



**Testimony of Dr. Jacque Patterson  
At-Large Representative and President  
D.C. State Board of Education**

*Before the Committee of the Whole, Council of the District of Columbia  
On School Improvement in the District of Columbia*

December 9, 2025

**I. Opening**

Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson, members of the D.C. Council, and staff. My name is Dr. Jacque Patterson. I am President and At-Large 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 school improvement in the District of Columbia. The focus of our testimony will be on the topic of community schools.

**II. Advocacy in Support of Community Schools**

As the only elected body with exclusive focus on public education, the State Board prides itself on advocacy driven by community voice. At our public meetings and throughout our local communities, we hear from students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders about ways to continuously improve schools in the District of Columbia. During our testimony at the academic achievement hearing last month, we stated that we are heartened to see the improvement in CAPE scores, but we also strongly believe that more can be done. Investment in community schools contributes to overall school improvement. The in and out-of-school services provided by community schools help meet students' needs, which in turn increases engagement and helps them learn better. We were energized by the discussion at our recent legislative breakfast with the Council, which included how we can collectively engage in proactive thought partnership in key areas such as community schools.

The State Board is one of the agencies required by DC code<sup>1</sup> to participate in the Community Schools Advisory Committee (CSAC) led by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). Our Ward 7 Representative, Eboni-Rose Thompson, is our current appointed representative. She supports the work of the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://code.dccouncil.gov/us/dc/council/code/titles/38/chapters/7B/subchapters/IV>.





committee to review and evaluate progress and make recommendations for improvements. We look forward to continued participation and cross-agency collaboration to ensure consistent support and growth of community schools. We can also continue learning from other states and large urban districts. A recent journal article<sup>2</sup> published by the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) shared that New York City’s Community Schools Initiative has led to a drop in chronic absenteeism, improved test scores, and fewer disciplinary incidents, particularly for the most vulnerable students.

The District of Columbia Council plays a critical role with its budget oversight. Considering the continued cuts of education and social services by the federal government, it is incumbent upon local and state governments to step up and provide funding. We ask the Council to ensure that any positions dedicated to community schools are not removed from schools’ budgets because these cuts are detrimental.

As Mayor Bowser prepares her Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Budget and Financial Plan, we are also preparing our budget priorities letter, which will outline the top priorities and items specific to the State Board’s budget requests—one of which will be community schools. Additionally, community schools will be the topic of our expert panel at our public meeting in January 2026. We will welcome a wide range of perspectives on community schools and use the information gleaned from the discussion to take united action as a Board.

### **III. Closing and Thank You**

Thank you for holding a hearing on this important topic. We are committed to working with you and our partners in the education cluster to ensure schools in the District of Columbia continue to improve. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nasbe.org/how-states-are-investing-in-community-schools/>.

