think one of the reasons we don't know how -- we can't project how people are going to gain them yet is because no one has attached stakes to them.

And as soon as stakes are attached to them, they're going to lose that power that they have to have schools determine what's going on, which is why I had stated in my testimony and had stated in my writing that we use school climate surveys for the affirmative purpose in order to see whether we're moving a hard indicator like chronic absenteeism. And it helps schools -- it encourages schools to use the data, which is what we all want them to do.

In terms of how we project things to be gained, I don't think that it's actually that hard to think about it. You know, we've already heard testimony today about teaching to the test. Can you imagine what teaching to the survey would be in terms of both social and emotional skills and school climate; telling kids they're really hard workers over and over and over again, and they're going to check off that my school encourages me to work hard.

These things not only could be

detrimental to the value of the surveys, but detrimental to the students, and that's something that we're very concerned about, both in the social and emotional space and in the school climate space.

And so I think in conclusion, I would encourage you to invest in data systems and statewide school climate data collection for formative purposes, and use your technical assistance and you know, convening capacity and statewide power to get schools to use these surveys for formative purposes and not for accountability purposes.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you for that perspective. I'm sorry, I'm out of time, but Mr. Ratner, if you had a quick point to add.

MR. RATNER: Thank you. I would like to respond in several respects. First, let me clarify something that I think is a very important point. To count for accountability under the ESSA, the indicator has to be disaggregable. That is to say it has to show for different subgroups of students, how each subgroup performs.

As far as I can tell, about the only way you can do that is with a survey. It's analogous to a test score where you have individual students who you can identify what their grouping is, and you can say, okay, you know, the black students as a group did like this. Their report was this.

So with a survey, if you administer a

survey to all of the students, then you can disaggregate the results -- a school climate survey. You can disaggregate the results. I don't know of any other way, really to do that.

If you measure -- with teachers, I agree completely. There's more commonality here I think, than you might think because when you do a survey of teachers, you do a survey of principals, staff, parents, you're not going to really be able to disaggregate that. So I think by its nature, that's going to be for formative purposes.

That's going to be informative, but it's tremendously important, because you want to do -- and what I'm recommending is, do the -- particularly the SCAI survey, but if you're going to do a comprehensive climate survey, do that for all the students. I think that will satisfy the accountability requirement.

Separately, require and make available the same survey, and SCAI has for different groups -- you know, for grades two to five and above, for parents, for teachers of different levels. It's comprehensive. It's all integrated. Administer the whole thing to everybody, because then you'll get the information that you can't get just from the students.

You'll get information about teaching and about leadership that the students are not really in a position to give you, but it's tremendously important for evaluating a school. So, when you

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think about it, it's just the students. And I think that the point I'm gaining -- one of the things about SCAI that's so powerful that I only could allude to very briefly, is it's got this incredibly high predictive validity.

That is to say that if you look at the SCAI aggregate score from like a 60 item you know, question, and you go school-wide, you aggregate it, which you can do, you find that there's a huge correlation between achievement in the school and the school climate. There's almost a one on one correlation, which tells me that the school climate instrument is very perceptive. It's getting at very profound things in the system that correlate with achievement.

So how much is that being gained? Not very much, you know, if at all. And of course, it's possible to gain anything. It's not perfect. I'm not contending that. But this is a very powerful instrument.

MR. JACOBSON: I hate to cut you off, but I'm way over time. Perhaps you could finish your statements as part of a response to one of my colleagues' questions.

MR. RATNER: Okay. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: I think others will touch on this point. So let's start with Ms. Wattenberg and then Ms. Lord.

MS. WATTENBERG: Yeah, you can finish, because that is a question I was going to ask. Let me just throw out a couple of things to all of you as you're doing this. Kristen, I want you

to talk about the extent to which the survey you're talking about, the Department of Ed one, has, in fact, been used with stakes.

I mean, to what extent are you imagining that it won't be gained, and to what extent do you know it? But Gary, you finish and then we'll go to that, and then I have a couple -- Do you have any more to say on --

MR. RATNER: Oh, I do. Well, thank you.
(Simultaneous discussion)

MS. WATTENBERG: -- what you were going to? Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MR. RATNER: I just wanted to make two other points. I'll try to make them quickly. I know it's late. On validity, I would urge the board to look at the AIR study. AIR, the American Institute of Research did a study of what they regarded -- I think it's about the third -- probably a 13 (sic) best school climate surveys was for principal evaluation purposes.

And they found -- this was listed as sort of -- it was the top one that they study is the SCAI. There are others. They find that all of the 13 are valid and reliable in that context.

MS. WATTENBERG: Even while being used for stakes?

MR. RATNER: Well, I think yeah, on principal evaluations. So in that context.

MS. WATTENBERG: But not in the context of using them for school --

(Simultaneous discussion)

MR. RATNER: I'm not an expert in this,

but I don't know why it would be any less reliable and valid for this purpose.

MS. WATTENBERG: Right.

MR. RATNER: But definitely look at the AIR study that's cited in my testimony. The third thing, on the reference bias, I think that's really important.

My understanding is that the reference bias comes in -- if you are doing a Likert survey, which is what most school climate surveys are, they ask a single question. And they say, do you have this to a high degree, a medium degree, a little bit in your school. That's a Likert survey.

Then you could have a reference bias, because people in one school may think, well, we're -- you know, we're great. You know? But by comparison to others, they're really very different. You don't have the comparability. One of the key things to realize about this SCAI is it avoids that problem, because it's not a Likert scale. It's a unique scale that has three different conditions for every question that are descriptive.

So when you're answering the question, you're saying the conditions in my school are like A, they're like B or they're like C, as to every question. So on that, I don't think you're going to have the problem of misleading. Within each school, each child can tell you, you know, in my school, the teachers can tell you -- in my school it's like A, it's like B, it's like C.

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And so with that regard to anything else, they're describing their school. That's all.

MS. WATTENBERG: Thank you. All right, a question to Lauren, which is --

(Simultaneous discussion)

MS. WATTENBERG: So you're making the argument that we don't know if it will be valid if it's used for high stakes. And you make the point correctly that when we have the tests, they get used in ways that become very distorted with a bad effect.

One concern is, if we don't have something like a climate survey, we end up with 80 percent of the rating based on testing, which has had all the kinds of difficulties that we've heard about tonight. So what would your response be to that? I'm sure it wouldn't be that chronic absenteeism should be 50 percent of the score, or would it?

MS. HARPER: No, it's not. I think I have a couple of responses. First of all, though not part of my testimony, I think overweighting for growth scores is correct. And as well, a correct approach for chronic absenteeism that we don't want to recreate threshold problems with a fifth indicator that we can take a growth approach here, as well.

We have not seen school climate surveys in a high stakes accountability statewide system yet. And so I don't think we -- everything that anyone is saying here is production. And I think in terms of the AIR study, reference bias does

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not actually dissipate empirically when you give people examples to peg themselves to. It's now how the cognition works, and it's not what we find when we try to dissipate reference bias by giving an example to compare people to within a survey. And so that's something to note, as well.

In terms of weighting, I think -- my approach to this fifth indicator work has been how can schools know that they're making progress on it. Right? And how can they take actions to say we have done something here, and we've shown improvement, and we're going to be rewarded on that improvement; which is why we recommended a single indicator that's meaningful, where other sources of information that we want schools to be collecting and working on can be an input into that.

In terms of the actual, you know, composition of this is this percent of the total score, I can't speak to that, because I haven't looked at the -- I look to look at the data and gain it out for you. And I'm happy if you want to provide me with some data to give you some scenarios as to what things will look like for schools, but I can't speak directly to it.

MS. WATTENBERG: And for you, you talked about the Department of Ed survey, and I think you talked about how it's being done here in D.C. as a pilot.

MS. HARPER: Yes.

MS. WATTENBERG: So one issue. It is

being done here as a pilot, and as you said, I think it's ready to go -- be put into full practice in 2020. To your understanding of it, how would it harm or not harm the rollout of that if we were to use it more quickly for all schools for accountability? And there's the issue of what effect does the stakes have.

MS. HARPER: Mm hmm.

MS. WATTENBERG: There's also the question of, you know, do you harm a greater project? I actually had some conversations with OSSE about this, and at least one thought that I had is that now it's being rolled out in a way where you can -- where schools will learn how to use the information from these surveys to improve their schools, which is ultimately, absolutely what we want.

In the short-term, though -- and that's part of why it takes till 2020. In the short-term, though, having the information without the full training could still help us to fill in this void of involved that we have about schools, and insofar as this idea of if you measure it, they will come, right, you at least have something that's being measured that people can look to as a goal.

MS. HARPER: So first of all, to be clear, I think there are a number of options to pick from to put climate in the spotlight as part of your accountability system. There are a number to choose from

MS. HARPER: Mm hmm.

MS. WATTENBERG: There's also the question of, you know, do you harm a greater project? I actually had some conversations with OSSE about this, and at least one thought that I had is that now it's being rolled out in a way where you can -- where schools will learn how to use the information from these surveys to improve their schools, which is ultimately, absolutely what we want.

