## GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
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PUBLIC MEETING

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WEDNESDAY
APRIL 20, 2016

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The D.C. State Board of Education met in the Old Council Chambers, 441 4th Street NW, Washington, D.C., at 5:30 p.m., Jack Jacobson, President, presiding.

PRESENT
JACK JACOBSON, President
KAREN WILLIAMS, Vice President
BRIAN CONTRERAS, Student Representative
TIERRA JOLLY, Ward 8 Representative
MARY LORD, At Large Representative
RUTH WATTENBERG, Ward 3 Representative JOE WEEDON, Ward 6 Representative DESTINEE WHITTINGTON, Student Representative LAURA WILSON PHELAN, Ward 1 Representative

ALSO PRESENT
HANSEUL KANG, DC State Superintendent of Education, OSSE
JOHN-PAUL C. HAYWORTH, Executive Director, SBOE JAMIKKA BRISCOE-KENDRICK, Staff Assistant, SBOE SEAN CHALK, Policy Analyst, SBOE

MIRANDA HUCHINS, Communications Fellow, SBOE

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Adjourn
P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
5:33 p.m.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Good afternoon. The time is now 5:33 p.m. on April 20, 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 a quorum. Mr. Hayworth?

DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Mr. Jacobson, present. Ms. Williams?

VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Present.
DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Ms. Lord? (No audible response.) Ms. Lord? (No audible response.) Ms. Wilson Phelan? (No audible response.) Ms. Wilson Phelan? (No audible response.) Ms. Wattenberg?

MS. WATTENBERG: Present.
DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Ms. Anderson? (No audible response.) Ms. Anderson? (No audible response.) Mr. Jones? (No audible response.) Mr. Jones? (No audible response.) Mr. Weedon?

MR. WEEDON: Present.

DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Ms. Jolly?
MS. JOLLY: Present.
DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Mr. Contreras?
MR. CONTRERAS: Present.
DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Ms. Whittington?
(No audible response.) Ms. Whittington? (No audible response.) Mr. President, you have a quorum.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: A quorum has been determined, and the State Board will proceed now with the business portion of our meeting. Colleagues, we have a draft agenda before us. Are there any corrections or additions? (No audible response.) There being no corrections, I would entertain a motion to approve the agenda.

VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: So moved.
PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Moved by Vice President Williams. Is there a second?

MS. JOLLY: Second.
PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Second by Ms.
Jolly. Let the record note that Ms. Lord, our at-large member, is in attendance, as well. The
motion being properly moved and seconded, I ask for the ayes and nays. All in favor, please say aye. (Chorus of ayes.) All opposed? (No audible response.) The motion is approved. Next on our agenda is approval of the minutes from the April 6, 2016 working session. Are there corrections or additions to the minutes? (No audible response.) Hearing none, I would entertain a motion to approve the minutes.

MR. WEEDON: So moved.
PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Moved by Mr. Weedon. Is there a second?

VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Second.
PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Second by Vice President Williams. The motion being properly moved and seconded, I ask for the yeas and nays. All in favor, please say aye. (Chorus of ayes.) Any opposed? (No audible response.) The minutes are 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 you, our guests, and our viewing public to our Wednesday, April 20, 2016 public meeting. The State Board holds its regularly scheduled meetings on the third Wednesday of every month, here in the old council chambers at 441 4th Street Northwest. The members of the State Board of Education welcome your participation and your support in our efforts to improve education in our nation's capital. Tonight's agenda includes a vote on new health education standards. The revision process for these standards began almost two years ago and is very close to my heart.

I have spoken before about my personal experiences with bullies, mental health issues, and other health-related issues while growing up, and I am convinced that these new standards will help district students and prevent many of these students' pain and suffering.

We will also be hearing from two
fantastic organizations, Achieve, Inc. and The

Education Trust, on graduation requirements. The State Board and OSSE have committed to completing a review of the district's graduation requirements within this calendar year. Our panel discussion tonight will help provide context for that ongoing dialogue.
We'll begin tonight with public
witnesses. 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 future public meetings, please contact our staff at sboe@dc.gov, or by calling 202-741-0888. Is Ms. Merilyn Holmes here? Terrific. Ms. Holmes, from Total Sunshine, please come down. You'll have three minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS
MS. HOLMES: All set? Good evening.
It's great to be back here once again to share the information that we have with Total Sunshine
and our support for our D.C. top graduates city wide. I'm the executive director and founder of Total Sunshine, Inc. It's a D.C. non-profit 501(c)(3), and we have been serving the community and our students for the last 16 years. It's quite a task. I was running, so excuse me if I'm a little out of breath.

I wanted to make sure that $I$ got here. I'm working an ambulance tonight, Lord help me, but this is super important to me. I'm going to make sure that $I$ make sure these young people have laptops for college. Total Sunshine is embarking on our eighth annual School Grade Rewards ceremony. It's going to be June 23rd. This is actually the flier, which you probably will see floating around. We've been sending these save the dates out to everyone, and everyone is invited to come out and applaud these young people, but not only to applaud them, to support them with tech tools. Now, everyone knows that when you go to college, you need a laptop. Total Sunshine, it's part of our mission
to support students. In this support, we want to make sure that these young people have the tools that they need.

Valedictorians and salutatorians, we just got that final list in today, and we have 66 students to support. We're doing public schools and charter schools. We're not discriminating. If you're a valedictorian or salutatorian, we're going to try to make our best effort to ensure that they have the tech tools they need to succeed when they go to college.

Total Sunshine, this is a part of our School Grade Incentive Program. With this program, we do anti-violence life coping seminars and skill seminars in schools. We do anti-bullying things. Basically, if the kids are on the wrong track, we try to turn them around to the right track, and if they're on the right track, we do our best to support them there. Our School Grade Incentive Program facilitates our annual rewards ceremony. Thursday, June 23, 2016 is going to be an exciting day. I work
tirelessly with this, and so does our team, but we're always in need of more help. So I implore anyone within the sound of my voice that's here or that can hear me, please feel free to get in contact with us about our School Grade Incentive Program, www.totalsunshine.org, that's our website.

You can see all of the wonderful work we've been doing in the community there. You can email me directly at info@totalsunshine.org, or call the Sunshine line, it's 202-575-0462. I cannot remind you enough that this is a momentous event, and these young people are always happy and smiling.

I always bring a picture of one of our former rewards ceremonies. This is a picture of our 2013 top graduates. They all have Total Sunshine bags with tech tools in them, ready to take them on to college and do more great things, and hopefully bringing this brightness back to the city and contribute even further. I know there's a lot of people that are proud of our top
graduates, and I am absolutely one of them. I don't have any children that are in D.C. public schools, but when it comes down to it, this is our village, and it's up to each of us to do everything we can to support these young people. I have totally taken on this mission. As a paramedic in this city, $I$ have seen a lot. Too many times, young people go down the wrong path, and there's not any barrier, so I'm doing what I can.

Hopefully, others will hear me and will be willing to join with us and support this effort. We're still looking for a location. I'm hopeful that we're going to get a great confirmation this week, and I'll be keeping everyone updated. So feel free, get in touch with Total Sunshine. We'll be televising the whole thing, recognition and applause and support for the top graduates. I love it. Thank you so much for this opportunity.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
Holmes, and thank you for coming down. Next,
we'll hear from our superintendent of education, Ms. Hanseul Kang.

SUPERINTENDENT KANG: Thank you, President Jacobson and members and community that's here. I just wanted to offer a few brief comments. First, as President Jacobson said, I'm looking forward to the vote this evening on the health education standards. Over the past months, OSSE and the Board have worked closely together to engage with stakeholders on the health standards revision, including educators, parents, students, District agencies, and health advocates.

We are grateful for all of those who have provided input and comments throughout the standards revision process, and I'm personally very grateful for the hard work of my OSSE staff and the Board members and their staff for their partnership on this issue.

The new standards align with the national health education standards and reflect best practices and community input from D.C.

