

Allison Harvey, Amidon-Bowen PTA Co-President
October 29, 2019
DCPS Budget Hearing

Good evening. My name is Allison Harvey, and I am co-president of the PTA at Amidon-Bowen Elementary, the neighborhood elementary school for Southwest DC.

Our school is actively working to create a strong sense of community, stability and support for our children. This is particularly important, since Amidon-Bowen serves a high percentage of at-risk children. Children who are at-risk are more likely to experience one or more types of childhood trauma, which can affect a variety of long and short-term outcomes. Short-term outcomes include decreased school attendance, engagement and performance. However, our efforts to build resiliency in our school community (which is correlated with increased attendance, engagement and performance) are negatively impacted when the school lacks key resources, everything from technology, basic school supplies and adequate staffing.

In particular, it is demoralizing and potentially traumatic to our children to face losing school staff each year. Each spring when we receive the school budget from DCPS Central, our school and parent leaders suffer through weeks of anguish as we consider the prospect of losing staff in these areas:

- 1) Supplemental instructional support: The addition of a reading specialist and a math intervention coach two years ago has contributed significantly to academic gains, measured by both PARCC scores and internal school assessments. Additionally, these two staff members have become invaluable members of our school community—they know our students across all grades, provide unique expertise, and serve our school outside their regular duties (such as leading a Math Club and serving on the LSAT). However, we continue to be told that these positions are temporary and we cannot expect to keep them in future years.
- 2) Staff support for school culture: To address school culture and discipline issues, the school budget has included funding for a dean of students and behavior techs. Teachers cite improved school culture as one of the factors contributing to improvements in student achievement. Improved school culture has led to better retention of staff, as well as less time in class spent on disruptions and more time for instruction. Because these positions are not automatically provided through the comprehensive staffing model, we struggle to find funding every year to continue them.
- 3) Specials and other school staff: In the 2018 Budget, we lost our STEM teacher and 0.5 social worker position. The year prior to that, our full-time Spanish teacher position was reduced to a part-time position. When difficult tradeoffs in the budget must be made, it is this category of staff that gets cut. These cuts run counter to what our children want and need beyond math and reading.

The impact of a stable staff on the social, emotional and academic well-being of our children cannot be underestimated. We want to ensure our children can continue to grow and flourish.

Last but not least, Amidon-Bowen relies heavily on computer-based programs for blended learning and reading and math intervention. Problems with outdated computers are a daily frustration for students and teachers. We urge you to continue funding for technology and the

Empowered Learners Initiative in the 2021 Budget. Digital equity will not be achieved until all our students have access to technology. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

District of Columbia Public Schools Budget Engagement Hearing

October 29, 2019, 6-8pm

Maury Elementary School

1250 Constitution Ave NE, Washington, DC 20002

Written testimony submitted by Dr. Jalan Burton

Good evening. My name is Dr. Jalan Burton and I am a Pediatrician, public health expert, wife, mother, and Ward 7 resident. I practice pediatric medicine in the District of Columbia and surrounding Maryland and Virginia. I have a background in pediatrics, public health, health disparities, and quality improvement. I have 4 years of experience as an active member of my son's Parent Teacher Organizations and am a proud parent of a first year Anne Beers Elementary school student.

As the mother of an Anne Beers third grader, I am **deeply saddened and shocked to learn of the differential treatment of so many children in DC Public Schools**. It is appalling that along with other parents at Tyler Elementary School I was able to secure over \$1.5 million for playground renovations last year (2018-2019) while students at Anne Beers Elementary Schools: are being taught in trailers due to overcrowding, are put in danger due to the school being overdue for cafeteria modernization including new wiring, not having a compliant and safe fire safety system, and only completed Phase 1 of modernization even though they were slated for Phases 1, 2, and 3 in 2013.

First, I would like to talk about **overdue renovations and their lasting health and safety implications:**





Pictures of the overcrowded Anne Beers cafeteria where a fire occurred due to faulty wiring in Spring 2019. Taken October 2019

Anne Beers was slated for Phase 1, 2, and 3 of modernization and underwent Phase 1 of modernization in 2013. The contractor did not begin nor completed Phases 2 and 3, leaving the cafeteria and auditorium untouched in spite of the funds being originally allocated for the project. In Spring 2019, due to faulty wiring in the cafeteria, there was a fire. There were multiple systems breakdowns and half of the school was not alerted promptly about the fire and there was no continuous sprinkler system. This is unacceptable and shows the dire need for the completion of Phases 2 and 3 of the renovation.

