



D.C. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TESTIMONY

PRESIDENT & WARD 7 REPRESENTATIVE EBONI-ROSE THOMPSON

“Teacher and Principal Retention”

Committee of the Whole Oversight Public Hearing

October 29, 2024

I. Opening

Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson, Members of the Council, and staff. My name is Eboni-Rose Thompson, and I am the President and Ward 7 Representative of the D.C. State Board of Education. I am pleased to be here today on behalf of the State Board to provide testimony on teacher and principal retention.

II. State Board Focus on Educator Retention

Since 2018, the State Board has been a leading voice on the issue of teacher retention. We have published reports, convened focus groups, conducted surveys, and launched advocacy efforts.¹ In 2021, we even introduced Bill 24-0355, the Statewide Data Warehouse Amendment Act, which aimed to increase the transparency of the data on educator retention and enable leaders in the District to create root-cause solutions. In 2024, our Educator Excellence Committee was established to work on the issues that affect educators’ ability to achieve excellence in their craft.

A key focus of the State Board’s advocacy on teacher retention has been to promote the availability of better and more accessible teacher data, including demographics, attrition rates, and vacancies. We commend the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) for enhancing its data collection and public sharing of teacher and staff data.² While this progress is commendable, further efforts are needed to ensure timely access to educator data. We also continue to advocate for qualitative data, such as universal exit surveys across all sectors, to help understand why teachers leave their positions, schools, the District of Columbia, or the teaching profession entirely. Our previously released research and reports have pointed to IMPACT, poor social and emotional well-being, burdensome workloads, and lack of support as some of the primary reasons for departure.

III. State Board Recommendations

In October 2023, the State Board released its *Teacher Retention Crosswalk and Analysis*, which compares the [Statewide Data Warehouse Amendment Act of 2021](#),³ the [Educator Retention for Student Success Act](#)

¹ <https://sboe.dc.gov/page/teacher-retention>

²For example, OSSE has released educator workforce reports, educator retention briefs, and educator workforce data files.

³ <https://lims.dccouncil.gov/Legislation/B24-0355>





of 2023,⁴ and OSSE’s [2022 District of Columbia Educator Workforce Report](#).⁵ We are aware that OSSE recently released the 2024 Educator Workforce Report, and we look forward to reviewing and hearing more about it.

The State Board’s crosswalk includes the following recommendations for collaborative next steps:

- **Ensure that all local education agencies, including public charter schools, are included in all aspects of legislation on teacher retention.**
- **Identify which teaching positions have the most vacancies and what state-level interventions could be enhanced or implemented to reduce them.**
- **Take measures to reduce “job creep” in teachers.** “Job creep” is when a professional is gradually asked to take on additional responsibilities outside of their day-to-day job requirements.
- **Consider perspectives from school leaders and others responsible for hiring and retaining teachers.**

These recommendations reflect the testimony the State Board has received over the years regarding educator retention. During a 2023 panel on educator growth and development, a panelist⁶ highlighted some of the gaps in D.C.’s existing teacher evaluation policies. For example, there are no requirements that struggling teachers be offered improvement plans, which could result in more teachers quitting. Several teachers also provided testimony at our September 2024 public meeting.⁷ Their testimony highlighted the need for effective communication and support from administrators, the importance of meaningful professional development that is not just compliance-based, and the dire need to ensure teachers’ well-being and mental health are prioritized.

IV. Closing and Thank You

The State Board will continue to engage in these hearings, but we also look forward to decisive action from the Council. We ask the Council to review our crosswalk and analysis and leverage the State Board’s expertise and community connection as we work together to retain more teachers. While our crosswalk is focused on teachers, we also seek to discuss how to care for, support, and retain principals across the District. I want to thank the Chairman and Council for this time, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

⁴ <https://lims.dccouncil.gov/Legislation/B25-0200>

⁵ https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/2022%20DC%20Educator%20Workforce%20Report_FINAL.pdf

⁶ <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/pemq1jhskhvmohq2pef29/2023-06-21-TESTIMONY-Abigail-Swisher.pdf?rlkey=hm7u7y7brx192kryn4nmhcl2d&dl=0>

⁷ <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/8vm51wrgsqy4zy17ko6fd/ADJL888r3At9wOb7jJV-s4M?rlkey=flwn474db64znrmqdzjjskg8v&st=pkgrl91n&dl=0>