These standards reflect the needs of District students and will help schools support students in maintaining and improving their health and wellness. If the new standards are approved this evening, OSSE will work with LEAs in schools in the coming months to support them in implementing the new standards for the 2016-17 school year. I'm also looking forward to the panel on high school graduation requirements and hearing from our experts. OSSE and the Board are committed to reviewing these requirements this year, and will be engaging in ongoing dialogue to ensure that our graduation requirements best meet the needs of D.C. students. Thank you.

## CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Superintendent Kang. Now, tonight, it is our distinct honor for the State Board of Education to welcome Akilah Johnson to our meeting. (Applause.) Ms. Johnson is the very first District of Columbia winner of the Doodle 4 Google contest. I'd like to turn to Joe Weedon,
my colleague from Ward 6, where Ms. Johnson attends Eastern High School, for any comments he has, and to read into the record a ceremonial resolution. Mr. Weedon?

MR. WEEDON: Thank you. I'd just like to say thank you for your work at the school, Principal Skerritt for being here tonight, and all the Eastern students. You are an example to us all. I think when we see the news about our high school students, far too often it's the negative that we see -- students not graduating, trouble in the community. We don't see enough of this, students being celebrated for their success, for their efforts, for their dedication, and for that, I thank you. With that, I'll read into the record the resolution, Ceremonial Resolution 16-1 honoring Akilah Johnson, winner of the Doodle 4 Google competition.
"Whereas, the Doodle 4 Google contest invited submissions of artwork to adorn the front page of google.com and received over 100,000 entries from 50 states, the District of Columbia,

Puerto Rico, and Guam; whereas, Akilah Johnson, a tenth-grade student at Eastern Senior High School, in Ward 6, was chosen as the sole winner of the 'What Makes Me Me' theme contest for her design, 'My Afrocentric Life'; whereas, Miss Johnson's artwork depicts the Symbol of Life, the African continent, the Eye of Horus, the word power, a woman's fist, the District of Columbia flag, and prominent African-Americans; whereas, Miss Johnson sought to inspire others and explore childhood themes and reflections on society; whereas, Miss Johnson was encouraged to pursue art by her teachers, Baba Camera, at Roots Public Charter School, and Zalika Perkins, at Eastern Senior High School; whereas, Miss Johnson was invited to Google headquarters to meet other professional artists in March 2016; and whereas, Miss Johnson's achievement earned her a \$30,000 scholarship, and also provided her high school with a \$50,000 grant towards the establishment and improvement of a computer lab or technology program, now, therefore, it be resolved that the

District of Columbia State Board of Education recognizes and honors Akilah Johnson for her creative excellence, inspiring artwork, and contribution to the District of Columbia."
(Applause.)
PRESIDENT JACOBSON: I would now entertain a motion on the resolution.

MR. WEEDON: So moved.
PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Moved by Mr.
Weedon. Is there a second?
MS. WILSON PHELAN: Second.
PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Second by Ms.
Wilson Phelan. Now that it's been properly moved and seconded, I'll ask for the yeas and nays.

All in favor, please say aye. (Chorus of ayes.) Any opposed? (No audible response.) The resolution is approved unanimously. (Applause.) Now, I'd like to take a brief minute. Akilah, if you would join us in the well with my colleagues, we'd like to take a picture or two with you.
(Applause.) Thank you once again, Akilah, and the State Board is going to be very excited to
see great things from you in the future. We're now going to move on to a vote on health education standards.

## HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARDS

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: The health education standards currently in use in the District of Columbia were approved by this Board in December 2007. To put things into perspective, the iPhone was also introduced in 2007.

With the increased prevalence of technology and access to social media, it is imperative that we update the skills our students are learning to better protect them and, more importantly, to empower them to make better decisions throughout their lifetimes. The standards before us today have been re-organized into broad grade bands to provide teachers with greater flexibility and students with broader and more in-depth information. The standards are divided into eight strands that provide an over-arching context of what students should know
in six categories: mental and emotional health; safety skills; human body and personal health; disease prevention; alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

I want to express my deep thanks to Donna Anthony and her new baby, who are here tonight specially for this vote, and Yair Inspektor and the entire Division of Health and Wellness at OSSE, and the outstanding advocates, like the Young Women's Project, for their dedication in seeing this process through.

I also want to personally thank our superintendent of education for working with us on this to get these standards done. It is clear that we would not be here without all of this hard work. Members, we have a resolution before us today that will approve the health education standards, as proposed by OSSE. Mr. Hayworth, would you read the resolution?

DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: State Board of
Education Resolution to improve the health education standards, SR16-4. "Whereas, District
of Columbia law requires State Board of Education approval and regular review of academic
standards; whereas, health plays a key role in learning, and much has changed since the current health education standards were adopted by the State Board of Education in December 2007; whereas, the current health education standards do not provide the District's students with comprehensive education on bullying, mental health, sexual health, nutrition, and other items; whereas, data from the 2012 D.C. Youth Risk Behavior survey demonstrates a need for health standards that addresses the needs of our students in areas such as nutrition, mental and emotional health, violence and safety, and sexual health; whereas, the proposed health education standards focus more on skills students can use to make healthy choices and teach students how to advocate for themselves and their community; whereas, the proposed health education standards were developed after a rigorous and lengthy process begun by the State Board of Education
almost two years ago, and included significant public involvement, including District of Columbia students and teachers, through a working group, town hall meeting, and public comment period; whereas, the proposed standards emphasize self-advocacy and empower District of Columbia students with the skills and knowledge necessary to combat peer pressure, bullying, and other negative influences; whereas, District of Columbia students and teachers were directly involved in the creation of the proposed standards; whereas, the Office of the State Superintendent requested that schools field test several priority standards for the remainder of the school year and will provide information from that field test to the State Board after the school year ends; whereas, the State Board of Education heard testimony on July 15, 2015, January 20, 2016, and March 16, 2016 regarding the proposed health standards; whereas, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's Division of Health and Wellness aligned the new
standards with the national health education standards and is field testing assessment of the new standards through the health and physical education assessment, formerly known as DC CAS Health; whereas, the proposed standards are arranged by grade bands, allowing for greater flexibility in implementation, and are organized by reporting categories that are used in the health and physical education assessment; whereas, the proposed standards will provide some of the most robust instruction in personal, mental, and emotional health in the country; and whereas, for the first time, students in the District of Columbia will be empowered in the ownership of their own health by learning skills related to combating social pressure, bullying, discrimination, and other brutal experiences, now, therefore, be it resolved that on April 20, 2016, the State Board advises that the state superintendent adopt the health education standards, as proposed in this resolution."

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr.

Hayworth. Is there a motion on the resolution? VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: So moved.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Moved by Vice President Williams.

MS. LORD: Second.
PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Second by Ms. Lord, our at-large member. A motion to approve the resolution has been properly moved and seconded. Is there discussion or amendments on the resolution? Ms. Lord, and then Mr. Contreras.

MS. LORD: Thank you, Mr. President. As one of the few people who remembers the first set of standards, I just wanted to applaud your work, Mr. Jacobson, which started years ago, and the Young Women's Project, and all the board members who really dug deep into this.

We approved the first ones in 2007,
December. We were a brand-new Board, newly constituted. This was our first major piece of business, and the importance of it came home in the ability to recruit schools and teachers and
communities in the fight against what was then the nation's highest rates of childhood obesity, HIV/AIDS in teenagers, and teen pregnancy.

According to the state superintendent's office, we have seen a decrease in the rates of childhood obesity, so I think that this shows the impact of the work that we're doing, even though it seems very education policy up there in the sky. I also want to point out that there are some significant and very important differences between the standards that we're voting to approve and the ones that they evolved from. Our young people have been subjected to a lot more trauma than we probably envisioned back in 2007/2008.

We had one young man from Mary McLeod Bethune Academy who wanted to know how he could equip himself to deal with guns being pulled on him, so this includes violence advocacy, anti-bullying, and also for flexibility for teachers because it's grade bands.