Unintentional injury is the leading cause of death and harm in the United States per the most recent Centers for Disease Control data on child safety. Unintentional injury includes burns, suffocation, drowning, and falls.

Every day, our children are at risk of injury and death due to fire while at Beers due to the deficient fire safety system and in particular due to not having a modern sprinkler system throughout the school. The fire that occurred last school year due to faulty wiring in the cafeteria showed that there can be deadly consequences when promised renovations are not completed. If a staff member had not noticed and facilitated evacuation of the remaining students, countless children and staff could have lost their lives in an avoidable tragedy.

The poor response to last year's fire and the overdue cafeteria modernization are very concerning. What will it take for Anne Beers to receive the cafeteria updates and sprinklers that are so desperately needs? Is the safety of our children not important enough? DCPS must remediate this major safety issue.

Next, I would like to talk about equity and health.



Pictures of the Anne Beers auditorium, taken October 2019



Pictures showing the Anne Beers auditorium that is used daily by staff and students. It is overdue for renovation and modernization. Taken October 2019.

With the algorithm being used to provide modernization we are promised increased equity. But what happens when your school's modernization is partially completed, but vital components are simply abandoned, such as the case at Anne Beers? As part of its modernization, money was allocated within the budget to fix vital areas such as the cafeteria, auditorium, and library. While the library is a beautiful space that parents, teachers, staff, and students enjoy, where did the money go for the cafeteria and auditorium updates? Because of its partial modernization Anne Beers no longer even makes the growing modernization list. This is unfair, unjust, and unacceptable. DCPS must complete the modernization that was promised to Anne Beers before moving on to new schools. The cafeteria in particular has huge impacts on the health and wellbeing of our students.

Next, I would like to talk about wellness and facilities and how overcrowding can contribute to poor academic performance and poor mental health.





Pictures showing the trailers where Grade 4 students are taught because Anne Beers enrollment has surpassed its capacity. Picture taken October 2019.

The connection between our environment and health is a growing field of interest. Study after study shows the lasting and profound impact of the built environment as Americans spend most of our time indoors. For children, the health impacts are even more pressing because due to their anatomy and physiology any exposures often disproportionately impact children.

An excerpt from a 2019 article in the Journal of Public Health article states **"The built environment exerts one of the strong directly measurable effects on the physical and mental health."** Another 2019 article, this time in the State Education Standard highlights the connection between the school building environment and student health and states "Properly designed, maintained, and operated school buildings that address these environmental factors have been shown to prevent cognitive deficits, optimize student and teacher performance, and create a thriving learning environment within the school."

Several pressing facilities issues at Anne Beers have a profound impact on the health and wellbeing of our students including the school being over capacity and housing many students in temporary trailers.

I was deeply saddened to learn that fourth year students at Anne Beers are taught in trailers with no real plan for permanent space for these classes and that enrollment at Anne Beer These trailers are used throughout the DCPS system to provide temporary space for students. Long-term teaching in trailers is suboptimal and takes up valuable play space from the outdoor areas at Anne Beers. If the Anne Beers population has outstripped its current footprint, DCPS must consider a more long term and sustainable solution besides having children taught in trailers indefinitely.

Additionally, I am concerned that the money for the Anne Beers auditorium modernization is no longer available. Upper level students meet every morning in a large group in the

auditorium for the morning meeting. During the meeting, they are led by teachers in mindfulness and positive affirmations. The space that they begin the day in should reflect this positive spirit, but as it currently exists, it does not. The auditorium is long overdue for its restoration.

In closing, I thank you for the opportunity to share my perspectives as a parent and Pediatrician who lives and works in DC. Our children mean the world to us and the world depends on us providing them with the tools and resources they need. One of my favorite quotes by Frederick Douglas says "it is far easier to build strong children than to repair broken men". I implore us all to prioritize these children and do a better job each day to provide them with the resources they need to be the strongest children they can be.

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Hello, my name is Maggie Koziol. I'm a Shaw resident and parent to a Kindergartner and a preschooler.