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MS. HARPER: So first of all, to be clear, I think there are a number of options to pick from to put climate in the spotlight as part of your accountability system. There are a number to choose from.

When it comes to school climate measures, we don't know. It's attaching high takes to school climate measures. There's not a lot of information either way. So yes, if you attach it to the teacher survey, yeah, you're asking a teacher to decide, okay, if you answer one way, you're going to get dinged over here. That seems pretty clear to me.

But the student survey, again, I've not

seen research showing that the students are -- again, you're asking a number of students within the school, ideally, all of the students within the school, and you aggregate the measures up. I've not seen anything to show that you can manipulate it easily.

And if it is a situation where you know, a teacher is beginning to encourage their students with the goal of making -- the indicator asking, you know, my teachers encourage me go up, that sounds like a great outcome. I don't think the teach to the test for school climate scores and for academic assessments is analogous in any way.

However, taking a step back, I think it is probably safest to assume that any measurement has strengths and potential weaknesses; any of them. So on school climate measures, I think it's fair to say that there is a significant, we don't know. It's something that would have to be watched.

But on discipline, another very clear, actionable item that we know is tied to risk of dropout, risk of a JJ contact, risk of grade retention, but that one has to be watched. We know that that one can be manipulated and manipulated easily. But chronic absenteeism, I think this is another one that we have to think about its application to different contexts.

D.C., for example, has a very high rate of student mobility. I don't know what that means when you try to add in chronic absenteeism.

So if you do that in one state, maybe that works for them. Does that necessarily mean it would work for D.C.? I don't know.

I think it's safest when you assume that any measure is going to have -- it could offer certain benefits, and we need to think in advance what are the potential weaknesses that we need to guard against and be vigilant.

MS. WATTENBERG: No, I think that's a good point; that whatever we do we -- and one point, also, is what we use -- its usefulness and its effectiveness really does depend on what the consequences are. How high are the stakes?

And so for us as a board in trying to figure out how we're going to make the judgment, there needs to be a conversation about what the consequences are going to be, because certain things will make more sense in that setting or not, and it hurts all of them. So I just raise that as a future --

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms. Wattenberg. Much appreciated. Ms. Lord.

MS. LORD: Thank you. There's so much interesting material here. Just on the climate survey, Gallop has been surveying teachers and students for decades, and they've come up with what they call a hopefulness index. So there's no reason why we can't have something like that, that gets at that aspiration. Because after all, we're all about every student succeeds. It's not about every school or every principal.

So I'm sort of thinking, is there a way

of combining that and maybe just having it as a -
- you know, an extra indicator. So with the
panel, I'd like to explore two things that came
up very clearly. One is the notion that you have
things for accountability versus things that will
drive things in the right direction. Are there
items that we should be absolutely keeping up
there on that billboard that we need to have
schools report on, measure and in a sense, help
parents and students determine where their best
fit is according to those? And if so, what are
they?

And then the second thing is, there has
been some pushback in Washington State recently
on chronic absenteeism, because in a sense, how
can we hold teachers and principals and schools
responsible for the behavior of a kid or a parent
who doesn't care about the kid, or a student who
is suddenly homeless or who has a chronic health
condition.

These are totally beyond the school's
control, unless it's like such a chaotic school
that no one wants to attend, and that's why
everybody is playing hooky. So help me
understand how we use this as a measure of
accountability as opposed to just a very
important data point.

MR. RATNER: Did you want to go first?

MS. HARPER: I'm happy to. So Washington
State will be using chronic absenteeism as one of
their accountability measures. They released
their plan today, and it's one of the three that

they've selected to go. So whatever issues they thought they were having about you know, can schools actually improve on this measure, they have decided the answer is yes, and they'll be holding schools accountable for improving on rates of chronic absenteeism.

This is one place where the evidence is starting to come in very strongly. The state of Connecticut last week released that they had reduced their statewide rate of chronic absenteeism by 1 percent. That's 10,000 kids. So in one year, one year focusing on it, they moved 10,000 kids from being chronically absent to not chronically absent.

There is new experimental evidence that shows that school -- that very simple school contact and school communication programs experimentally do induce students to come to school more often. So I think both in terms of whether other states think that their schools can move rates of chronic absenteeism, evidence that that's actually happening after focusing on them and experimental evidence that shows that at the school level, small interventions can start moving the numbers. I think that's the case.

In terms of your other question, I think you know, school report cards will be coming and changes to what's publicly reported will be coming in the next round, but that's a really important place to bring some sunlight into some of these other measures that are very, very important for data to be collected and for us to

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know about and for parents to know about, but might not be appropriate to attach stakes to.

And so you know, some of the disciplinary -- exclusionary disciplinary policies are going to be -- you know, could be sucked up into a measure like chronic absenteeism, even if we want to attach stakes directly to it. But it certainly is appropriate to publicly report those on the new school report cards so that parents know what discipline policy -- rates of exclusionary and disciplinary policies, lengths of suspension, et cetera, et cetera -- how those differentiate between schools.

And so I think that's you know, a step down from high stakes accountability, but certainly high enough stakes to you know, give schools a couple of years' notice that we're going to be telling people what your rates are.

MR. RATNER: Yeah, thanks. On the accountability versus non-accountability usage, I think that it's really important to have the school climate survey, particularly a comprehensive one, as part of accountability as a counter to the emphasis, the over emphasis that we've had on testing.

It's also required, as you know in the act, that you have to have a school quality measure as part of the accountability system. That's not open under the federal law. The question is what kind of school quality or student success measure or possibly both do you want to have?

I'm urging a comprehensive one, because particularly with the SCAI, you get something that will not only help to take the emphasis off testing in addition to reducing the weight, which I agree you need to do that, but this will give them something for the concrete for the schools, for all the stakeholders to concentrate on this.

Well, what are we doing in terms of the student relations? What are we doing with the faculty relations? What are we doing with leadership? What are we doing with curriculum? What are we doing with each of these things? It gets the conversation focusing on the right issues, and it's only the students that are going to be reported here. So I think that's really important.

But as I said, I think you need to have the assessments for the teachers and the parents, too, because that's an important part of the pool of information. You want to have the stakeholders. I think chronic absenteeism is a manifestation of schools that are not functioning well.

If you have a school that does well on the school climate survey, you won't find high chronic absenteeism. That's almost a given. So you know, that's a relevant factor, you know, for sure, but I think what you need is -- you need more than that. You need a comprehensive way of helping schools improve, and then that, just like test scores, will fall into line, because that's part of what you'll be dealing with are the

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conditions that produce the chronic absenteeism.

MS. LORD: Just to your point, I see much merit in breaking out the chronic absenteeism, because it does give a specific focus. But this other measure, this climate survey, I think, also has great merit, particularly as a counter balance to the testing. And you do -- you get a little index score. You're like, we're in the top tier for happiness or hopefulness or something like that.

And just to your earlier point, I do think some measure of career readiness is important, just because we think we know what we're preparing students for, but the employers, at least the ones that I've talked with, have a very different idea of what they need to see in students.

And I think if we ignore that, we risk having this sort of college or career conversation that is frankly -- it's both, but we need to be able to articulate how it's both. And I think there's some merit in exploring those college readiness measures, as well. Thanks. I'm over time.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms. Lord. Mr. Weedon from Ward 6.

MR. WEEDON: Thank you. It's been a great conversation about the survey, so I want to go down the different paths. My notes are a little bit garbled here, as everyone up here knows. I tend to scribble all over paper.

I think it was you, Ms. Bauer, who talked

about reenrollment. Could you repeat and maybe expand a little bit there?

MS. LOWENSTEIN-BAUER: Certainly. So in the OSSE straw man that suggested reenrollment and in a different working group meeting that I participated in, it came up as something that a particular type of school would be interested in doing, because it has provided meaningful information to parents.

And I think in my previous comments, I distinguished between what's appropriate for accountability stakes and what provides meaningful information to parents in terms of transparency. I think that because you know, D.C.'s theory of change is predicated on choice that any incentive a school has to hold onto a student, regardless of whether that student should be in that school or not, it's the same theory of teacher turnover as why we don't want to do teacher retention in a high stakes manner, because you know, a lot of how the system has been designed is based on movement.

And so reenrollment rates not only lose their power to indicate to a student a degree of quality when you attach stakes to them, the incentives around holding onto a student that you already have are quite perverse.

And we don't want to create combative relationships between schools and what a parent wants for their child, schools that might never have a reenrollment rate because they have a waitlist, as opposed to schools that do not have

to take all comers.

MR. WEEDON: So I'm going to push back a little bit here --

MS. LOWENSTEIN-BAUER: Sure.

MR. WEEDON: -- because of something else you said. You also talked about how chronic absenteeism can impact what schools are learning or what students are learning and impact the classroom environment --

MS. LOWENSTEIN-BAUER: That's right.

