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Committee of the Whole
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Public Oversight Hearing:
Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy

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Introduction

Good morning, Chairman Mendelson, members of the Committee, and staff. My name is Danielle Robinette, and I am a Senior Policy Attorney at Children's Law Center. Children's Law Center believes every child should grow up with a strong foundation of family, health and education and live in a world free from poverty, trauma, racism and other forms of oppression. Our more than 100 staff – together with DC children and families, community partners and pro bono attorneys – use the law to solve children's urgent problems today and improve the systems that will affect their lives tomorrow. Since our founding in 1996, we have reached more than 50,000 children and families directly and multiplied our impact by advocating for city-wide solutions that benefit hundreds of thousands more.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding the issues of student engagement and school attendance in DC public schools. Children's Law Center represents DC students who regularly face barriers in accessing their education. Through our medical-legal partnership, Healthy Together, we represent parents whose children are facing school attendance challenges related to chronic health conditions, lack of access to special education, housing conditions, among other concerns. We also represent children in foster care who face myriad challenges accessing and engaging with their education. My testimony and recommendations today focus on the experiences of our clients navigating DC's complex special education system.

Preliminary Data from DHS Pilot Program Provides Valuable Insight into Students' Unmet Needs

Over the past two years, we have been glad to see the Council maintain focused attention on persistently high rates of chronic absenteeism among DC students. Both the legislative and executive branches have invested time and resources to identifying and addressing students' barriers to regular school attendance.¹ This work culminated in the creation of a truancy pilot program within the Department of Human Services (DHS).²

Last week, DHS issued a report sharing insights gained from the first year of the pilot program which provides some valuable insight into why DC students miss school.³ Specifically, it notes that the primary barriers to attendance for students in the pilot, as reported by schools, are struggling academically, struggling behaviorally, and youth sick.⁴ Notably, these trends are consistent with those observed in research by national experts.⁵ It is particularly concerning to see how many students are missing school because they are struggling academically.⁶ When schools were asked to identify the reason for a student's absence, their most common response was "struggling academically." This primary reason was reported more times (169) than the second (struggling behaviorally, 90) and third (youth sick, 74) reasons combined.

Where a school believes that the issue underlying a student's absence is academic in nature, the responsive intervention must be driven by the school's expertise in educational supports. When a middle school student with a 2nd grade reading level misses school because they are embarrassed to be so far behind their peers, no amount of

punishment will address their underlying needs. Just as schools cannot be expected to solve a family's housing insecurity, CFSA and DYRS should not be expected to teach reading and math. The District's education sector must do more to ensure that students' academic needs are met and that students struggling academically are uniquely supported to prevent disengagement and absenteeism.

To the extent rates of chronic absenteeism and truancy are driven by schools failing to meet students' academic needs, the District must focus on what schools need to strengthen student achievement. Over the past two years, the Council and the Executive have invested significant time and energy seeking to understand the factors outside of school that impact attendance - transportation, community safety, and poverty. Acknowledging that schools cannot solve this problem alone, we have supported efforts like the DHS that seek to connect students with unmet needs to city services that can support them.⁷ However, the education sector cannot continue to ignore its responsibility to meet students' academic needs – especially for students with disabilities. While schools alone cannot solve homelessness or public transportation or community safety, they absolutely must ensure that “struggling academically” does not continue to drive chronic absenteeism and truancy in the District.

Failure to Meet the Educational Needs of Students with Disabilities Increases Absenteeism and Prevents Meaningful Academic Growth

Unmet educational needs are not a new trend in DC's attendance data. In the District, students with disabilities consistently miss school more than their nondisabled

peers.⁸ Data from OSSE shows that, among students with disabilities, absenteeism risk varies based on a student's primary disability.⁹ Moreover, this trend pre-dates the COVID-19 pandemic. OSSE Attendance Report for SY16-17 found that students with disabilities were more likely to be chronically absent and truant than their nondisabled peers.¹⁰ In their report for SY17-18, OSSE highlighted the connection between rates of chronic absenteeism among students with disabilities and their deeply concerning rates of proficiency on statewide assessments:

“Students with disabilities are among the District’s most vulnerable populations. The degree of chronic absenteeism for students with disabilities, particularly the students with the highest level of needs, is a barrier to their educational progress and opportunities. Less than 7 percent of students with disabilities achieved proficiency on the annual statewide assessment, PARCC. The prevalence of absenteeism among the District’s students with disabilities undermines efforts to narrow the achievement gaps between students with disabilities and those in general education.”¹¹

The District must do better in educating students with disabilities. National research and the DHS pilot report show that students struggling academically are more likely to be absent from school. Additionally, years of statewide assessment data show that DC students with disabilities are not meeting proficiency benchmarks.¹² As such, it should not come as a surprise that DC students with disabilities are disengaged and chronically absent. It is critical that we disrupt the cycle of disengagement and poor educational outcomes for students with the greatest need of academic support.