It's what's appropriate for $K$ through

2, rather than kindergarten, first grade, second grade. That gives us enormous flexibility for creating the right interventions, the right advocacy, the right information at the right time.

I'm really, really excited about the effective strategies our young people will have to cope with fear, to cope with stress, to cope with peer pressure, how to recognize it, and, of course, nutrition and safety. With that prelude, I am very enthusiastic about this work and about the process by which we arrived at it. Thank you.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so much, Ms. Lord. Mr. Contreras, and then Ms. Wilson Phelan.

MR. CONTRERAS: Thank you. I'd like to thank the Board, and in particular, President Jacobson, for using this venue as an opportunity to bring the D.C. student community further into education policy.

A lot of the topics we dealt with, in
terms of health standards, are uncomfortable, and a lot of times, adults and teenagers don't talk about them with another to find common ground in things that need to change for the safety and the wellbeing of the student community. So I applaud this Board for taking the step in bringing that voice into having a substantive role in changing policy.

But then beyond that, I'd also like to thank all of the students who used that opportunity, especially from the Young Women's Project and the student advisory committee, and took an active role in their education and in their community and worked to change these policies for the better. Because I do think these are some of the most important standards to have in place, that have the most direct impact on students' lives and their emotional and social wellbeing. I would like to thank everyone who did take steps to change theirs for the better, and I hope the Board takes steps tonight to recognize that input. Thank you.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so much, Mr. Contreras. Ms. Wilson Phelan.

MS. WILSON PHELAN: I just want to echo the sentiment of the comments before, in terms of feeling that this process was quite thorough and persistent, despite opportunities to be distracted in seeing their completion. I just want to recognize that, Jack, and your leadership. I know how important this has been to you, personally, and it's been very fulfilling, as a relatively new board member, to see what the kind of engagement we aspire to have looks like across a broad range of stakeholders.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so much. Vice President Williams.

VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Mr. President, I just want to echo everyone else's thoughts about how this was a passion for you. Since we came on the Board together, this was the issue that you were most excited about and pushed the hardest. I think it will do a lot for our children and students in the District of Columbia
public schools, this new look at how health affects your life. I just want to thank you for your efforts and your leadership.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so very much. Ms. Wattenberg, from Ward 3.

MS. WATTENBERG: Yes, there's a famous saying that sometimes, especially at a meeting, everything that needs to be said has already been said, but everybody hasn't said it. I just want to say, again, congratulations to Jack, thanks for doing -- and thanks to all the people at all the meetings who participated because it was really a tremendous participation. The folks who came to talk to us here at the Board were tremendously interesting.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms. Wattenberg. If there are no more comments, I will make a brief statement of my own. Once again, appreciating the Bowser Administration, and in particular, Superintendent Kang, for agreeing to work with us and move this forward. I also want to make sure that folks know that
this is not the end all, be all. There's a lot of work to do with implementation. There's a lot of work to do between city agencies to make sure that we improve the health and lives of students not only just by passing these standards and letting them sit on a shelf, but implementing them effectively, creating toolkits for teachers and for families, and for ensuring that students have the wrap-around services they need to be healthy, productive citizens.

We will continue that work, at least from the State Board side, from what we can do, in terms of following up on implementation and on scores on tests when there are assessments on these health education standards. With that, I would suggest that we move to a vote.

MS. JOLLY: Are you making a motion to move to a vote?

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Yes.
MS. JOLLY: Second.
PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Okay, we are now moving to a vote. I would like a roll call vote
on this, please, Mr. Hayworth.
DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: On approval of the health education standards, SR16-4, Mr. Jacobson?

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Aye.
DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Ms. Williams?
VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS: Yes.
DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Ms. Lord?
MS. LORD: Aye.
DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Ms. Wilson Phelan?
MS. WILSON PHELAN: Yes.
DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Ms. Wattenberg?
MS. WATTENBERG: Yes.
DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Ms. Anderson? (No audible response.) Ms. Anderson? (No audible response.) Mr. Jones? (No audible response.) Mr. Jones? (No audible response.) Mr. Weedon?

MR. WEEDON: Yes.
DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Ms. Jolly?
MS. JOLLY: Aye.
DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Mr. Contreras?
MR. CONTRERAS: Yes.
DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Ms. Whittington?

MS. WHITTINGTON: Yes.
DIRECTOR HAYWORTH: Mr. President, the vote is unanimous.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so much. Thank you to our staff; thank you to my colleagues; thank you to OSSE and the Deputy Mayor's Office for this incredible work. We look forward to continuing to follow up on these. As always, staff is empowered to make minor technical and conforming amendments. With that, we're done with health education standards for the moment. We're now going to move on to our review of graduation requirements. That is going to be led by our at-large member, Ms. Lord.

We are joined tonight by
representatives from two organizations with deep experience in bettering education outcomes, The Education Trust, and Achieve, Inc. Daria Hall is the interim vice president for government affairs and communications at The Education Trust, where she operates as the strategic leader of the organization's legislative, editorial, and field
operations work.
She previously served the
organization's director of K-12 policy development, where she advanced Ed Trust's K-12 policy agenda. Marie O'Hara is the associate director for state policy and implementation support at Achieve, Inc., where she manages their 50-state survey, which will be 51 states, I hope, at some point, and report researching state policy adoption and implementation efforts in aligning standards, graduation requirements, assessments data, and accountability systems with demand of college and careers. Ms. Hall and Ms. O'Hara, thank you for joining us here tonight. Ms. Hall, would you like to begin? You'll each have -- is five minutes sufficient?

MS. HALL: Absolutely.
PRESIDENT JACOBSON: We're going to put five minutes on the clock. It works just like a stop light. Green, you're good; yellow, we're getting to the end; and red, we'd like you to wrap up, and then we'll have questions from
board members.

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

MS. HALL: Thanks for the opportunity to be here. I'm Daria Hall, with The Education Trust, and we're a national non-profit advocacy organization located here, in D.C. We work to close the gaps in opportunity and achievement that separate low-income students and students of color from their peers. My role here this evening is really to provide a national perspective on what we know, from the data, is going on about high school course completion. Specifically, I've been asked to talk about a report that our organization recently released called "Meandering Toward Graduation." Let me give you just a little bit of information about what we did. We analyzed data from the high school transcripts study, which follows a nationally representative group of ninth graders from 2009 to 2013.

We grouped graduates into four course of study categories: college prep, career prep,
college and career prep -- which is, of course, what we want for all of our young people -- and no cohesive curriculum. How did we create these categories? We looked first at the courses that most public colleges require for admission to determine what comprises a college-ready curriculum.

That is four credits of English, three of math, up through Algebra II, three of science, including biology and chemistry or physics, three social studies, including U.S. or world history, and two foreign language within the same language. For a career-ready curriculum, frankly, we defined it pretty broadly and said that there would be three credits of CTE courses in the same field, so in business or health science, for example. Now, I want to be very clear that, of course, just courses do not make a student college ready, they do not make a student career ready, but they are an important piece of the puzzle. What did we find?

That despite all of the rhetoric and
commitment to college and career readiness going on in this country, just 8 percent of graduates had completed both a college and a career-ready curriculum, and that nearly half, 47 percent, had completed no cohesive curriculum at all, neither college ready, nor career ready, and that there are gaps between those students from the highest socioeconomic status backgrounds and those from the lowest socioeconomic status backgrounds, with our most disadvantaged students more likely to have completed no cohesive curriculum and less likely to have completed a college and career-ready curriculum.

What did we take away from this?
Frankly, we took away that schools are prioritizing credit accrual that treats graduation as the end goal -- just get enough courses, get your diploma, and we're good -- not actual coursework that aligns with students' future goals. To give you just a couple of examples of the kinds of things we found, we found it was quite frequent that students who
didn't complete the college prep sequence had actually taken enough courses in each of the subject areas, but not necessarily the right courses.