This past spring Mayor Bowser chose not to build a well-designed, thoughtfully-programmed, and much-needed stand alone middle school for the many children and families who live in Center City. This while parents and community leaders clearly demonstrated through publicly-available data that children – potential students – exist in the catchment area, and beyond – and that schools like School without Walls at Francis Stevens are already bursting at the seams. The early enrollment numbers for 2019-2020 also show that there is a great need – particularly at the middle school level – for DCPS seats. And, recently, while attending a Ward 1 Education Council meeting I heard from the Principals of Columbia Heights Education Campus, MacFarland MS, and Roosevelt HS about how full their schools already are, and their concerns about how further growth will impact students and their educations. Of course, there's a positive side to the growth as well. I heard a lot of people counter parents' efforts last year by drawing on Brookland MS as an example and yet, this year they saw a 34% increase in enrollment. And when you look at the extremely impressive numbers at Ida B Wells in its first year, and the fact that MacFarland will be bursting at the seams within two years it becomes even more evident that there is a need for Shaw Middle School in the Cardozo Feeder Pattern.

Fortunately, there is a path forward. DCPS's very strong enrollment increases show the need to now plan and build this school. And, thanks to legislative amendments, which are now law, Shaw Middle School will have a new home at 800 Euclid Street. Currently in DCPS's budget sits a pot of money – just over \$1 million dollars. This money is designated to work on planning, programming, and design of what Shaw MS on Euclid Street could look like. And even more fortunately, I am pleased to tell you that over 150 parents and community members are working diligently on planning and programming for what they want and need in a MS at Euclid St – the location that DCPS is legally bound to plan around for a Center City middle school. We have been meeting and discussing. We have been gathering input from parents and stakeholders. And, we are meeting with DC government officials. **In August we met with Patrick Davis and discussed the planning process, which he guaranteed was happening. Yet, that money sits in the budget untouched. Why?** We need and expect real and immediate action on this, and DCPS is legally bound to do so.

Of course, beyond planning, we recognize that we need budget allocated in the CIP to renovate and prepare 800 Euclid Street for its students. DCPS should be preparing and working with students currently housed at the Cardozo EC for the move to a new building. And not only that, DCPS should be considering consolidating both middle school programs at Cardozo and at Francis Stevens. This will allow for better PK-5 programming at SWWFS and for Cardozo to focus on its high school students, while simultaneously addressing serious overcrowding issues at FS.

There is much to do in Shaw and Center City. My hope is that DCPS can rise above politics and do what is right for students who have been waiting for over a decade for a middle school in the heart of our great city.

October 28, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Lewis D. Ferebee, Chancellor
District of Columbia Public Schools
1200 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chancellor Ferebee,

I'm the parent of a Grade 4 student at Maury Elementary School. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the DCPS FY21 budget, and how it can strengthen the goals set in A Capital Commitment, the DCPS five-year strategic plan.

Maximize staffing flexibility for school leadership. Give school leadership the flexibility to use their resource teacher positions to staff their schools according to established priorities within school communities. For the last nine years, our students have benefitted immeasurably from our dedicated Think Tank science teacher. The community has worked to maintain Think Tank without a dedicated classroom when we ran out of space, through staffing changes, and when budgetary mandates made it impossible to fund fully. I believe that our school leadership should be able to maintain this innovative position through our DCPS budget both to provide stability to our valued and talented teacher, and to the school community. *Strategic Priorities: Empower Our People, Ensuring Excellent Schools, Engage Families.*

Increase student support staffing. Affirm the commitment to educating the whole child and emphasizing social and emotional learning by supporting school communities with adding staff positions. A school of more than 450 students needs more than a one social worker and a half-time school psychologist. We know that increased staffing in student support areas and special education works to help every student achieve their potential. *Strategic Priorities: Empower Our People, Ensuring Excellent Schools, Educating the Whole Child.*

Release budgets on schedule. Release budgets on time so LSATs can digest and advise school leadership in a timely way. This is especially critical this year as LSATs are now subject to the Open Meetings Act (OMA), which has strict requirements around meeting notice, recording, publishing meeting schedules in the DC Register, etc. The budget process is already challenging for our volunteer LSATs and this new layer of OMA meeting regulation adds a lot of additional work and statutory requirements every time an LSAT meets. On-time budgets means that LSATs can plan ahead and use their time more effectively. *Strategic Priorities: Empower Our People, Ensuring Excellent Schools.*

Remove barriers to family engagement. I was pleased to hear that the DCPS Volunteer Policy is under review. I hope that a revised policy will remove barriers like TB testing protocols and intensive background checks and focus on ways to engage families and improve safety for all students. Scouts BSA requires online training for volunteers and has guidelines that ensure

children are never left alone with a single adult. These are common-sense approaches that educate parents and allow for safe engagement with students without intrusive background checks. *Strategic Priorities: Educating the Whole Child, Engaging Families.*

Maintain our investments. The Maury renovation is a fantastic example of public architecture, and we are proud to be able to send our students here and share it with the community. I ask that it is staffed and maintained appropriately, both in recognition of the physical size of the building and the capacity for students. We need more custodial staff, and an ongoing plan and commitment for maintenance of outdoor spaces.