At this Committee’s absenteeism hearing in November of 2024, we encouraged the Committee to “explore rates of chronic absenteeism among students with disabilities and how improved provision of special education could support improved attendance among this student group.”¹³ We continue to uplift the urgent need to focus on how DC’s inadequate provision of special education leads to student disengagement and chronic absenteeism. To improve attendance, the education sector must do more to identify and evaluate students with disabilities, to provide adequate special education services, and strengthen the provision of home and hospital instruction.

Failure to Identify and Evaluate Students with Disabilities Increases Absenteeism

From our experience representing DC students with disabilities, we have seen a wide variety of cases in which failures to identify and evaluate students with disabilities has fostered disengagement and undermined regular school attendance. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), states have a Child Find obligation which means they must ensure that “All children with disabilities residing in the State, [...] regardless of the severity of their disability, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated.”¹⁴

DC has a long history of failure to meet the Child Find obligation. In 2005, a class action lawsuit was brought against the District on behalf of 3- to 5-year-old children who are or may be eligible for special education arguing that DC’s education agencies had violated Child Find by failing to provide timely special education to children with

disabilities.¹⁵ The District Court agreed and in 2016 imposed an injunction requiring the District to improve its special education system to comply with the IDEA. This injunction is still in place today and will remain so until the District demonstrates consistent compliance with benchmarks set by the Court.¹⁶ The District's most recent report to the Court regarding their progress toward meeting these benchmarks show there is still much work to be done to ensure that students receive timely eligibility determinations and effective transitions from early intervention (birth to 3) to special education services (3-21 years old).¹⁷ For example, for Subclass III, the Court requires the District to ensure that "at least 95% of all preschool children referred for Part B services¹⁸ receive a timely eligibility determination."¹⁹ The District was close to meeting this benchmark during FFY2015-2018. However, this metric took a steep drop during the pandemic (49% in FFY2020) and the most recent report stated that the District has recovered to only 80.3% compliance.²⁰ Moreover, for Subclass IV, the goal is for 95% of all Part C²¹ graduates that are found eligible for Part B receive a smooth and effective transition by the third birthdays."²² The District has never exceeded 88% compliance for this group and the most recent report indicated only 56.4% compliance.²³

Delays in evaluation and placement in an appropriate educational setting can lead to extensive periods of missed school. Over the past year, we have seen an increase in placement delays for young students evaluated and found eligible by Early Stages where the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) calls for a self-contained classroom

setting. Typically, after Early Stages develops an IEP for a student, DCPS determines whether the student's neighborhood school can implement the IEP. However, for DCPS students who need a self-contained setting, "[s]eats in these classrooms are administratively assigned by the central office."²⁴ In a recent meeting with counsel for the D.L. class action lawsuit, DCPS reported that at least 185 students ages 3-5 were placed on waiting lists for self-contained classrooms in SY24-25.²⁵ It is unclear whether DCPS monitors the number of days missed by similarly situated students left in limbo. Without a school assignment from DCPS, these students are yet enrolled in a school and thus not being marked absent by anyone. Even if these students are not accumulating absences on their attendance record, they are not receiving any educational services and are at risk of falling further and further behind their peers. Moreover, as seen in the DHS pilot report, academic struggles increase disengagement and drive chronic absenteeism and truancy. By failing to meet the needs of students with disabilities, the District undermines efforts to improve attendance rates.