MR. WEEDON: -- as students come in and out. And I've seen the same within our public schools here in the district, both public and public charter as students reenroll or transfer or are pushed out. Whatever those reasons are, you're moving students around and they're entering different schools at different places, and that impacts the students that are there.

And I think we need to strike a balance between choice holding parents accountable for the choice they made. But really, the way that I view the reenrollment within this is, is it an indicator of whether or not that school is meeting the needs of the students and those parents who chose to enroll their student in that school? How is that undermining our theory of change, our theory of choice in the district?

MS. LOWENSTEIN-BAUER: I would say that my counter example would be a student who chose to enroll in a school because they're on a waitlist for a different school. And when they get off the waitlist, they leave. And because

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you have a mixed system, it's going to -- you know, I think my having not looked at the data specifically, because I don't have access to it, that no charter school would fail on the reenrollment statistic in a high stakes environment, because that's my interpretation of how the data would flow. And you don't want to - - in terms of valid, reliable and comparable, it's not comparable on that metric.

MR. WEEDON: Okay. I understand the logic there. I'm not sure I agree, and I think this is something that I've heard others talking about reenrollment being critical, and making sure that we're evaluating whether or not the students are moving forward within individual schools.

MS. LOWENSTEIN-BAUER: Well, I don't disagree. I do think it's critical. I think everything that we've talked about here is critical. Is it critical, but also, will it uphold its informative power and under a high stakes accountability? And I am concerned particularly about school climate surveys, but also, about reenrollment under those circumstances.

MR. WEEDON: Okay, thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you. With that, thank you so very much for staying late and for providing us your insight and your experience. We very much appreciate it.

I'm going to call the next panel of witnesses. I'm going to start, just to see if

Shakera Oliver has come in, and I don't think she has. Cathy Reilly who is the executive director of the Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals and Educators, and in the meantime, our team member is going to fix the computer.

Ms. Vanessa Bertelli, who is the executive director of the D.C. Language Immersion Project, and Jason Tyszko -- I hope I got that close to right -- who is the executive director of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Center for Education and Workforce.

We are restarting the computer and getting our PowerPoint up. Is that yours, Ms. Reilly?

MS. REILLY: No.

MR. JACOBSON: No? It's for the next panel. Well great. Can we go ahead and get started with Ms. Reilly's testimony? You have five minutes. You know the drill. Thank you so much.

MS. REILLY: Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Ms. Elena Roberts is not able to be here this evening.

MS. REILLY: Thank you. My name is Cathy Reilly, and I am the executive director of the Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals and Educators, which is largely a DCPS group. I'm going to try not to repeat so much of what has been said. I'll hand it in so that it's in the record. I do really appreciate your having this.

My main criterion in looking at the metrics for evaluation is that they should

measure items that leadership or staff of the school actually have control over. I think this has been really tough. You know, you can even make a statement that they don't have complete control over the test scores; certainly not over proficiency. So that's one criterion we look at. That's a good window.

The second thing: I feel we've been using a very blunt instrument by measuring, you know, 70 or 80 percent of it with test scores. This is an opportunity to move away from that. We've seen the price of that. It directs everything in one direction.

And the third thing is I hope the district will shift its emphasis from using this completely as a stick to some way that we can, you know, improve and use it as a method of improvement and investment. So you know, we completely support moving away from the high weight. I would go again with the minimum, almost, of the weight on proficiency and growth.

And we totally support using a much higher weight for growth. Now that -- and you know, that is a challenge in the high schools, because we only do one testing grade in the high schools. So I think part of our -- I mean, I don't have all the answers to that, but something we're really going to have to work in is how do we measure growth, because especially for the high schools; if you're measuring proficiency, they've had no control over the previous 10 years, and they're being held accountable for

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that.

You know, the people I've talked to have suggested that maybe we could use a diagnostic test that's given in 9th grade. It might be the SRA or the MAP test as a basis, and then look at how much we can advance by the time we take whatever test measure we decide for the high schools. But I think we do want to do growth. We don't want to the high schools just measured by proficiency. So I'd like to work with you on what would make sense with that and talk about that much further.

We support the five year graduation rate as definitely an option. The four year graduation rate has really hurt especially our ELL students, and we have pushed many students through that weren't ready to graduate. And that's not what we're trying to be about.

And I think we're going to have to -- if we look at this growth rate, we're going to have to work on how we're going to encourage growth, even for those that arrive at the advanced level. I do support giving greater weight to those that move from the lowest level up, but I don't want to send the message that if you arrive at the advanced level you're taken of. You know, we're fine because you're advanced. We don't have to do anything. So I think we're going to have to work on that if we go with growth.

With the quality of indicators, I mean, I think looking at what we have control over is going to be tough. I hope that we can use this

as an opportunity, and I'm not as well versed in what the feds would accept -- as looking at what we provide, partly. We measure people a lot without looking at what they're given to achieve what we've asked them to do.

You know, with the high schools, one of the biggest things I hear every time I ask is that they would like smaller class sizes for the more challenged students. You know, could we look at what types of strategies there are in place, or what types of resources there are that each school is offering for meeting the needs of these challenged kids? Could we look at what courses are being offered? You know, not an unlimited number of electives, but what range of courses do we offer? And then we'd have to couple that with what the enrollment is. We don't want just empty classes.

So this would all have to be worked out, but I hope this qualitative measure can be an opportunity to look at what we have control over, and then to make sure that that's being offered. That might be where you can stick in your physical education in some of this. I wouldn't do by minutes at all.

But the bottom line is, you are trying to move us from a position of how can I gain the system and make myself look good on the accountability measure to having us all think about how we can offer the best education to our students. And this is a delicate balance.

You want the accountability, but you

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actually want the consent of the government, that they think this is important and they think it's fair. So I mean, I think community involvement in the school, the parents. The things that worry me about some of what we've talked about is -- okay, I'm almost done -- is they might unduly punish the schools that have the most challenged population. So we'll have to look at that. But thank you for this opportunity.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you so much, Ms. Reilly. Ms. Bertelli.

MS. BERTELLI: Good evening. Thank you for this opportunity to testify. There have been some very thoughtful testimonies. My name is Vanessa Bertelli, and I'm the executive director of the D.C. Language Immersion Project, a not-for-profit urbanization working for dual language programs to become the norm in the District of Columbia in order to narrow the achievement gap, provide access to education and specialized programming -- equitable access, tackle school segregation and improve access to college and build desirable 21st century skills that allow for a full participation in a competitive and inclusive workforce.

Last week's events also remind us that linguistic and cultural competence are key to our country's political discourse. So how does this relate to the Every Student Succeeds Act and to testing?

A measure of school success relevant to a growing number of D.C. schools that speaks to

multiple, multiple intelligences as mentioned by Elizabeth Davis and to the well-rounded education that most people in this room seem to be advocating for is currently ignored. I'm talking about partnering language proficiency.

Partnering language is defined as the language in which students in dual language programs are taught at least 50 percent of instructional time. At the moment, because assessments rely primarily on proficiency in math and in English, the fact that in 19 of our district schools and close to 8,000 of our students also happen to be literate in a foreign language and competent in a foreign culture. This is largely ignored by fellow parents and policymakers when comparing schools and their achievements.

If we look at educational growth, a large and growing body of research finds that students in dual language programs -- their increase in achievement is faster than that of their counterparts who are non-dual language programs. So aside from this growth aspect, there is an argument to be made for partnering language proficiency being a measure of growth, because growth for some students might happen in the partnering language.

This goes back to the multiple intelligence argument, and it's a valuable indicator of educational growth. Growing understanding in literacy and a foreign language is not only directly correlated to access to

college, but it is also valuable in itself from a job opportunity standpoint, as fluency in languages other than English becomes a requirement for many jobs.

Regarding weight of testing, in the effort to reduce the weight of testing and the ill effects of over testing, we must also look at ways to rationalize the testing that is mandated. Most of our dual language schools already are testing in some partner language, and D.C. Immersion is working with Georgetown University on research to improve and better coordinate partner language testing so that this measure of achievement can be captured and used to better inform parents and the work of education stakeholders.

And finally, if we look at safety, engagement and environment, learning in a context in which two languages and cultures have equal footing not only affects the perception of our native English speakers and their ability to respectfully engage with other communities, but it also empowers and keeps safe the students who speak languages other than English at home.

Hector Tober writes in yesterday's *New York Times*: For Latino immigrant children, Spanish is a source of self-knowledge, a form of cultural capital. They are smarter, in fact, for each bit of Spanish they keep alive in their bilingual brains, and they are more likely to see the absurdity in the rants of xenophobes and racists.

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Now I realize that this measurement is tricky, because only roughly a 10th of D.C. schools has anything to measure. But the current measurements do not pick up on a huge part of these schools' work achievements and long-term benefits for our kids and our communities. So here I am to highlight that.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you so much, Ms. Bertelli. Mr. Tyszko?

MR. TYSZKO: Mr. President, members of the board, thank you very much for the honor and privilege of being able to come here and talk to you today. There's really just a couple of things I'm hoping to spend my time on.