Finally, we need attention to top priority “punch list” items that may impact student safety. I would ask that you consider keeping the School Improvement Team active for the first 3–6 months of a newly renovated school to ensure accountability among DCPS partners like DGS and various contractors and subcontractors. *Strategic Priorities: Empower Our People, Ensuring Excellent Schools.*

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration as we work together to achieve the goals of A Capital Commitment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JK' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Jean Kohanek,
Parent of a Grade 4 Student
Parent Representative, Maury LSAT

Sarah Wolf, Peabody Elementary School
Testimony to the DCPS Public Budget Hearing, October 29, 2019

Good evening Chancellor Ferebee and Deputy Chancellor Kim,

My name is Sarah Wolf and I am the parent of a kindergarten student at Peabody Elementary School. I have been a DC resident since 2003 and currently live in Ward 6. I am also a member of the Peabody School Improvement Team, which was set up in September 2019 to address safety and maintenance concerns on the school playground.

Peabody is the early education campus of the Capitol Hill Cluster School in Ward 6. It educates 226 students in grades PK3, PK4 and Kindergarten. Peabody is a diverse school that draws students primarily from the Capitol Hill neighborhood: 81 percent of students attending are in-boundary. Eight percent of students are economically disadvantaged and five percent have special needs.

In 2018, when our son Roman was offered a PK4 spot at Peabody through the DCPS lottery we were delighted. Peabody prides itself on providing a joyful learning environment for kids ages 3-6 years old. The school is a bright, cheerful place decorated with kids' artwork, the teachers are kind, and the program provides a gentle introduction to school life. My son loves it.

So, you can imagine my shock on the first day of school, at dismissal, to see Peabody staff attempting to drive out of their parking spaces in a playground full of little children. The situation struck me as potentially dangerous and not at all in keeping with the safe, supportive learning environment that Peabody endeavors to provide.

Over the course of the last and this academic year, I, along with other parents, have witnessed many close calls between kids and cars. The school has a policy of 'honk and freeze'. The teachers honk their horns, the kids are supposed to freeze. However, we have seen kids completely ignore the honk and instead of freezing, run straight towards the moving car. We have witnessed kids obey the honk and freeze but freeze behind a car that is backing up. We have seen 10-12 cars that are double parked, maneuver through a busy playground with parents and caregivers trying to direct traffic and kids still run in front of cars. We have helped cars to back up, only to see a 3 year old on a tricycle ride behind the car. In all cases, accidents were avoided due to the efforts of parents and drivers working together to keep kids safe. But other times, it was pure luck that the child running behind the car did not get hit. These close calls are too frequent and put our children in an unnecessarily risky situation.

Playgrounds were established to provide a safe place for kids to play that is free from cars. I cannot believe that if the city were designing a new playground today, they would place cars within it with no barriers or fencing to separate the kids. The Mayor's Vision Zero Initiative seeks to reduce traffic accidents and fatalities involving pedestrians. I find it inconsistent that the city

focuses on pedestrian safety on the way to and from school, but once at the school site, there are no such safety or traffic measures in place.

In addition to parents worrying about keeping their kids safe from cars, the playground itself has become over the years, unsafe. There are three main problems that are leading to injuries including scrapes, bruises and broken bones.

1. The playground surfacing includes blacktop, poured rubber and wood chips. The blacktop and poured rubber have uneven surfaces, gaps and sinkholes, and provides insufficient padding in some places, especially under ladders. A week ago, a Peabody parent reported that her four year old daughter tripped on the surfacing and fell onto the corner of a picnic table getting a black eye. The same week, a four year old Peabody boy fell off a ladder and badly scraped his forehead. Another Peabody parent says her PK3 and Kindergarten kids come home almost every day with scrapes on knees and elbows from falling on the blacktop.
2. The playground equipment is between 15-25 years old and no longer meets current safety standards. One structure in particular (orange/blue) is not age appropriate for students who are three and four years old -- who are the majority of Peabody students.