They hadn't necessarily taken both biology and the chemistry or physics, but they had taken enough science credits. We also found, looking at career readiness, that it was common for students to have taken a number of career courses, of CTE courses, but that they were very disjointed and haphazard, and not something that actually provided any kind of rich and sustained foundation in a particular career focus area.

We get to the question about what about college and career readiness? We found that a number of the students who had, in fact, completed the career ready course of study were not taking the rigorous math or science courses necessary for college readiness, even though we know that so many of the in-demand careers demand high levels of mathematics and science. We also found that failures and course withdrawals are a
really big obstacle. This is telling us that it's not simply that young people aren't enrolling in the courses. They are. They're struggling. They're not getting the help that they need.

They fail the course, or they withdraw the course, and far too often, they're told, "Don't worry about it. You can take it again next year," but that slows down students' trajectories, and oftentimes they're just not able to make up that ground. We found, too, that simply being in a course isn't enough. When you look at grades, we know that not all students who actually took the courses were getting even a minimum grade.

So we looked at an average of a 2.5 GPA as a proxy for mastery of the content -- a rough proxy, I'll be clear -- and found that across the board, 61 percent of graduates, nationwide, either hadn't taken a college and career-ready curriculum, or hadn't mastered it on the basis of that 2.5 GPA. Let me just end by
saying that these numbers represent a huge missed opportunity. Because across the board, these graduates, despite the course categories they were in, said they wanted to go on and complete at least a certificate or an Associate's degree, many of them a Bachelor's or beyond. Even of those students who took no cohesive curriculum that would prepare them for neither college, nor career, over 75 percent said, "I want to go on to some sort of post-secondary training."

That is a missed opportunity of potential and desire. It also, frankly, speaks to the kind of advising that these young people are getting if, in their junior year, which is when they reported these aspirations, they are not on track to take the college and career-ready course of study, but they say, "Yes, I want to go on and get that post-secondary credential." With that, I think my time is up, so I will hand it over to Maria.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so
much, Ms. Hall. Ms. O'Hara?

MS. O'HARA: Thank you. Thank you to the D.C. State Board for this opportunity. We're thrilled to be able to share some information as you start down this path of reviewing graduation requirements in the next year or so. My organization, Achieve, if you're not familiar, we're an independent, non-partisan, non-profit education reform organization, located here in D.C., as well. We, since 1996, have been working with states to raise academic standards, graduation requirements, improve assessments, as well as data and accountability systems.

We regularly engage with states on graduation policies, as well as issue reports on those graduation policies and requirements. With that, I'd like to share a few high-level take-aways about D.C.'s graduation requirements and those policies and how they compare with other states. Again, keep in mind, these are high level, lots of weeds and nuance and wrinkles that I would love to spend a lot more time on, so happy to take those as questions.

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\text { D.C. is one of } 24 \text { states -- I'm }
$$ counting us as a state -- that has committed to exposing all students to its full range of college and career standards by expecting students to take a complete course of study in high school aligned to those expectations. Specifically, we're talking about math and English language arts for this number. D.C.'s requirements are similar to many states' math and English language arts requirements. D.C. is one of 15 states to expect students to complete four years or units credits of math, and specifies Algebra II or Integrated Math III as a necessary requirement, in order for students to receive a diploma.

D.C., as well, is one of almost -- D.C. and almost all states require students to complete four years of English courses before graduation, in order to earn a diploma. Of course, as Daria was indicating, having some of the right policies in place is necessary to ensure that students graduate academically
prepared. However, it goes without saying that these aren't going to be enough, and that implementation really does matter.

So to this end, D.C. needs to increase the transparency of data around student outcomes and actually improve those outcomes, so that graduates are prepared to succeed in their next steps after high school, whether that be enrollment in a two or four-year institution, technical training or apprenticeship program, military workforce. Three key points to increase the data transparency and improve these outcomes, first one being that diplomas should be meaningful. Students who graduate from high school in D.C. should be prepared for their next steps after high school. Graduation rates are continuing to rise, both in D.C. and across the country, and we want to make sure that more students are actually graduating college and career ready.

In D.C., and in nearly all states, there exists a large gap between the number of
students who graduate from high school and the number of students who are actually prepared to succeed in post-secondary education, the military careers, etc.

In other words, in too many states, earning that high school diploma is not a signal that they're actually ready for their next steps after high school, and this is of great concern. Some of the information that $I$ provided as handouts look at which college and career-ready measures D.C. reports, as well as how students are performing against some of those measures. There's both a national and a state-specific profile that I'm happy to talk more about. The second point is that transparent public reporting is a powerful lever. System leaders need to monitor and publicly report on the effectiveness of policies. This starts with understanding how your students are doing. This means having the right information at the right time for the right people. It can also be a powerful low-stakes accountability mechanism.

Monitoring graduation requirements' implementation can enable policy makers to have more informed discussions and answer key questions, such as do required courses and course sequences actually lead to success in and after high school? Are there course sequences that are disproportionately leaving students ill prepared, or those that actually are preparing them for great success after high school?

Are students that might be likely to succeed in more rigorous courses not actually getting access to those courses? Why don't they have access to those courses, if there's reason to believe that they really would be better served by them? Finally, what are some key demographic characteristics of those who enroll, who succeed, and who don't succeed, and are there particular patterns that we can learn from? If you're not collecting that information, nor publicly reporting the information that these types of questions, you may not be able to understand what's working, where there's bright
spots emerging, what can be scaled and replicated, and where there are opportunities to better support students and educators.

Finally, just a note that this -- we really do see there being a moral imperative to this work. The imperative is to ensure that all students have access to the coursework that will prepare them for the demands of college and career.

One of the great promises of establishing college and career-ready graduation requirements, as D.C. has done in English and math, specifically, is to address long-standing inequities, in which low-income students and students of color are systematically given a less-challenging curriculum. Effective implementation, to Daria's earlier point, requires ensuring the rigor and consistency of courses and that the standards are actually being covered by those courses. So one thing to have the standards, another to actually make sure that they're being implemented in the classroom. Some
of the mechanisms we talk about are things like course approval and reviews processes, inventorying school curricular and instructional materials in required courses, as well as end-of-course assessments.

Finally, as states and D.C. create these routes to graduation, the question remains whether they actually lead someplace for the student. Are students being set up for success? Do they fully understand the implications of taking one set of courses, as compared to another? And how are we ensuring that they're ready for their next steps after high school? Thank you again. I'm happy to take questions, and I'll wrap there.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Wonderful. Thank
you both for being here this evening. This testimony's incredibly informative and will help us as we move down this path, which is being led by our at-large member, Ms. Mary Lord.

Ms. Lord, I'll allow you to open up this conversation, and you may have the time that
you need.
MS. LORD: Well, thank you very much. First of all, thank you for being here and giving us the 30,000-foot view, and for really focusing on the importance between the high-quality college and career expectations, the graduation requirements, and how those actually help to close achievement gaps, raise access to high-quality courses for all children.

Because at the end of the day, it's not about what the policy says; it is how well it is accessed by students and taught by teachers. That alone was worth the price of admission for me. As my colleagues know, I spent a bunch of time thinking about revising graduation requirements and talking with members of the community, and we've had many efforts along this. We also want to create civic readiness.

One of my questions for you is how do we use this policy lever of establishing graduation requirements to ensure the equity -the equal access to great courses? Do we have to
rethink how we consider project-based learning? Should we require term papers and final projects? Most specifically, how do we get at this career technical education piece, and what indicators would we use or consider using to know that we've actually moved the needle forward? Graduation rates are kind of a post mortem, so are many of the indicators of college and career readiness, but I'd like to be able to know, if we're sending students into expensive colleges and they're flaming out in their first semester, what we need to do to adjust that. With that, take it away.

MS. O'HARA: You want to start?
MS. HALL: Sure. I think that there are a number of things to consider. When you talked about the equal access and course requirements as promoting equity, I genuinely believe that having common and consistent course requirements is one of the most things that any kind of policy making board like this can do to ensure equity for young people to create that common experience and say this is the expectation
of college and career readiness; this is the expectation for D.C. students.