Number one, I want to talk to you a little bit about who we are at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and why we care about this issue. But then I'll talk to you a little bit about a report we released earlier this year that's been shared with all of you, and talk about some recommendations specific to a career readiness indicator as part of ESSA accountability.

So the first thing I wanted to talk about is who we represent, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce headquartered here in the District of Columbia is the world's largest business federation, and we represent over 2,500 state and local chambers and over 3,000,000 businesses. So we are an organization that's pretty widespread. We tap into the pulse of the business community.

And part of the reason why we're here

talking today about where the business community intersects with the education community is we know that in today's economy and today's labor market, individuals are going to increasingly -- or businesses will increasingly require a skilled and competitive workforce. And we know individuals will increasingly require advanced education and advanced skills in order to be upwardly mobile in today's society.

We have been tracking some stats that cause us some concern. If you were to survey our business membership, you'd find over 90 percent of CEOs believe there is a chronic skills gap facing their industry. About half of those companies cannot fill open positions that are available today that are good paying jobs.

Forty percent of them cannot take on new business that's available to them, because they don't have the human capital to do so. And at the present rate we're on, we're going to have 6,000,000 unfilled positions in our economy that are skilled, middle class positions that could be driving our growth.

So that's one of the reasons why the business community cares, but we also think this is very important to the students. If you look at how our talent pipeline has been functioning in this country, we have a lot of reason to be concerned. We're very good at getting people out of high school. We're very good at promoting college access. We're very bad at getting people out of college and with a degree.

In fact, over half the students who show up to college today require remediation, and for those who kind of know the stats around remediation, it's a road to nowhere. Very difficult to get out of that track. And even those students who go for a four-year program, nearly 40 percent of them never complete. So we know students are not completing the credentials they need to be successful in this economy.

And even if you are successful, over half the students with a BA degree in this economy are unemployed or underemployed. So the skills that they are acquiring are not relevant to the economy that surrounds them, and they're not able to find the opportunity that they need. So for all of these reasons, that's why the business community cares about this, and it's why the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, its 501(c)(3) affiliate is really trying to engage proactively with the education and workforce systems in our country in order to better promote career readiness for our young adults.

And we think this is a very ideal time to have this conversation, because the business community has been supportive of the college and career readiness agenda that many states and districts have adopted. We've been strong supporters of that. And under ESSA, we think this is a tremendous opportunity to further explore through a more revamped accountability system what do we exactly mean by career readiness.

For a long time, we've treated them synonymously. College ready equals career ready. We often use them in an intertwined way, but when you look at how we measure it, it's always come down to academic proficiency in math and reading. And while that is very important for someone to have those skills to be able to access the workforce, it requires a little bit more than that to meet the needs and expectations of the employer community.

So what we're really excited about is this allows us to tease out what exactly do we mean by career readiness and how is it the same or different from college readiness. So that's why we're very excited. And I'm hoping what we can provide through this report is a little bit more in terms of how you can define career readiness, how you can measure it and what are some interesting ways you might be able to incorporate it into your accountability system.

So as part of this report, we really wanted to highlight three big challenges. One is, we need to tackle what is a cultural stigma that's right now positioned against career readiness, and that stigma is there for a lot of good reasons. Career and technical education, back when we called it vocational education had long been seen as a way of tracking students; putting them on a lesser path, precluding them from opportunities to access college, and it was seen as something that needed to be done away with.

We know things have changed, but there are still widespread perceptions that career readiness is not something for my child. It's something for somebody else's child. So that's one challenge that we need to tackle; what are public perceptions and what is the community buying to a career readiness indicator.

Another one is where states and districts have experimented with it, it's often been in a very narrow way. So if you look at how most states have tried to track it, they've simply called it career ready if you have scored proficient on a certain academic assessment.

They've called it career ready if you have participated in a dual credit course, which could be an AP course not really related to any specific career or industry area, or they've called it dual credit simply by tracking what are the enrollment levels in career and technical education courses. And we just assume that correlates with career readiness.

So the third challenge, then, is looking at employer engagement. We talk about career readiness and we talk about how to measure and how to define it, but we don't talk often about what is the enabling environment and the support environment that's necessary that involves the employer community to really make that successful. And we need to rethink how could we reinvent the relationship between the business community and the school community to support those principles, those teachers and those

students that really want to meaningfully tackle career readiness as an indicator.

So the way we've approached it is we've put out mainly two recommendations. The first is if you are interested in approaching career readiness as an accountability indicator under ESSA, we encourage you from day one to frame it not as a lesser track or less than college, but really, college read plus, as we call it.

A career readiness should be framed on day one with families and with students as an advanced level of college readiness. And what we mean by that is there are still the expectations that you'll be academically proficient and you'll be prepared for college; that you will receive college and career guidance, but then you will be expected to do at least one additional thing that could improve your career readiness.

And that could include course participation in career related fields. It could include the attainment of an industry recognized credential, or it could include participation in a high quality workplace learning experience, which could be an internship or a youth apprenticeship or even project-based learning or a simulated work experience.

So we think that if all students are given the opportunity to be college ready plus, that helps tackle some of these stigma issues, and it also helps us break out of any one single indicator as a measure of career readiness, but it allows folks to experiment with different

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combinations to show the kind of skills that a student has.

And then the last thing I'll just mention is the way that the business community wants to support this, is say don't just define it and measure it, but work with the business community to really make it a reality. And that includes getting the business community to come in and provide some of that career guidance directly to students and built relationships; give them the ability to access those students in work-based learning opportunities and to be able to assess those students to determine that they learned something on the job; allow them to identify the credentials that are recognized and valued by business in your community, and find other ways of getting employers to evaluate schools based on the measures that matter to them, and allow employers in the business community to actually endorse schools who have done it extremely well in actually promoting the career readiness of their students.

So we hope to make this report available to you as you consider your ESSA accountability system, and to the extent that any of our other materials or additional conversations could be brokered, consider us at your disposal. Thank you for your time.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you so much to all three of you. We'll do a round of board questions. I'm going to apologize ahead of time. I'm going to need to head out, unfortunately.

But let's start with Ms. Lord and then Ms. Wattenberg. Ms. Lord?

MS. LORD: First, thank you all for staying late. This is enormously exciting, and as the parent of two, the word I believe that was used was mal-employed college graduates (Laughs). This whole idea of preparation plus is to me, enormously exciting and it gets at sort of language abilities. It gets at that extra that the teachers are doing, and it also helps supply some of the resources to your point, Cathy.

So let me delve down a little bit into what college ready plus might look like. And there were some examples from Tennessee, where the local Chamber of Commerce had some interesting relationships with the students and the schools.

And then the other question that I raise is, there are some very specific industry certifications or certificates that mean something -- nursing or the allied health fields. But there are others where it might seem like the certification means a lot, but in fact, in the industry, it means less than showing that you can actually, for example, serve as a computer help desk or program a computer.

So some specifics about sort of how it looks like currently in practice and what caveats you might suggest about the industry certification.

MR. TYSZKO: Yes. Thank you for the question. The Tennessee example that you're

alluding to, I'm pretty involves a National Chamber of Commerce. And they have done a really good job of brokering relationships with their local school districts where their staff is able to work directly with the student body and actually help play a matchmaker role with some of the area businesses to place them in a high quality work-based learning experience.

But there, you are achieving economies of scale, because the chamber is providing that as one of their member services, and they're able to tap into a large distribution of companies that make up their membership, and then make that network available to the students.

So once the students actually have a successful experience, the chamber then maintains a relationship with that student and says if you really proved yourself and made a name for yourself, and we saw that you were a good worker, as you continue in your education, we might want to stay in touch with you because we may have a job for you down the road, particularly if you come to live and work in this community.

So that's a great way where you had a local chamber partner with the school district to expand opportunity for these students and tackle a lot of the problems like transportation issues or how to assess that it was a good experience. So that's a great example of how the business can be proactive with school leadership.

And then regarding the industry credentials, this is a real big issue, because

there's a lot of interest in public policy right now and saying, well students should be given some kind of additional credential beyond a high school diploma. And while I couldn't agree more, the challenge that we have is there are literally thousands of credentials, and the number of credentials is increasing every year.

So how can somebody, particularly within a school district decipher which ones are valuable and which ones are not, and where do I want to spend the time and cost in getting my students plugged into credentialing opportunities without it being all for naught. So that is where the business community really has to have direct engagement.

It has to have a process whereby they identify and continually update which are the credentials that employers are using for their hiring purposes, and which ones are they not. That is key information that could only be gotten at by having a dynamic conversation that's constantly updated. You're never going to find the list, and that list is good for ten or five years. It's not even going to be good for necessarily one or two years.

So this is really why we need to address that larger support environment, and we need better communication channels between the business community and the schools and the teachers who are actually making these decisions for the curriculum, so they're spending their time on the right set of credentials that are

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most recognized and valid and relied upon or reliable, channeling the previous conversation; but the ones that are most recognized and have utility to the business community.