According to the US Consumer Product Safety Commission's *Public Playground Safety Handbook*, monkey bars are not intended for children ages three or younger, and for children ages four and above, the structure should be no higher than 60 inches. The Peabody monkey bars are 77 inches in height. A Peabody parent reports that in 2017 her four year old daughter fell off the monkey bars and fractured her elbow. A three year old boy also fell off the same monkey bars and had severe bruising. His mother says the only reason he didn't break his arm was because he is such a tall and heavy child. The same handbook says sliding poles should not be used in playgrounds for preschool students. The Peabody playground has three sliding poles measuring between 85-100 inches in height. In 2017, a five year old boy fell off the pole and broke his elbow in two places. He had to be hospitalized and had three pins inserted into his arm.

3. In addition to the equipment not meeting current safety standards, the equipment itself is old and not well maintained. The coating on the play structures is peeling off, exposing rust and creating sharp edges that poke into kids' hands. For awhile, yellow safety tape was put up on the chain climbers. It seems to have been removed yet the sharp edges remain.

In summary, the playground is in need of an overhaul.

In 2013, Peabody received funding for Phase 1 Modernization under the 10-year DCPS School Modernization Plan. The Education Spec included renovating floors and ceilings, improving

lighting and electrical, and upgrading IT, water lines, service lines and HVAC systems. The playground was not included.

I understand that DCPS has abandoned the phased modernization process and now uses the PACE model to prioritize schools for modernization. Given Peabody's current rank of #30 (out of 32) on the modernization priority list, we would not receive full modernization funding until at least 2024 but likely many years later as there are higher priority schools. However, I am aware that outside of modernization funding, there is a city-wide Capital Improvement Plan as well as stabilization funding available to address repairs of school buildings and athletic fields.

One solution to the car safety problem would be to create a daytime school parking zone under the law that was passed last year. We are working with our ANC Commissioner and gathering data to submit a formal request. Another solution is to redesign the Peabody site to include separate spaces for cars to park and for kids to play. There also needs to be an interim solution that does not rely on children ages 3-6 to be always conscious of cars. The playground is supposed to be space for kids to play, exercise their bodies, and stretch their imaginations without worrying about moving cars. We cannot wait for an accident to happen.

I, representing the Peabody community, urge the Education Chancellor to address the Peabody safety concerns in the next DCPS budget.

Examples of Close Calls with Cars, Peabody Elementary School Playground,

Witnessed by Patricia Metz, parent of kindergarten student

On Monday February 4, 2019, around 3:25PM one teacher who was parking on the Peabody playground needed to leave with about 20 kids playing nearby. She was honking when she was maneuvering her car backwards. One parent proactively decided to help her with instructions and another mom was checking that no kids were crossing in the area plus other parents and caregivers were alert, paying attention to the kids and the situation. Even so, one little kid suddenly started running in the direction of the car. The parents yelled at the driver to stop the car. Teamwork avoided an accident, but it was very stressful.

On Friday April 5, 2019, around 3:45PM lots of kids were playing in the playground. The majority of the staff's cars already left. We were a group of three moms who were talking together where our kids were playing. We were located at an angle that allowed us to see the kids as they were running and playing around. Suddenly one of the cars who was parked just to the side of the driveway (see picture attached) started to reverse. The three of us immediately started looking for the kids, and it seemed that all of them were playing in a safe location. Suddenly, just between the wall and the storage shed, a boy in PK-3, who was riding a tricycle, without any awareness, crossed just behind the car as it reversed. Luckily the boy was not struck. It was a scary moment.



The boy from PK-3 passed from the corridor between the wall and the blue house, we couldn't see him, until the last moment, even when we were very near to the place. This little boy was so lucky because it was the closer call I witness. I feel my heart stop for a moment.

**Statement of Cedric R. Hendricks
Chair, SWWFS LSAT
@ DCPS Budget Hearing
October 29, 2019**

Good evening.

On behalf of the SWWFS LSAT, I am here to provide information about the enrollment challenges facing the School Without Walls at Francis Stevens for the 2019-2020 school year and the projected enrollment growth over the next several years. I will also address the resulting need for the immediate expansion of our available classroom space.

Currently, according to DCPS data, we are enrolled at over 105%. Though the building capacity is 513 students, we now have 546 students attending our school. It is anticipated that our student population will continue to rise, due to an increase in new enrollments and the increase we have seen in re-enrollments at all levels. Enrollment next year is projected to reach 587. DCPS projects that we will reach 656 students in school year 2025. Although the largest growth is occurring at the middle school level right now, it is already having a significant residual impact on students and staff at all levels. We have been forced to use what was program space for classrooms. Some of them are small and students have been crowded in.