I really applaud you for doing that. Of course, though, then you raised really important questions about the implementation. How do we make sure that they're actually getting the content, and not just the seat time? There are a number of different ways that can happen. It could be through project-based learning. It could be through a more traditional classroom. I would say the one thing that never varies, regardless of what kind of delivery mechanism you're talking about, is the importance of a strong, well-supported teacher, who's leading that instruction, whatever format the instruction takes place in, so to ensure that teachers truly have a grasp of the content, itself, have the ongoing support that they need, the embedded professional development, the ability to collaborate with peers, the opportunity to benchmark with peers.

I know that D.C. has been doing some
really exciting and interesting work on anchor assignments to give educators an opportunity to really check in and see is the work that I'm requiring really up to standard, and how does it benchmark with others?

I would really encourage you to continue to think about the work of preparing and supporting strong teachers, in particular, ensuring that those strongest teachers are with the students who most need them, the students who are at most risk of -- I'm not talking about flaming out in college, but flaming out in high school -- so making sure that there's every incentive for strong teachers to be teaching the ninth-grade math course, not necessarily the elite 12th-grade calculus course. We know that there's a lot of incentives and structures in place where it's oftentimes the strongest teachers teaching the students who have already progressed really far academically. I think turning that around is one very important thing to think about.

> MS. LORD: I'm just going to jump in there. It sounds like we're not talking just about graduation requirements, but also seeing how our teacher certification and licensing rules either support or don't support what you were just saying about prepared and supported teachers.

> MS. HALL: Absolutely, yes, and teacher placement and support and all of that, yes, making sure that high-quality instruction is there. The other thing you had asked about, CTE. We know that so many of the jobs that are high growth, high demand, require post-secondary training. There's not a big distinction between college readiness and career readiness. I would ask, as you think about how to make sure that those CTE sequences are well developed, making sure to really engage the business community in those conversations. What is it that the jobs that are in demand require? How do we make sure that those skills are embedded within the courses that young people are taking?

Also, just remember we hear a lot of pushback when we talk about the imperative of college and career readiness. People say there's just not enough time in the schedule to do both. Well, according to at least our national analysis, the average high school graduate gets about 26 credits. You can complete at least the college and career-ready course sequence that we defined in 18 credits, both, and that still leaves time for elective and exploration of other courses that young people are interested in. I would encourage you to keep that in mind, too. MS. O'HARA: Just two things to add to that. On the college and career readiness, we recently, within the last year, profiled a number of schools in both Massachusetts and Ohio and nested the school district/state role and showed you a window into the world of really, really successful programs that were delivering both the career and the college readiness of students. Very different models, both in Ohio and Massachusetts, and even within the individual
districts and how they're structured, but some, I think, really powerful, and a lot of it from the lens of the student, which is always nice to be able to step into their shoes.

I'm happy to share those resources because what we don't want is for it to become a choice between the college or the career. We think that those are really -- there's a role for both of them because eventually, everybody's going to be at that career readiness, hopefully, or engaged in a career.

The other thing I would mention, back to the real-time data and understanding where students are along the trajectory and not waiting, as you said, to the post-mortem graduation statistic, is that we have seen a number of states add these eighth and ninth-grade early warning measures, these credit accumulation -- and they can be structured in ways that -their credit accumulation of the core courses and strong -- a lot of times district level, some highlights from districts that are really using
that data and have partnerships with counselors and are really making sure that they're taking that in on a regular basis, so that they're understanding where students are along the path to graduation and, in eighth and ninth and tenth grade, addressing, so that it's not a question of in 11th grade, when everybody thinks that they're shooting for the star, and the reality is that the coursework and the transcript is not indicating that they're going to be able to get that before they get to high school.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so much. Additional questions? Ms. Wilson Phelan, from Ward 1.

MS. WILSON PHELAN: Thank you. I wanted to hear a little bit more about your word choice around cohesive because I just don't understand. That didn't seem to fit with what you were talking about. Let's start there, but I have other questions.

MS. HALL: Sure. So what we meant by cohesive was meeting either the college-ready
course sequence or the career-ready course sequence. The students who fell into that no cohesive curriculum had done neither. They were graduates. They had taken enough courses to get the diploma, but the diploma did not add up to either the college-ready requirements -- and again, we defined that based on the kinds of courses that colleges are most likely to require for admission -- or career readiness, which, again, was loosely defined as just three CTE courses within a career field.

MS. WILSON PHELAN: Okay. Then I was curious about why you thought college and career paired is ideal, honestly? Because taking three high school courses in the same field, if you are planning to go to college and explore what your career pathway should be, I'm not sure I would advise a student to do that.

MS. HALL: I think that giving
students and young people exposure to
high-quality CTE helps them to begin that career exploration even earlier on. I want to
underscore the high-quality CTE, not the random and haphazard and, frankly, low-level CTE we know is too common nationwide. That's something that the research really bears out. But if there is a focus on these -- if we want to consider a career in health sciences and integrating both your regular science courses and additional science courses that are related, that gives young people exposure. That's something that we think is particularly important. We also know that in the national conversation, frankly, we talk a whole lot about college and career readiness. We know better how to define college readiness, because there is that college benchmark, that the conversation about career readiness can get so watered down and so level that we think it's important to actually start talking about what high quality looks like, so we can't say that anything that's not college ready is career ready.

MS. WILSON PHELAN: I don't disagree
with that. I just thought suggesting that all
students should take three courses in the same career field -- I've never heard that before. When I think about what I would hope a student would get out of high school, it would be broader, rather than deeper. I think about our own graduation requirements, where students have very limited space to take electives, so suggesting that they should take three in the same field, $I$ don't know if $I$ would recommend that. I don't know if I wouldn't. It's a new thought. The other question $I$ had, if you look at the table that you showed with regard to what equals career ready, our high school graduation requirements today far surpass those requirements, but to your point, many of our students are graduating completely unprepared to take the next steps.

So you could say we do have a cohesive set of graduation requirements, but $I$ don't know if they're allowing the amount of depth that's required for students to truly master the material, in order to be prepared for the next
step, whether that's college or something else and, furthermore, that the reality is the vast majority of our public high school students come in at least two grade levels behind when they enter high school.

So I don't know if either of you have looked at states that have tried to address the reality -- it would probably be more like an urban comparison -- but reality of where their high school students truly are today, as they think about modernizing their approach to graduation, and whether you have any thoughts to share about what other states might have tried? For example, I know in Philadelphia, their competency-based high schools actually allow a catch-up component and the acknowledgment that many of their students enter well behind where they need to be to have something -- a future that's valuable out of their high school diploma.

I just wondered if you had any other examples? MS. HALL: I absolutely agree. If young people are coming in far behind, you can't
just ignore that. I think that one of the things that we see too often, and I would just really guard and recommend against, is thinking about remediating students, meaning slowing them down -- to really slow down and catch up and build the skills that they need, as opposed to leaving the students where they are, but knowing that we need instruction that accelerates them, so that they can catch up to grade level expectations, and then keep up on those grade level expectations. In terms of what kinds of practices can help support that, $I$ think that the early warning indicators really, really contribute to that, knowing before students come into ninth grade who are the students that we need to support? Can we do a beginning of ninth grade academy, particularly in mathematics, if that's where students are struggling, to really do some of that skill development, so that students can hopefully hit the ground running, or at least a little bit further ahead. That's something that we know some districts in California, including

San Diego and others, have been experimenting with.

MS. O'HARA: Yes, it struck me as I was doing some prep for this; we always benchmark D.C. as a state because we hope soon. But to your point about the benchmarking against the big urbans and the work that they're doing -- which I don't have a lot of depth of expertise in.

I focus much more on state-specific policy and implementation -- but certainly happy to dig around some and see what we can surface. I do know one of the dangers with the idea of the credit recovery and some of the other additional, more flexible measures out there, is ensuring that rigor is still there, and you're not just giving a pass, and then what for the student who receives a diploma, but is still arguably ill prepared for their next steps. I did want to also flag -- just back on the career-ready piece -- that we spent a lot of time looking outside of just courses, but two years ago, worked with an organization that is now called Advance CTE to
take a look at all state, including D.C. -- the career-readiness measures that states were publicly reporting, as well as including in their accountability system.