MS. LORD: Would we be well advised to consider maybe something like a diploma of distinction? For example, at Duke Ellington School for the Arts, they do the equivalent of an internship. They also have extra course work in addition to their sort of -- there's a professional or career track.

So they don't necessarily get industry certification, but they do have this extra or badges so that there's -- you have your traditional diploma, but you also have this sort of career ready plus, college ready plus assortment that is separate and apart from the accountability plan.

MR. TYSZKO: Credentials come in all different shapes and sizes and they have different meaning for different folks and different stakeholders. Whether it's a digital badge, an industry recognized credential provided by a vendor -- what I'm trying to encourage is, don't get caught up in those kinds of distinctions. What matters is the conversation you have with the business community and them having buy in to what that credential represents, and whether or not they're actually looking for it when they place someone in the workplace learning experience or whether they actually recruit somebody for hiring purposes.

So it could be anything you want it to be. What matters is, is it getting attention? Is it understood? And is there buy-in from the employer partners that matter to you? So it's a way of at least kicking that conversation off, because in some of the programs of study or career and technical education tracks, there aren't credentials that could be earned at the high school level.

That doesn't mean you're out of options. It means you can create a digital badge or some other form of endorsement that has widespread buy-in for the businesses in the community. And if they see that it's part of someone's transcript or part of their resume, that actually carries value.

But that's not something that you can just create and say, I'm going to give you a badge, and I expect employers to recognize it. You need to have processes in place that are managing those conversations and constantly updating those conversations with the business community.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms. Lord. We'll go to Ms. Wattenberg.

MS. BERTELLI: I just wanted to say how much the contribution of the business community is really, really important amongst the states that have implemented dual language programs in a systemic way. In all of those cases, the impetus for doing so comes from the business community advocating for language competencies that were

not existent. So it is an incredibly valuable partnership and desirable one.

MS. WATTENBERG: Thanks. I have two questions for Ms. Reilly. One: You talked about a way of measuring growth using a different test, and I half followed. Could you explain that again?

And then the second is, you talked about the importance of looking at whether or not the school has the resources. You talked about class size. You talked about the range of classes and so on. Do you have any idea about how you would incorporate that into the accountability formula, or is this sort of a larger idea that yeah, our schools need more resources, but this may not be a place where we can address it?

MS. REILLY: Well, to the -- you know, I'm not an expert on what we could use, but the people I talked to have said we might explore using the diagnostic that would be administered in 9th grade. You know, right now in math and English, apparently, we use something called the SRA and we use something called MAP for math. And then we use that as the basis --

MS. WATTENBERG: That's used by DCPS?

MS. REILLY: That's my understanding, or those are in use. And if that were the basis, then you could figure out how to align that then, so that when you gave whatever test we decide on for high school, you could see growth. How that aligns, I don't know. It's just kind of exploring that you give a diagnostic and then

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measure the growth; that you need to do that for high school.

So that's -- I'm not the expert. I think there are people that can help us with that, though, so that we did something in 9th grade, and we could see by, if we keep administering it in 10th or if we went to 11th, we could see that we'd actually made progress.

In terms of -- what I'm after, which could be the college plus, I'm after in the qualitative indicator looking at something that we have control over, and that we're looking at some of the inputs as well as -- you know, it's an accountability thing, but I would like us to roll in what we have control over so that it's both larger --

I don't know what fits its accountability, what you're permitted to do. I am concerned about things like chronic absenteeism as a blunt force, because we don't have complete control over that. It might be if you use three or four measures here, you're not having such a high stake. You use your climate survey. You use something like the career readiness, which then you know, you also -- you have to give them the resources to do it.

So the other thing I want to say is, I do disagree that choice is our main form of improving our schools. I think we have many ways we're trying to improve our schools, and many of us have felt choice has been a poor way of thinking about improving it. So stability, I

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think should remain in the mix, whether it's the stability of students or we're also limiting staff turnover, which might be a better measure.

So you know, the larger point was that it's things we have control over and not things that we don't, and that we try to craft what we value and what we're doing with this qualitative indicator.

MS. WATTENBERG: Can you say something more about the staff turnover? What would you look at?

MS. REILLY: Well, I feel that at the high schools, we've really suffered, especially if you think about it, high school kids need recommendations. They're hopefully there for four years. We're having a lot of trouble keeping them there for four years, but part of that might be that the adults and relationships are gone, because there is so much turnover amongst both the principal or the teachers or even the other staff.

So I think a measure that looked at staff turnover, that encouraged our LEAs as well as our schools to reduce that. I mean, part of what I'm after is more of an investment and sense of ownership in these schools, because I think that will mean that we have more of an investment and a sense of ownership of our students.

So I don't know what else I can say, other than that I think it should be a measure. You know, it shouldn't be the only measure. Each one of these will get reduced by the number of

measures you put in. So you're going to have to look at the whole picture and see what it looks like at the end. But I think it definitely has to be there.

I think the stability has been a major impact on the school climate; the changing -- you know, it doesn't mean that you want no turnover. It means that we've gone too far to the other side.

MS. WATTENBERG: You can maybe have an average, then.

MS. REILLY: Yeah.

MS. WATTENBERG: Or something like that.

MS. REILLY: I mean, I think we have to - I didn't delve into the details of how all these work, so I'm hoping we have time to do that.

MS. WATTENBERG: Right. Thank you. I just want to say thanks to all of you as well as for our next panel for sticking around so long. We really appreciate it.

MS. REILLY: Thank you.

MS. WILLIAMS: Ms. Wattenberg? Mr. Weedon? I'm sorry.

MR. WEEDON: It's late. I'll forgive you. Just real quick, I wanted to thank you all. And then I wanted to bring up or relate to something you've talked about, Vanessa, strongly support foreign languages.

And it's disappointing when we see our public schools talk about how students get foreign language or world language weekly, and

every elementary school gets it. The school my children have gone to, I believe they had Spanish, French, Spanish, nothing, Chinese. That's not how you learn a language.

And I think one of the other things that I've heard repeatedly tonight is making sure that we get good data that's meaningful. And I think there's something into what you're talking about there, and ensuring that we're getting students who can speak proficiently and embrace the culture and diversity and the languages, and that's one of the factors that we should be looking at. And thank you everyone else, as well.

MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you. You can go home now, if you'd like (Laughter) or you can stay and listen to --

SPEAKER: Or you can stay.

MS. WILLIAMS: -- the last panel, who -- Mr. Steven Glazerman.

(Discussion off the record)

MS. WILLIAMS: Mark Simon and Mr. Tansey.
(Pause)

MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Glazerman, just for the record, your PowerPoint is loaded on that computer in front of you, and so if you want to slide it over, you can use it as you need.

(Discussion off the record)

MS. WILLIAMS: Mr. Tansey, would you like to start while they get that together?

MR. TANSEY: Sure.

MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

MR. TANSEY: I'm going to take a little bit of a cue from Cathy, since a lot has been said, and I'll say ditto to some of them. I really appreciated what Ms. Ernst said in one of the earlier panels from the teacher -- perspective of a parent, because over testing, teaching to the test, all of those things when it comes from a teacher can sound like you're just trying to you know, cover for yourself.

But I have had that experience. I was a teacher for seven years at Dunbar Senior High School, and I'm now a teacher at McKinley Tech High School and at both schools, but primarily at Dunbar, we had times where every freshman was enrolled in a class called test taking strategies, and it was a year-long class, and there was a lot of narrowing of the curriculum, and that was obviously, not to their benefit.

But I want to speak a little bit more broadly about testing and what purpose it's supposed to serve, for as a teacher, I primarily use testing to inform instruction. So I need to get unique data about each student, about what their strengths and weaknesses are so I can build on their strengths and fill in those weaknesses.

It can obviously also be used for accountability, though people have spoken to the perverse incentive structures that can create. I think that we need to find a way to have a testing structure that provides for the teacher's need to use it to inform instruction, some element of accountability, but also, so that as a

school system, and I mean that to include all of the LEAs, we can learn how to better provide an education for our students, because as Erich said earlier, we need to know why did those two kids manage to get good scores on the test when everyone else didn't.

And unless we have transparent data, we can't analyze that. We can't explore it. And as a school system, again used broadly, that serves such a wide range of students, kids whose parents are senators and you know, lawyers and doctors and kids who are at -- you know, homeless and chronically absent, we need to have a very blunt conversation about how we best serve all those different populations. And that only happens when we're not gaining the system; when we're having clear data.

I am a proponent of growth rather than proficiency to undo one of those perverse incentive structures, because I also saw things like uninviting students and only targeting the kids who are on the threshold and things like that. Cathy referenced a couple of tools DCPS uses, though she got the acronyms a little off. There's SRI, which is Scholastic Reading Inventory, and MAP, which is a measure of academic progress.

The idea of using a tool like that, and I'm not advocating necessarily those tools, but tools like that, is that they can give very individual data about what a student's strengths or weaknesses are, so it's actionable on the

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teacher and school level, and because it can measure growth, if I give you a diagnostic twice and the difference is at least in large part, what I or the school provided.