At our LSAT meeting on October 9th, we received an update from DCPS Chief Operating Officer Patrick Davis regarding the short-term plan to provide additional instructional space. Currently, the plan is to convert the two balconies over the small gym into two classrooms with an anticipated completion date of late February or early March. Additionally, DCPS is looking into securing the funding to bring four portable classrooms onto the school property. Mr. Davis told us, however, they would not become available until the 2020 - 2021 school year.

I have to point out here, that the plans I have just described were developed following my successful efforts to secure the personal engagement of Chancellor Lewis Ferebee. We appreciate the attention he has given to our needs. We also appreciate the work now being done by the DCPS Facilities team.

To accommodate this unexpected and extraordinary growth, we now need another art teacher. This teacher is necessary so that all SWWFS students will be able to meet minimum seat time requirements in art. We have had to limit Latin instruction to grades 2 through 8 as a result of the enrollment increase. As such, we need an additional Latin teacher to achieve our school's goal of providing all students with the strong base for the development of the English vocabulary that Latin provides. Finally, we are in need of an additional special education and ESL teacher to comply with the federal regulations covering students in need of these support systems. We don't currently have the funding for these teachers because our current year's budget was based upon a projected enrollment of 495, but, again, we have now reached 546.

On October 16th, at a meeting attended by Mayor Muriel Bowser, ANC 2A adopted a Resolution stating as follows: "ANC 2A calls on Mayor Bowser, the DC Council, and DCPS to advance initiation of the first stage of modernization at SWWFS to FY 2020 by allocating the funding necessary to commence planning for modernization of the physical plant at SWWFS and planning for and acquiring the swing space necessary to facilitate modernization." Our LSAT is very grateful that ANC 2A took this action. It sent a copy of their Resolution to the Mayor and the Chancellor. I want their Resolution to receive your very careful consideration as well.

As DCPS proceeds with the process of developing its 2021 budget, we strongly urge you to take our current and future enrollment challenges into account as you make your decisions regarding allocations and priorities.

Thank You.

Thank-you for allowing me to testify my name is Rebecca Davis I am an environmental education consultant and live and work in Washington D.C.

Is it responsible to shape a society that depends on science and technology and not educate and prepare its youths with basic science and engineering principles?

- A student who has asthma and does not know the basic structure and function of their respiratory system and doesn't know their asthma triggers.
- A student who doesn't understand how trees grow and therefore doesn't understand how planting tree can mitigate climate change?
- A student who does not know that phytoplankton provide more than half of the oxygen we breathe on Earth and therefore doesn't act on keeping our ocean's healthy.

Humans are born curious. I see my granddaughter less than a year old testing the difference between a refrigerator sticker and a magnet, testing gravity with objects, testing velocity and friction with her body on playground slides.

Our job as educators and parents is simple, it is to encourage that curiosity starting in pre-k, inspire careful observations, embolden them to ask a million questions, support their countless experiments that follow. A scientist doesn't just do science experiments to test her/his hypothesis s/he reads about science, writes about science, and talks science. Our students should do the same.

Our jobs is to find ways to keep students interested in sciences as they finish elementary school when we see a significant drop off. Our job is to find ways to encourage interest in sciences and engineering through MS and HS to create scientifically literate citizens who understand important issues that will be facing their generation such as Climate Change but perhaps more importantly "life expectancy being shorter than their parents".

We can do this by 1) having transparency regarding the science budget for DC public school if not in dollar amount then at least percentage compared to ELA, Math and Social Studies 2) by making principals accountable to the changes to the Elementary Scheduling Requirements As of 2019 The Office of Teaching and Learning requires that science be taught (as a standalone subject) at minimum for:

- 45 minutes/day (for the equivalent of at least one semester) in grades K-2
- 30 minutes/day (for the entire school year) in grades 3-5

As Neil deGrasse Tyson stated " The problem in society is not kids not knowing science. The problem is adults not knowing science. They outnumber kids 5 to 1, they wield power, they write legislation. When you have scientifically illiterate adults, you have undermined the very fabric of what makes a nation wealthy and strong. "

Thank you for allowing me to address this important topic.
Rebecca Davis- rnjdavis@gmail.com