That was back in May of 2014, and we're working on an update to that, which should be out in May 2016. That will take a new, fresh look at what and how states are including -- I think we've got about 20-25 different types of career-ready measures, so everything from things like dual enrollment to completion of a program of study, CTE pathway, and just to recognize credentials, completion of specific career and technical ed courses, really kinds of apprenticeships and work-based learning and things that really span the gamut on how you could arrive at career readiness that may be worth taking a look at.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: One last question.

MS. WILSON PHELAN: I just wanted to raise the issue -- and again, we're in the
beginning stages of exploration here -- of age. I do find it unfair that we ask our students to hurry up and catch up, when society's essentially failed them up until that point in time.

So now the onus is on them to try to overcome that and to catch up. As you likely know, our federal law measures high school graduation only in terms of four-year graduation elements, but that doesn't mean we can't do something unique here, in D.C., especially given that those students who are graduating and moving on to UDC spend the bulk of their first and second year in expensive remedial courses anyway, which is an extension of high school, for the most part.

So why not just keep them in longer?
I know over-aged students, or the concept of being over age, is considered a risk factor, based on some of the data that's been analyzed by Raise DC, but I'm just curious, from your own assessment and knowledge and direct experience, how we might think about age as one of the
variables here?
MS. HALL: I think a couple of things, one very discrete. You referenced the federal requirements. There's a new federal law that does allow for both a calculation and accountability for both a four-year and an extended year graduation rate, so factoring in five and six years.

So that's kind of relevant, I think, to your question. I also would suggest that as we talk about the importance of accelerating students and getting them caught up to grade-level expectations, that doesn't work, at all, if it is just an expectation on the students. It has to be an expectation on the entire system.

It has to be an expectation that the strongest teachers, with the most support and most demonstrated expertise in accelerating students, particularly those who are coming in far behind, have the support that they need, the incentives that they need, to go to where those
students are, and that we continue to make very intentional teacher placement decisions. It's making sure that those are smaller classes, not bigger classes, which is something that we see very, very often. It's the remedial course that's huge, and it's the AP calculus course that's tiny -- that those students are getting additional time, whether it's before school, during the school day, after school.

All of those things have to be in place and reflect a systemic responsibility to catching students up and accelerating them, not just saying, "Hey, Student, go forth, and if that doesn't work for you, sorry." That's how I would think about it.

More so, frankly, than thinking about using age as a variable, $I$ would think about it as what is the systemic response to ensuring that all of the resources and all of our systems are aligned to identifying those students who we know are most at need and at risk of either dropping out or not getting the high school experience
they need and changing those patterns with decisions about staffing and decisions about time, decisions about money.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: I understand, Ms.
Hall, you may have a stop soon?
MS. HALL: I do. I can stay for a little while longer, but yes.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: We'd appreciate it if you (Simultaneous speaking), but when you need to go, you can go.

MS. HALL: I appreciate that. Thank you.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: You're welcome. We'll turn to Ms. Wattenberg from Ward 3, and then Ms. Whittington, our student representative.

MS. WATTENBERG: Thanks. First, I don't want to go into this now, but $I$ want to share Board Member Phelan's skepticism on the career tech. I also am curious, for another time, to explore why this would make sense. Because the career tech sequences are going to be very specific.

Maybe somebody doesn't want to go into healthcare, or they don't want to go into computers. I'm also leery about that. I want to pick up where you were about how to improve the courses and connect that to some of the other stuff that Ms. Phelan and others have said. We do have an issue in this city. As you've noticed, we have very high requirements. You mentioned that we're 1 of 15 that meet the college career-ready sequence in both English and math -- 18. But I think we're one of even a fewer number that actually requires Algebra II. Am I correct in that? (Simultaneous speaking.) That's part of the 18 . Here's my question. As noted, a huge proportion of our kids are entering ninth grade multiple grades behind in reading and math.

I don't want to have to go back through that again. Then there's the speed-up factor, which we've heard of. There's also this push to move them quickly into more difficult math classes. Part of that, we've actually just
addressed through a task force that we had and a new regulation that won't require ninth graders to take Algebra $I$.

They'll have a year to catch their skills up. But still, in all of our courses, there's such a push to get kids through these high-level courses and to graduate. Somebody mentioned credit recovery. We hear a lot from teachers, in particular, and also kids, that the learning isn't what you'd think it would be based on the course title. There's this issue of how do you balance getting kids into these courses with the complicated course title and getting that coursework to be the same, versus putting them in a class where they're going to get what they need? I totally appreciate what you're saying, which is the goal is to accelerate, not to remediate.

But again, to go back to some of the stuff we've been working on, part of accelerating is you've got to backfill. In all these subjects, they are, to some extent, sequential.

You can't just move quickly. You also have to backfill, which is more time. All the accountability is on the name of the course and on the pace.

So I'm very interested in what you
were saying about how you can look inside the course, maybe through -- I forgot what word you used, but you could compare assignments. Part of what makes a course a course is that it has a certain level of rigor to it, that it reaches the standards. Can you talk a little bit more about that and how people actually do that? Was that an idea? Does it exist?

MS. HALL: In terms of anchor
assignments, so having consistent assignments that are assigned to all students in a particular subject and grade, if I'm not mistaken, that's something that DCPS has been doing some of.

MS. WATTENBERG: It's part of what
DCPS is trying to do in its curriculum with its cornerstone curriculum. I don't want to speak for DCPS, but I think it's the curriculum, more
than it is knowing what the students are returning, in terms of the assignments. I might be wrong on that. But at the state level, in terms of the graduation requirement, that's not part of it.

MS. HALL: Okay. Then I think there are ways to consider how do we build in signals of whether students are truly being exposed to and mastering the course content, not just taking the course and getting the fancy name, as you said.

That's one of the reasons for
assessment is to truly show whether students have actually mastered the course content. An assessment can be objective. It can be consistent across a state, so that all young people who are in biology are taking a consistent assessment, and we can really get that benchmarking. It can be high quality. I know that's not always the case, but it can be. That's one of the ways. It's how people think about AP and IB. It's that kind of rigorous exam
at the end of the course that really is the signal of did students not just sit in the course, but actually master the content?

That's a signal that we know
post-secondary takes very seriously. I think that's one way to consider it. You can think about if those are end-of-year assessments, if those are interim, along-the-way assessments. There's a lot of different options for actually administering them.

MS. O'HARA: I would just add to that this idea of the student work being an important and critical reflection of where -- the expectation that are being demanded of students. There's definitely a lot more chatter out there, I would say, than there has been in the past about figuring out a way to really get inside the black box of what's happening in a big $A$ accountability, but rather to really understand where is this happening really well, where rigor is being maintained and a high bar is being expected of students, and what are the specific
student work pieces that we should be seeing that would be demonstrative of that high level of rigor? I know that Tennessee, in particular, springs to mind. I don't know that much about what they've done, but I do know that their commissioner was speaking about it at an annual meeting that we hosted in December.

I know that there was a number of other states that were really taken by this idea of having that feedback loop. As well, my organization has developed a student work protocol that is -- it's trying to get at that understanding of the student work piece. So I'm happy to follow up with additional information, but it's that -- I think you're absolutely right to be on that.

MS. WATTENBERG: I guess I'm also
trying to get at the tension here, which is if you really could look at the work and, therefore, make it so just the name of the course doesn't count, insofar as kids are entering these courses super far behind, I think the course is going to
have a hard time showing the rigorous work. Because if they're doing a good job as teachers, they'll be trying to lead kids there, but that's not what the work will be because they'll be doing the backfilling. I guess part of it is how do you resolve the tension between wanting kids to get through this high sequence of courses, beyond just the name, and recognizing that they're entering, in many cases, so far behind?