And at that point, PARCC doesn't provide a lot. PARCC especially, and this is just sort of how the math works, the further away a kid is from proficiency, the less PARCC provides, because a non-adaptive test only gives you useful information if it's close enough to where you are that you're doing better than guessing. Right?

But once you're way behind, the data is trash. And I have not gotten a lot of useful data out of PARCC. Some of that is the delay. People spoke about how long it takes to get the data back that I'm now -- you know, the next year, I'm teaching different kids.

The other benefit of SRI or MAP or any other diagnostic data is it would allow us to have very blunt conversations about where our kids are. If we started getting data at the beginning of the year going wow, we have 9th graders coming in at the 3rd grade level? We need to have a conversation. What do you do?

I mean, what we were told is just pretend they're on grade level. But that doesn't help anybody. Right? That's not constructive. So we need to be finding a way to make the data we collect useful.

I don't know what -- you know, I heard some of the research about climate surveys and things like that. I happen to like them. I'm

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forgetting who brought it up, but the idea of having an audit or some system like that for accountability, because I think there are best practices for a high functioning learning institution is.

And when I say learning, I don't mean an educational institution. I mean an institution that is able to learn. And to reinforce something Cathy said, school choice has become a little bit of a -- you know, a cop-out, that you can say well, maybe Mary Lord, maybe you're suited to our school.

Well, maybe there's some kids who aren't suited to any school. The school has to adapt to them, and we need to have an incentive structure that says you're at this school. We're going to invest in you. You've chosen this school. We're going to invest in you. We're going to figure out how to make this work for you. Otherwise, you have just upped some of that turnover.

So in closing, I want to make sure we're asking what is education, and how can we be sure we're providing it? Because what the kids I taught for seven years at Dunbar need is different, and some of this, you know, college plus is an example that a kid -- just because he can pass a test doesn't mean he can do a job. Thank you.

MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you. Mr. Simon?

MS. WATTENBERG: Can we go to Mr. Glazerman, because his slides are up and we didn't get to see --

MS. WILLIAMS: Oh, I'm sorry.

MS. WATTENBERG: -- Mr. Tansey's face while he was testifying.

MS. WILLIAMS: Mr. Glazerman.

MR. GLAZERMAN: So my name is Steve Glazerman. I'm a senior fellow at Mathematica Policy Research. I'm also the director of the Educator Impact Laboratory. The Ed Impact Lab seeks to develop measures of the impact that educators have on their students, but more importantly, we work with states and school districts, local education agencies to find ways to use those data effectively and to make smart decisions.

So I actually am not going to read from prepared remarks today, because we heard so much earlier, I wanted to be able to sort of try to fill in gaps and not repeat what we've already said, although I may do some of that really more for emphasis. And so I did sort of pull together some slides, and I'll use them as something of a structure.

So I really want to start out by emphasizing this distinction that others have made, but two distinctions. One is between test score based measures where we must make -- draw a bright line between status measures and growth. I think I'm not the first person to raise that, but I want to re-emphasize it, of course, not to de-emphasize the value of all other kinds of measures, non-test-score based measures. And those can include things that are both academic

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and non-academic.

My expertise principally lies in the test-score-based measures; not exclusively, but I will spend a little bit more time talking about that. And what I really want to say is that the most important starting point is what are you going to use these measures for? The status measures, things like proficiency rates or graduation rates or college readiness index, or even, you know, other kinds of point in time measures answer a question that maybe parents would have. You know, is this a good school for my child?

And it only partially answers that question. It answers that question to the extent that you want to know is my child going to be going to school with high achieving peers. But more importantly, we ask the question -- policymakers ask the question, are educators in this school doing a good job with the kids that they serve?

And that is why we have to focus on growth and I would say, we have to get growth right. It's not just a matter of saying, well, let's look at growth, because that's not the same thing. It's just gains in scores. Right? We have to account for all of the complexity and the nature of the tests themselves as well as the fact that even knowing a prior score doesn't tell you everything you need to know about a student and the challenges that they face.

I've had a lot of lively conversations

with Mr. Tansey, who has given some really vivid stories about students bring and the challenges that teachers face. And we want to make sure that we're comparing teachers who are facing the same kinds of challenges to each other and not trying to sum up everything, as people said, in a single test score. That includes in a pretest score. Okay? So we have to take into account the family background, the learning disabilities, the language -- home language and other factors.

So we have to get growth right, and I don't have enough time to give a lecture on that, but I provide some resources in the PowerPoint that you can click on as hyperlinks. If I leave you with one thing, it's a piece of advice that I don't think I've heard before, at least not as clearly as I want to make it with this ridiculous graphic.

But we should not combine status and growth measures into a single index. Please resist the urge to say, apply a weight to this and a weight to this and a weight to that and add them together. They measure different things, and if you put them together, you'll have something that is just uninterpretable.

The reason is, the growth measures are what you want to focus on exclusively for making policy decisions like resource allocation. What's working so we can replicate it? What isn't working, so we can help fix it? For that, we need a measure of the impact of a teacher, of a principal, of a curricular offering, a program.

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The status won't tell you that.

The status will answer the questions that the gentleman from the Chamber of Commerce wanted to know, which is do we have kids who are career ready. And that's a different question. That's a valid question. But for ESSA accountability, you probably want to be focusing on the latter.

It's also useful to be able to distinguish between status and growth, because if you look at them together but not combined, you can get like a scatter plot like this. And each dot here, I imagine one day we'll be able to attach names of schools to the dots. And then what we could do is really clever. On one axis, we have the percent proficient, which is a status measure, and the other one is some kind of growth or value-added.

We can start to break down schools into low status, high growth. And that means something very special. These are people who are working miracles with kids who we would have written off in the old system under No Child Left Behind.

We also have high status/low growth schools. Those are the ones that we would otherwise have been complacent about. And then finally, you can, you know, identify high status/high growth, low status/low growth, and you really learn a much richer story about the schools and their performance by this approach to multiple measures, where you don't just mindlessly combine them. Instead, you know, you

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look at them separately, but reconcile them.

So that's what I want to leave you with in terms of multiple measures and use of test-score-based measures. I do have in this presentation, various other points, which I'm happy to address during questions. And you'll see that there are some hyperlinks to papers, some of which are technical, some of which are less. I apologize for the technical ones.

And let me just sort of -- as I scroll through, you'll see a lot of links on things like standardized testing, you know, comparing different growth models to each other. And also, one point I do want to make, which is that these accountability ratings matter, even though we already have this sort of de facto accountability through parental choice, choice is going to work better if we have smart measures and better information that we're providing to parents. And that includes everything.

That includes on the school climate. That includes you know, student survey based measures or whatever you know, measures we want to add to it, as long as we sort of package them carefully. I'm gauging some research right now that shows just how these choices about presenting and tabulating information for parents influences how they choose. And I'm happy to answer questions.

MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Glazerman. Now, Mr. Simon.

MR. SIMON: My name is Mark Simon. I've

come here tonight as a former active DCPS parent from Ward 1, a 30 year career educator and as a national education policy analyst with expertise on education reform and specifically teacher evaluation.

At this point in the evening, most of my points have been made, but I'm still going to talk to you by way of summary, maybe, because I don't think that there was a huge amount of disagreement tonight. First of all, I want to thank you for this hearing, because this may be the most important thing you do as the State Board of Education, if you're capable of not just rubber stamping the bad recommendation that's coming to you from OSSE.

I don't think that anybody who's come before you tonight has said anything different from that. When they wrote ESSA, Congress roundly rejected the strategies of the federal government under No Child Left Behind, not only because the strategies have failed over the past 15 years, but because the policies produced a gigantic backlash among parents and teachers.

So you have an opportunity now to join the states that are rethinking what schools, teachers and school systems and LEAs should be accountable for. Many states are moving towards engaging educators in developing more meaningful assessments of student work; towards qualitative measures of school quality; towards focusing on growth, not the ranking of students in schools based on test scores that largely reflect the

socio economic background of the students; and towards more of a focus on the learning culture in schools and system-wide continuous improvement strategies.

Drawing conclusions from standardized tests has been inaccurate, simple minded, demoralizing of both students and staff, and it's driven educationally unsound decisions. States as diverse as California, Arizona, Michigan, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Kentucky are all forging new ground. The District of Columbia should be part of that group.

So this is a moment for courage on the part of the State Board of Education. I have three recommendations, and I think that they've come from almost everybody who's spoken tonight, with very good caveats you know, from Steven and you know, Gary Ratner and a lot of people have kind of gotten into the care that has to be taken.

But number one: You have to shift from using absolute standardized test scores or proficiency rates to rating schools more based on growth. My first recommendation is to replace growth -- I mean, to replace the absolute ranking with a growth measure. But I take what Steven said to be true, which is it's the combination of the two on some level that is maybe most effective; not combining them, but having the two measures.

