



**Testimony of
Dr. Michelle J. Walker-Davis, Executive Director
DC Public Charter School Board**

**No Shots No School Hearing
Committee of the Whole
October 11, 2022**

Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee of the Whole. Thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing on No Shots No School. I am Dr. Michelle Walker-Davis, Executive Director of the DC Public Charter School Board.

DC PCSB continues to support requiring all childhood vaccines to create safe and healthy learning environments. Between COVID and recent outbreaks of polio in the US, we realize the need for an immunized student population is more urgent than ever.

First, I want to thank the Mayor, DC Health, Children's National, DME, OSSE, and all schools for their work to make vaccines accessible this summer and fall. Public charter schools held dozens of vaccine clinics staffed by DC Health and Children's National medical professionals. These clinics have allowed families to access vaccines after work and on the weekends at convenient locations such as parks and schools, and staff were flexible for walk ins, in addition to serving those with appointments. I personally attended a clinic, and spoke with health professionals and families, as did other members of my staff. Dozens of families attended, and they appreciated the convenience of having clinics at schools and the festive atmosphere established. We also appreciate the citywide effort that continues as DC Health and Children's hold clinics through November in order to meet families where they are.

We continue to support schools in their work to get students vaccinated. Since the beginning of the pandemic, our two health consultants have supported schools with navigating reopening safely, managing outbreaks, and setting up vaccine clinics. They are continuing that work with schools to hold workshops on enforcing No Shots No School, addressing potential COVID waves, and mitigating other illnesses such as the flu. We have shared information about vaccine clinics consistently on all our communications platforms, and our Community Relations team coordinates with nonprofits and neighborhood groups to organize and spread the word as well. We also partnered with DC Health and Children's this summer to convene school registrars to discuss the new DOClIS system and ensure they know how to navigate the platform. Just as families need access to vaccines, school staff

need the skills and tools to monitor compliance and share available resources.

Despite all these efforts, public charter schools still have far too many noncompliant students. We see the lowest compliance rates among PK students and 7th through 12th graders. It is unclear how many students are not up to date on immunizations or have paperwork issues.

Many of the other challenges which existed this summer are still present. The three vaccine data systems, DOCIIS 2.0, Salesforce, and School Health Management systems, often report different information. The different numbers require schools to assign additional staff to comb through all systems to monitor compliance for an accurate picture. These are staff members who want to focus on educating students, but instead are overwhelmed by vaccine compliance and the desire to make sure every student remains in school. No one wants to exclude any students from school, especially if that exclusion is based on a data error.

In the coming weeks and months, schools will focus on middle and high school students to ensure few students remain noncompliant when their exclusion date arrives. We also need to remain vigilant on vaccinating students against COVID-19 before we enforce that policy this winter. Regarding COVID, the city is in a much better place than it has been in quite some time. To keep that up, we must continue to hold vaccine clinics which provide all immunizations, address vaccine hesitancy, and provide initial doses and boosters of the COVID vaccine. After all the progress we have made, the last thing any of us wants is a big fall or winter wave causing many students and staff to miss a week or more of school.

DC PCSB appreciates the collective efforts of the DME, OSSE, and DC Health to respond to ongoing system and process challenges in getting all students vaccinated and in compliance with No Shots No Schools. And, we acknowledge the hard work of each of our charter LEAs toward this goal. We look forward to collaborating on long term solutions that prioritize the health and safety of all our students, while reducing burdens on school administrators, and minimizing student exclusions. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'm happy to answer any questions.