I know part of the answer is that we need to accelerate them, and I agree with that, and I appreciate you're saying that the way to do that -- and I really think this is right -- that the way you have to do that is with more resources. It is with the smaller classes and with the teachers who are really good at working with these kids, that just having the requirements, itself, only takes us so far.

So if you want to comment more on that, but I guess it's that tension that I'm trying to figure out. We have these very high requirements, and I think we're all very proud of
it, but I think we're also very aware that to some extent, they're in name only, and how do we resolve that?

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Then after the witness's answer, we'll move to Ms. Whittington.

MS. HALL: Again, $I$ think that the resources are far and away the most important thing to consider. I also think, thinking about how time is used within schools and really doing a deep look at master schedules -- are students truly taking -- are we taking advantage of all of the time that students are in schools, particularly for the students who need that acceleration?

We don't have a moment to waste, so we should make sure that they're not in courses that they don't need, that are repetitive. Because we may need that time to do the backfilling, as you suggest, so that they can then be ready to take and succeed in the rigorous courses.

We've had the opportunity to look at
a number of high school transcripts, specifically
in California. It is astonishing how much time gets wasted on kids taking courses that they've taken before. That really gets to advising and counseling and, actually, just the course placement within schools.

MS. WATTENBERG: Thank you.
PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Ms. Whittington, and then Mr. Wheaton.

MS. WHITTINGTON: Okay, I have a question for Ms. Daria. I know, as you said, about accelerating students who come in ninth grade who are already far behind. I know you only talked about California. I know that in D.C., at our schools, we have what is called Summer Bridge for middle schoolers.

Middle schoolers who come to high school, they have the opportunity to come to school over the summer, and they sit there and they work. As you said, they play catch up. I don't know about all the small classes and things because it's only ninth -- well, in my school, it would be eighth and seventh graders coming in as
potential eighth and ninth graders that would do work. We also have summer school.

Summer school is separate from Summer Bridge. For kids who are already on track -everyone takes an entry test for reading and mathematics. If you past your entry test, then you will go to Summer Bridge, but if you haven't, then you go to summer school, which is where you play catch up. But for many kids, if you come in ninth grade on a fourth-grade reading level, it's only so much that teachers can do. I know that we're here for students and teachers and faculty to help the students get you where you need to be, but the students also have to help themselves. It can't just be everybody depends on the student, or everybody depends on the teacher.

It has to be even for both. I understand you have to have -- the teachers can only do so much, and it can only be small classes, but we have to hold them accountable because this is their education. Because if
these people leave, all they have is themselves to learn by themselves. That is all.

MS. HALL: I couldn't agree more. I absolutely agree, and I really appreciate that. I think that holding students accountable for their own success requires being really honest with them about these are the courses that you need to take, here's why you need to take them, because this is what you're going to need when you get out past high school, into college, into the military, into the workforce, being very honest with young people about what they need, being really honest about where they are, not sugar coating if they're far behind, but saying you're behind, what do we, together -- teacher, student -- going to do about that? So that gets to the honesty of the system. It gets to how students are advised, all of that kind of stuff. But I totally agree with you.

MS. WHITTINGTON: Because I know that some schools, they'll come in and for kids who are not on the proper reading level, they'll come
in and they do a diagnostic test, where they do vocabulary and make sure they know all the words for themselves. I don't feel like that's accurate because anybody could pass a test, ask for you to spell a few words, even if you are not on grade level, because $I$ don't think the tests are accurate to what they're trying to prove.

I think that instead of telling them what they should take and what they need to do, I think somebody needs to genuinely sit down with the student and let them know that if they're far behind and they're not on track for graduation -which is the goal, even though career readiness and college readiness is more important -- I think we need to sit down and let these students know if they're not seriously prepared for college, or they're not seriously prepared for the world outside of school, then they should be aware of that. Because if they go here and they're trying to get a job, where if they can't read what their avocation is, then there's a problem. Then they'll be like, "Oh, it's the
school system."
PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so much, Ms. Whittington. Mr. Weedon, and then -Mr. Weedon.

MR. WEEDON: Thank you. I think a lot of my initial questions were covered in your response to Ms. Wilson Phelan and Ms. Wattenberg, but $I$ just want to reiterate a couple of things. The statement that really struck me came from Ms. O'Hara, when you said, "Earning a diploma's not always an indicator that students are ready for what comes next."

> I think that's really, really prevalent here in the District. Just last year, we had a celebration in District of Columbia Public Schools of a graduation rate reaching 70 percent in a school. Yet, when we look at the PARCC results for that school from last year, no students were proficient in either English or math in that school. When we look at the employment rates of D.C. high school graduates, they're atrocious. I've seen studies where they
approach 25-30 percent of those with a high school degree can't get a job. As Ms. Wilson Phelan pointed out, many of our students who go on to college, many go to UDC. Often, that's a remedial education.

So I think we need to be really, really cognizant, as we start looking at graduation requirements, that we also have to look at the students and their readiness before they enter high school, looking back as far as fourth grade, are they reading on grade level, but really focusing on the middle schools, both in the academics, but also some of those behavioral issues, attendance, family participation, and looking at indicators around there, as we start looking towards graduation and ultimate student success, however we define that.

The question that you haven't really addressed yet, or you touched upon -- and I promised my daughter, who is taking PARCC this week, that $I$ would say something about the amount of testing in our schools, so Malia, that's for
you. You said something about having rigorous end-of-course assessments, and that could be testing, that could be other measures. In an environment where my 11 year old has complained daily about the number of tests, not just this week, but for the last few weeks, as we've been approaching PARCC, how do we balance that effort to have these strong assessments that can be city-wide and ensure that we're having the same standards in all our schools versus this need for the hands-on education, the experiences that help shape well-rounded students?

MS. O'HARA: I'll take a first crack at that. Thank you for the question. It certainly is something that we hear -- and unless you never turn on a TV or open a newspaper, we're seeing across the U.S. -- is this idea of really a lot of pushback to over testing.

Some of the recent reports that have come out, that look individually at states or within districts, find that there is a lot of unnecessary testing that's not well aligned to
neither the instruction that the students receive in class, nor the standards that the state has adopted for students to meet as evidence of them being ready for their next step. We've been involved in both state and district and more local initiatives to do an inventory, of sorts, of what's happening. It's meant to be a process and a reflective and really digging deep to try to better understand why some of the assessments are happening. A lot of times, it could be legacy.

It could be tied to something -- a curricular suite that was many moons ago and is still on some shelves. Folks hold things near and dear, and it's hard to let go. I would say that the goal of a highly rigorous and well aligned end-of-course assessment or end-of-year assessment is that it is seamlessly embedded within instruction, and then there's not a disruption that's occurring for a teacher to stop teaching the standards and focus on test prep.

This is the goal of the system is that
you wouldn't know because it is in service of better instruction is why there is a need to have that check on the system. Certainly, moving forward, that is -- hopefully, better information on a more timely basis really reflects what's happening in the classroom and where students are and aren't meeting standards, and more diagnostic in nature, so that people really have the information they need, teachers, in particular, so that they can make different instructional choices or support choices, and intervene, where necessary, so that it's not that chunk of time, where you feel like you're not focusing on the learning.

MS. HALL: Just to reiterate that question of auditing assessments, we've seen districts and states really take this on, with the help of Achieve and others, to go in and just ask, of every assessment that's given, why are we giving this? Who uses the results? Is there another assessment, or something else that provides the same information? Is this aligned
to our standards or our curricular benchmarks or anything?

If there's no good answers to those, then why are we doing it? So just taking that step of doing a deep dive and audit I think can be really powerful. There's also a pot of money in the new federal law to support states in doing just that, so $I$ would encourage you guys, if that's a concern of yours, to pursue that money.

MR. WEEDON: Thank you.
PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Do board members have brief follow-up questions? Ms. Lord, and then Ms. Wattenberg.