My second recommendation is there has to be a dramatic, not an incremental, but a dramatic

decrease, even if it's a growth model, even if you have both, there has to be a dramatic decrease in the stakes attached to that single standardized test score indicator. You know, Gary said something in the 40, 45 percent range. It's got to be below 50 percent. It has to be something so that what's getting measured is going to drive different behaviors at the school house and system-wide. If it doesn't do that, you will have failed.

So the two high stakes are the problem. All the other things that we talked about, you know, efforts to require numbers of minutes of PE or science or you know, prohibiting test prep, all of that will fail if you don't first dramatically decrease the stakes attached to the test scores.

My third recommendation is -- oops, can I keep going? I'm the last one. My third recommendation is to develop robust qualitative measures of the learning cultures of schools, perhaps using the SCAI climate survey instrument that Gary Ratner referred to earlier.

California, where they developed that, is also developing measures of students' social emotional skills that I think, you know, are going to be worth looking at. Michigan and Kentucky have developed a continuous improvement set of standards and qualities that they're putting in place as system processes and will be measuring schools' engagement in those processes.

New York City has for many years now,

decades, I think, had 38 schools, the New York Performance Standards Consortium that have been exempt from the generic standardized tests and have used portfolios and other measures for the quality of student work.

New Hampshire is experimenting with teacher developed assessments and locally developed measures in schools that are replacing the national standardized tests. And in terms of surveys, climate surveys, you know, I heard the discussion earlier. There are terrific you know, climate surveys that have been developed. The Harvard Tripod student survey process is really above reproach in terms of the ability to game it or -- you know, it's fair. It's effective.

Montgomery County has used parent and teacher surveys for you know, a decade now. And they don't use them to the extent that I think they should, but there are lots of models, and they're all much better than the surveys that are used now by DCPS to extract praise from constituents.

So I encourage the State Board to establish a work group to dig deeply into the arena of qualitative indicators of quality; to make specific recommendations for adoption by the State Board of Education. Qualitative measures of school quality need to account for a significant percentage of school accountability, if the learning climate is going to improve.

The Consortium for Chicago Schools research talked about organizing schools for

improvement, depending completely on these qualitative factors of school change. So there's a lot to look at it, but if you stick with the recommendations that are coming to you from OSSE, I'll be disappointed. (Laughs) Thank you.

MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Simon. Do board members have questions at this time? Ms. Wattenberg or Ms. Lord?

MS. WATTENBERG: Thanks again for being here. So I'm going to try to ask a complicated question, and we'll see if I can do it at 10:00 at night. It's mainly to Mr. Glazerman, but anybody else can get in on it; which is, the issue of -- if we measure growth, part of the reason for measuring growth in addition to that's what we want to measure, it's a way of encouraging schools, or at least not discouraging them from enrolling and helping the kids who are at the lowest end of the scoring.

So one of the things that we've talked about is even if we have growth, are there ways of extra weighting, say, students who are in special ed, students who are the lowest achieving students so that you create yet again, a fair system? In other words, if -- so that the growth -- I assume even in a growth measure, the students who are at the lowest end are going to grow the slowest, even if they're provided sort of a comparable education.

So how do you weight that or can you weight that? Can you just give us advice on that?

MR. SIMON: I think what you're describing is something that can be easily done for two ways. It's just mechanical. One is calibration. It's ensuring that you have a measure that gives the same chance or at least an even better chance for growth at the low end of the scale than it does at the high end of the scale.

Oftentimes, that's really a function of the test itself. It's not the same thing as height or temperature, where a one degree or a one inch difference is the same anywhere on the scale. Psychometricians design tests so that they have this property, what they call a vertically equated property, but as a state, the state's job is to select its test vendor and hold that test vendor to make sure that you have an instrument that is very sensitive and very carefully calibrated at the end of the scale that you care about.

But I think what you're getting at is even bigger, which is to give more weight to growth at the low end, because we might value that more. That can be --

MS. WATTENBERG: Well, it's two things. One is, maybe we value it more, but in particular, I don't want to penalize schools for encouraging students in those categories to come to their schools. I don't want to give those schools any disincentive for enrolling and keeping those students.

MR. SIMON: Right. Well, I mean, I think

what policymakers have done in some places to adjust the incentives for schools to try to compete for students, disadvantaged vulnerable students is through the financing, through weighted student funding and that sort of mechanism.

I'd be very leery of using a test score tweak to try to accomplish that goal. What you want from a test score measure is a fair measure of the impact that the teachers and the educators in that building are having on their students, because that serves two purposes. One, of course, it helps with you know, fairness in the summative function of an accountability measure, but also, like Mr. Tansey was saying earlier, that's an important input.

He wants to know how he's doing with different types of students, and he wants the data to be sort of in some ways, neutral about -- not trying inject a particular value system about this student is worth more or less to me. They just want to know how much did that student learn compared to you know, what a reasonable amount of growth would be for a student of that profile. And I mean prior achievement, but also, whatever learning challenges they bring.

MR. TANSEY: Just a thought on that. This one of the hard decisions about how to use any kind of data proficiency or growth, is what's acceptable. You can use percentiles, but then you're always saying the bottom x percent are not good enough. If we say, as the original No Child

Left Behind said, there needs to be a certain amount that was set by the state, but I don't want to call it arbitrary, but it was not based off anything other than it had to get to a hundred percent by a certain time, you know, then where do you get that measure?

And maybe there's some research. I don't know. Maybe there's some research of what should be able to be achieved for different student dynamics in a high quality classroom. You'd have to sort of curate that data point so you could say, rather than saying the bottom third always gets canned, you say here is the line that we have seen can be achieved, if you have a high functioning institution.

So that's going to be our bar for good enough, even if, I'll tell you, some of it is a little bit tough to sell politically, because you'd go, oh, wow, the data shows that a kid who's coming in this far behind is likely to only catch up three grades? Well, that's what the data shows. Maybe no one wants to say it, but that's what the data shows.

MS. WILLIAMS: Ms. Lord?

MS. LORD: Well, you guys get the prize for really, really hanging in there. Thank you. There's so much interesting stuff here, so let me see if I can condense it. The point about the high achieving -- so in other words, high poverty, high test scores seems to me a really robust way of starting to look at growth, so that it's not just growth on test scores, it's growth

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with students who started low and ended up higher.

Is there a way of thinking about the accountability system that would allow both parents, teachers and also public policy people to sort of credit teachers with growth that so far has been below the bar, to Mr. Tansey's example?

Take the student that started three levels -- grade levels below and got to within one level, so two years' worth of growth. Right now, we don't capture that. And are there ways of thinking about that, regardless of the weight; just setting the system up so that we get those measures, we get the growth and we are able to essentially not just acknowledge the school, but also, acknowledge the teachers who are doing extraordinary things?

MR. SIMON: Well, I have to say, I didn't agree with everything Mr. Martel said earlier, but one thing that he did have right, which is that a school is really just a collection of teachers and a principal.

And you know, some of my colleagues have done some research on things like school performance, which is not the same thing as principal performance, so they've sort of empirically determined that those are quite separate. But also, you know, you think of a school performance as the sum of its effectiveness of its teachers.

So yes, I think really the focus could

come back to teacher performance, and that's why again, Impact Lab is focused on educators. We don't really talk about schools quite so much, but the clear implication is that the effectiveness of the school is the sum of how effective its educators are collectively. And if you're a parent sending your child to that school, you're going to get some string of teachers.

I think that there is a lot to be learned by taking this approach to multiple measures where you -- instead of trying to come up with the single score is to reconcile differences. You do run into a problem where you have a lot -- we talked about a lot of different measures today, and if you have too many of them, it does become overwhelming.

The research I'm doing right now is taking different indicators of schools and grouping them into domains, and then testing whether parents and other users of this information find it more accessible if the domains are grouped in such a way that you either get a less detailed or more detailed report, or if you have something employing a progressive disclosure principle, where if it's online, you can -- as a user, you can choose to see more information, open a drawer and look at more information or close it and just have the summary and the less overwhelming quantity of information.

But it's this process of reconciling

differences. A school may be very good at what we call attachment measures -- you know, reducing absenteeism, increasing attendance and increasing its reenrollment rate, but it may be another thing entirely about whether they -- with the learning experiences for those students and the growth that those students experience in that school.

And they may go together. But we never assume that they all sort of load onto a single overall -- you know, to use an unscientific term, awesomeness at the school.

MR. GLAZERMAN: The only thing I would add in response to your question is that although it may not be in the priorities of the State Board of Education, my assumption is that if you're redesigning the accountability measures for schools, you should at least be making recommendations about how teachers and principals are evaluated, because if you create an accountability set of measures for schools that are, you know, diverse and multiple, but teachers and principals are still being evaluated using a single proficiency score, standardized test-based evaluation system, why bother?

So, you know, schools, principals and teachers all have to have a similar transformation in their evaluations to dramatically de-emphasize the standardized test and bulk up the other qualitative measures of the work that they do.

MS. LORD: To that point, there has been

some you know, well established research that shows if you use an instrument designed to assess or measure one thing and put it to another purpose, you warp its validity as a true gauge of, for example, student achievement.

So it stands to reason that that conversation -- I mean, certainly, the conversation should be held, but you know, if you're using test scores to evaluate teachers or principals, you need to know that you're probably not going to be getting a true gauge of student proficiency.

MR. GLAZERMAN: I should just add that I think in D.C., there has been such a fetish made about that single score that you don't realize that you know, in Montgomery County, the evaluation instrument for both teachers and principals is a blank page, and a narrative is written, and the test scores don't show up in it at all.

And so you know, there are rubrics about the kinds of things that need to be observed and mentioned, but it's entirely a qualitative kind of assessment taking into consideration a variety of things. So I think D.C. has to move in that direction.

MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

MS. LORD: Just a quick lightning round. Should science be part of the accountability program? We have to test it. We have to report the scores.

MR. WEEDON: That's a judgment call.

MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

MR. WEEDON: That's a policy question, not a scientific or research question, so --

MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you. Mr. Weedon?

MR. WEEDON: So one, thank you all for sticking around and having this conversation. I think it has lived up to the Twitter hype from earlier tonight.

One hopeful quick question: Should we look and value proficiency differently at different grade levels? Fourth grade reading is often seen as this universal indicator of future success; eighth grade math. Should we value those differently or higher than we value proficiency in reading at other ages?

And just a concrete example -- you know, Elliot Hine Middle School came up earlier. There are students in the school reading at a kindergarten, second grade level. Should we value the elementary schools that are producing middle schoolers who are ready to enter middle school higher than we're valuing or rating those that aren't producing those students that are ready to move forward?

MR. SIMON: So I'm very nervous about a should we value question, because usually that's for the policymakers. But if I can rephrase that as --

MR. WEEDON: Can we?

MR. GLAZERMAN: How should we weigh -- you know, what is the meaning -- how should we interpret proficiency of students at a certain

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grade level versus others, or growth at certain grade levels versus others?

One thing we do tend to know from decades of analyzing achievement data for students is that there is this process called fan-out, where a variation in student proficiencies, abilities, whatever gets much greater as the students get older. And this is -- so that's a clear pattern. The implications for that pattern are less clear.

Some people interpret that as we need to intervene earlier and put more of our resources into the early grades to minimize the inequitable trajectories of achievement gaps that can form and show up later, because there's only so much you can do about it at the middle and high school level.

Another way to interpret your question would be to think about the early grades; grades one, two and three or even kindergarten. One thing that I would caution there is that you know, students grow at different rates, the same way that their heights grow at different rates. And it would be silly to compare the growth rate of, let's say, boys versus girls at that age, because they're going to catch up.

And the same thing happens academically, where people might -- a student might learn how to learn. And that will show up two, three years later. So I think the long range solution, and unfortunately it's not one that will be helpful to you in coming up with this ESSA accountability system would be to develop some kind of measures

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that tell you about the impact that an early elementary grade teacher has on their students when they start fourth, fifth grade.

Are they learning how to learn? Are their growth rates at those later grades influenced by the kinds of patterns and sort of behaviors that they learned when they were you know, at the very formative years. That's a tough problems. Researchers haven't quite solved it. And if you did come up with a good measure, it would be very lagged. You don't know how good a first grade teacher you are until four years after your kids leave your classroom.

MR. WEEDON: Right. Well, we're not really using it to evaluate the teachers per se. We're using it to evaluate the schools. So did the schools put in place the policies, the supports and support the teachers so that when those students hit fourth grade, they were proficient and moving forward? But I completely get your point.

MR. TANSEY: I'd like to just add one element, because the caution for me is always the perverse incentive structure -- will they just start cramming in fourth grade or whatever? So there's two points on that.

One: Something that could be in the -- what I'm calling the learning organization criteria is, does the school or the LEA or whomever have a process to learn from you know, the data weaned from the students they have? So they go oh, wow, we have predictors in first

grade that we need to do this, that or the other indication, because especially with high teacher turnover and things like that, your first grade teacher from three years ago might be a totally different team now.

Second, going back to what I like to focus on with data is longitudinal adaptive tests, is that the hope is that we create enough data where people can go oh, wow. Developing this strength in first grade is predictive of some outcome in the future, so that we can start to -- or a gap; like this gap is predictive of failure.

But those learning institutions have to be there, or you end up with simplistic answers. Like at Dunbar, I was in our ninth grade academy for three years. And by the way, speaking of retaining students, we had a 90 plus percent graduation rate for kids who were there for all four years.

But they would say, well, they've got to pass algebra, you know, because if kids don't pass algebra, they're more likely to drop out. I was like, okay, I hear you, but just passing them doesn't change that outcome. (Laughs) Right? Like just because a kid passed it, even though he doesn't know algebra doesn't change anything.

So that's the delicate balance of how do you make sure you're pairing the institutional knowledge necessary to use data with the collection of it.

MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you. Thank you so

much for your testimony.

MS. WATTENBERG: A double thank you.

MS. WILLIAMS: Are there any other witnesses who want to provide testimony who have not provided testimony? Do you want -- would it be all right? Do you have a copy that we can have, or would you like to testify?

MR. BROWN: I'd like to testify.

MS. WILLIAMS: All right. Take the stand, please, and introduce yourself, because I don't have your name on my list, please.

MR. BROWN: Good evening. My name is Charles Brown. I work with an organization called Healthy Family Grows. I just want to give a quick testimony about how to better connect the growth model to actually how to better assist growing and developing our schools that are assisting our children, and kind of a programs mindset that I think might assist us in navigating children to be more successful and schools being more successful, and better partnerships with parents.

Without getting too much into the details of all of it, I'd like the current trend that everybody is going in with the growth model. We've all kind of accepted it. People aren't fighting it. I think that's a great thing. I think we need to tie everybody into the growth model. It seems very quick to tie just teachers into the growth model, but I think all people connected to children should be associated with the student's growth.

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So if you're a social worker and you work with a specific population of students, and those students are all looking at success, you should see and be connected to that student's success.

Also, a big portion of this that's very important to me is how we work with our homeless students, our very mobile students; that wherever they move, their growth is kind of tracked. I would prefer students -- their information be more like a bar code, so wherever they go, the minute that they're scanned, not only do their services immediately pop up, but we're able to track their success and how maybe slight movements to different schools, we notice that there's a yield, and that yield can be seen as positive.

Your diploma students all seem to bounce through four or five collective schools, and we notice that when they hit one school, they see this greater jump in their growth percentage. That school should be identified as a place that maybe is doing something well with more mobile students.

In addition to that, that's something I've pushed for quite often, is that we have better assistive programs for our students in the greatest academic need. Those schools that are constantly failing or have low performing students, those schools should offer better somewhat of academic assistive programs for those students.

I'd like those to be very specialized for

students, especially if they're homeless, so when they move from one school, their services transfer to another school. Those students that are special needs, that they also have academic assistive programs that are based on their special needs.

What I'm talking about is maybe a program that -- those students that have those needs that are constantly performing at level one and two -- if you're performing at one and two, you need help. The way students at higher performing schools function and stay at level three and four is in a transition to two to threes faster, it's because one; they're based at home and they have more educated parents that are able to assist them with their homework, help them progress.

I hear a lot about E.L. Haynes and how there's a disparity between some students, and I'm assuming -- I believe it's your daughter? Is that correct? Or son?

MR. WEEDON: Daughter in Elliot Hine.

MR. BROWN: Is she --

MR. WEEDON: Yes.

MR. BROWN: -- is probably benefiting from a very loving, nurturing household where academics is very stressed, which keeps her kind of insulated from maybe the environment that some of the other children are coming from. I believe a program where you focus more on academic enrichment, remediation where somebody is specifically working with you at the grade level that you're currently at to help increase you

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will yield better results for that student, thus better results for the school, which gives you better growth model representation and all other great benefits. And I could finish there.

MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Brown. Are there any questions for me?

MS. WATTENBERG: We love you for finishing up (Laughs).

MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Brown. And do you have a copy of your testimony that you can leave with us?

MR. BROWN: It's kind of --

MS. WILLIAMS: Or you can email it to us.

MR. BROWN: I just back in town, so --

MS. WILLIAMS: Can you email it to us?

MR. BROWN: I can.

MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

MR. BROWN: Thank you.

MS. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh. With no further business before the board, I would like to entertain a motion to adjourn.

MR. WEEDON: So moved.

MS. WILLIAMS: Mr. Weedon?

MS. WATTENBERG: Second.

MS. WILLIAMS: Second?

MR. WEEDON: Ms. Wattenberg.

MS. WILLIAMS: Ms. Wattenberg. All in favor say aye.

GROUP: Aye.

MS. WILLIAMS: The ayes have it, and this public meeting of the District of Columbia State Board of Education is adjourned.

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[Whereupon, at 10:19 p.m., the Regular Board Meeting was adjourned.]

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