MS. LORD: Just a quick follow up on CTE because I think there may be some misapprehension -- it's not vocational, and it's not required right now. We had to adjust our graduation requirements so that students were taking AP could take AP courses and have them count, rather than have to fulfill a CTE requirement that was not a pathway-aligned requirement. Do you have any advice, maybe from
states that you've looked at, for how you get that rigorous vocational or career pathway depth, without ending up with these, "We need to nail to CTE credits. We'll institute some keyboarding classes"?

MS. O'HARA: I would redirect you to one of our partner organizations, Advance CTE, who has that specific -- they used to be the National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education, now Advance CTE. They focus specifically on their membership, which is the state directors, but really digging into that question of how to get high-quality CTE. It's not the keyboard substitution or something that's just one off and not intentional and building skills and/or broadening ideas and experiences for students. But they're doing so much thinking around it. I know of some of the resources that I find helpful, which I can certainly send along, but they'd be a great organization.

MS. LORD: Isn't the evidence pretty clear that if you have a robust career technical
vocational education in the context of rigorous academic content education that, essentially, the students flourish? They apply what they know. They see the benefit of why they're learning Algebra II, for example? Maybe that's the model we should be aiming to foster in our schools. We may have to adjust teacher licensing because right now, those who do need a teacher certification, and that's not always the case if you are a specialist in a trade, for example. MS. O'HARA: There are a few states that have engaged in an analysis of that intersection between the CTE and college-ready space, particularly those that have Advance CTE either endorsements or diplomas, the intersection of -- or looking at how those students do alongside having in their pocket the rigorous course taking in math and English and science. When we follow them into post-secondary and we follow them into the workforce, it's true that they absolutely are flourishing and doing so in some of the models that are being put forth --
really creative and engaging ways that are much different than 30 years ago, when some people are still stuck on the career tech front.

MS. HALL: Right. I just think it's important to note, it's not just 30 years ago -people are thinking about CTE from 30 years ago. CTE from 30 years ago is still very much alive and well today, and the really rigorous, high quality that you've been referring to, I think, is very much the exception, rather than the rule.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Ms. Wattenberg?
MS. WATTENBERG: I'm going to throw
out two ideas that I've heard that I think maybe try to deal with this issue of how do you encourage everybody to reach their maximum, understanding that at any given moment, how people are going to get there and where they're going to get might not be the same. Two things that strike me. One is -- these used to be more popular -- the idea of different kinds of diplomas. So, to use Desiree's words, you make very clear this diploma is -- if you want to
enter the best apprenticeship programs that we have, this is the kind of diploma you want. If you want to attend a community college, this is the kind of diploma you want.

If you want to attend a selective four-year college, this is the kind of diploma you want -- so that each one is very clear about what the expectations are, and the idea behind each one is to really elicit the maximum learning and provide the maximum support for each child.

I know long ago -- it's very easy for those to become sort of a useless diploma and a good diploma, but at least in theory, it seems like you could have different kinds that would speak to these different kinds of needs, and each one would require serious, rigorous courses. I just wonder if you have any sense of the extent to which this is going on other states that we should look at?

MS. HALL: I imagine you could have had more on the diploma types. I will just throw out kind of a warning that there's a lot of
history with these multiple diploma options, that they're very, very differentiated by student race, ethnicity, and income, and that it is low-income students and students of color who are disproportionately in the, "So you want to go to community college, or so you want to get a certificate?" track. It is disproportionately White and affluent students who are in the, "So you want to go to a four-year college?" track.

I have not seen a piece of data from either students or parents that suggests that the aspirations of young people are so different by race or by class that those disparities and who's actually taking the course -- getting various diploma types is just a matter of what students want. I think that it is very clear that it is about how students are being tracked and advised and counseled. So I would just really raise that as a word of serious caution.

MS. WATTENBERG: Let me just say I'm very sympathetic to what you're saying. I would just encourage you to think about this and have a
further dialogue, which is we're not doing the tracking now, and our kids are totally tracked. As people have said, we don't have any tracking. We don't have offer any guidance in terms of courses, and we still have the same horrible statistics. I'm just trying to figure out a way to be honest about what we can do, and do it, as we move forward on this. I am so admiring of the work of Ed Trust. I used to do a lot of work with them, and same with the Achieve. I'd just love to be in contact with you guys as we move forward on this (Simultaneous speaking) it's a challenge. I didn't mean to cut you off.

MS. O'HARA: Yes, so definitely echo Daria's cautions, as well as would add that in the last few years, we've actually seen more states move to the one diploma, as you said. Many diplomas were -- or many diploma options, at least on its face, were something that have fallen away in a lot of states, although that raises, for us, some questions about is there a weakening of rigor?

Given that there's no movement -- grad rates going up in most of the other measures of college and career readiness across all states are stagnant or not where you need them to be, and we've got $40,50,60,70$ percentage points gaps in readiness, as per, call it what you will, a proxy of a student's readiness, but that versus graduation rate, it's hard to explain away those huge gaps. One of the other things we've seen is kind of an aggregation of diploma types into one diploma, but the addition of endorsements, which is more -- it's that core that remains the same (Simultaneous speaking).

MS. WATTENBERG: Yes, that's a much better idea.

MS. O'HARA: -- but then that recognizes, and in some ways, gets opportunity for the differentiation and the continued -depending on how your data system and everything is set up, that allows for some ability to dig in and look at the courses.

I've also seen, in some states that
have multiple options or endorsements, who want to continue to maintain that expectation that students meet this bar, but have some -- a safety net or have another way for students to get across the finish line, they've built in checks in their accountability system, so that, for instance, in one state, it's been the case that if a certain percentage of students within a district or school are meeting the lowest level, so basically opting out of the default set of expectations, which is a college and career-ready diploma, if they're going -- too many are going into a lower track, then there is -- it affects the overall school's accountability score.

There's a few different things that some states have done to try to put a check on the system. I don't know how effective they are, but just would definitely welcome additional conversations on it.

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so much. With that, $I$ just have a brief question. Could either of you speak to districts that might
have implemented or required personal financial literacy and whether that is a useful tool for students to have as they exit high school and enter the real world? Do either of you have any experience with that?

MS. HALL: I don't.
MS. O'HARA: I can give you a list of states that have it. It's pretty new, so on the effectiveness --

PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Not a lot of data on that.

MS. O'HARA: (Simultaneous speaking)
yes. But there's a lot of chatter, for sure, around financial literacy, or at least in the legislatures. I'm not sure how much those actually make their way into regulation or policy. We have information on which states have done something, which could be a starting point. PRESIDENT JACOBSON: I'd really love to see that. I think one of the take-aways for me on this dialogue is the importance of electives and flexibility. I don't know that I'm
really interested in making more requirements on the graduation requirements -- because we're very restrictive right now in D.C. I think 20 1/2 of our credit hours are prescribed.

But it's something that I think would have been helpful for me, as I went off to college, with no personal financial literacy experience and a checkbook and a bunch of loans. With that, I'm going to thank you so much, on behalf of the Board, for spending so much time with us this evening. We appreciate any follow up that members have. If you have additional materials that you'd like to provide us, we'd certainly love to look at that, so thank you so very much.

MS. HALL: Thanks for the opportunity.
MS. O'HARA: Appreciate it, thanks.
PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Our pleasure. As we wrap up, do board members have brief statements or events that they'd care to mention before we close down? (No audible response.) Then with that, $I$ would entertain a motion to
adjourn.
MS. WILSON PHELAN: So moved.
PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Moved by Ms.
Wilson Phelan. Is there a second?
MR. WEEDON: Second.
PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Second by Mr.
Weedon. All in favor, say aye.
(Chorus of ayes.)
Any opposed?
(No audible response.)
We're adjourned.
(Whereupon, the above-entitled meeting
was concluded at 7:07 p.m.)

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Yair 18:7

Neal R. Gross and Co., Inc.

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Public Meeting

Before: DC SBOE

Date: 04-20-16

Place: Washington, DC
was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

> Neae $\operatorname{lors} \rho$ ------------------Court Reporter