Notably any school days missed by these students, if DCPS maintained such records, are not reflected in OSSE's annual attendance reporting because their data general exclude pre-K and adult students from aggregate measures of chronic absenteeism because they are not of compulsory age.²⁶ As such, two key concerns arise. First, students with disabilities are missing more school than the annual reports indicate. Second, the District has minimal insight into the attendance patterns of early education

students. This is a concern given that research has shown that patterns of chronic absenteeism are established in students' early years. One study of students in Baltimore found that students who were chronically absent in kindergarten "were more likely to be [chronically absent] in every subsequent year."²⁷ Moreover, another study found that 3- and 4-year-olds who missed more days of school saw fewer gains in areas of math and literacy during the preschool year.²⁸

Moreover, such placement delays are not limited to preschool students. We have also seen long delays when a student already enrolled in DCPS needs a more supportive placement than their current school can accommodate. For example, we represented a family whose student missed more than 20 days of school last Spring while awaiting a special education placement decision from DCPS. The student's absences were excused, thus avoiding punitive consequences for the child or their caregiver. However, the student did not receive any educational services during this period.

Some students make it all the way to high school without ever being identified as a student with a disability. We represented a family whose high schooler was deeply disengaged from their education and exhibiting significant academic struggles. However, this student had never been evaluated for a learning disability. We advocated initial evaluations, and the results indicated a 5th-grade reading level. Only then, in the student's senior year, did the school create an IEP and offer services.

Failure to identify students with disabilities can lead to absenteeism through exclusionary discipline as well. When a student's educational needs are not met, their disability may manifest in unwanted behaviors that lead to suspension and/or expulsion. In one case, we spent weeks seeking initial evaluations for a student, but the school repeatedly delayed. When the student was involved in a fight with classmates, the school referred them for a Targeted School Violence Assessment. We argued that the student's behaviors were a manifestation of their unmet special education needs and fought for the school to conduct the relevant evaluations. Upon finally evaluating the student, DCPS developed an IEP with significant service hours and supports. But for their caregiver seeking legal representation, this student may have been suspended (accumulating unexcused absences and exacerbating the issues underlying the problematic behavior) instead of being appropriately identified or provided special education services.

As we testified at this Committee's special education hearing last November, too often families must fight tooth and nail to get their child the services and supports to which they are entitled under the IDEA.²⁹ These barriers to special education inhibit meaningful academic growth, foster frustration and disengagement, and increase chronic absenteeism among student students with disabilities.

Failure to Provide Educational Services Prevents Student Access to Learning

We have testified repeatedly about concerns with OSSE's Division of Student Transportation.³⁰ Each school year, we have dozens of cases in which OSSE transportation

issues prevent a student from accessing their education. However, because OSSE does not track how many absences result from agency-caused transportation delays, it is difficult to determine how significant an impact transportation plays in the overall rate of absenteeism among students with disabilities.³¹ Unreliable transportation from OSSE-DOT often means that students with disabilities simply cannot get to school. For many of the families we work with, OSSE-DOT is the only way for their student to get to school because they cannot rely on public transportation due to their student's disability and cannot afford costly ride share services. As the Committee continues to examine ways to improve student attendance, we encourage improvements to OSSE-DOT to remain a priority. We look forward to this Committee's hearing on OSSE-DOT next month.

For some students with disabilities, intermittent and recurring health conditions may impede their ability to attend school in person. For these students, the District should provide home or hospital instruction (HHI) consistent with the Students' Right to Home or Hospital Instruction Act of 2018.³² However, in our experience, DCPS is reluctant to offer HHI or make the application process exceptionally difficult. Again, we find that families need legal representation to even be aware that certain educational supports are available. For example, we represented a family preparing their student for an upcoming surgery. We sought HHI for the student to ensure educational services continued while the student was recovering from surgery and unable to attend school in person. The student's family shared that the school had never mentioned HHI as an option when the

student missed school due to surgeries in previous school years. The student's absences had been excused, but the student was not offered the relevant supports to ensure that they could continue learning during their recovery.

Absenteeism Driven by Unmet Special Education Needs Can Lead to Unnecessary and Harmful Interactions with Child Welfare

As we have testified many times, referral to DC's Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) is an ineffective and harmful strategy to address school attendance.³³ This is especially true when unmet educational needs underlie a student's absence. The child welfare system is not the "all-purpose agency" that many envision it to be.³⁴ For example, if a student is disengaged from school because they are several years behind grade level in reading or has an unidentified disability, CFSA involvement cannot provide the necessary academic interventions. Moreover, referrals to child welfare pose a risk of harm to students and families. Any contact with CFSA, even an investigation where allegations are not substantiated, can be traumatic and damaging for children and families.³⁵

Under the Attendance Accountability Act of 2013, schools are required to refer students with ten or more unexcused absences to law enforcement and child welfare. Upon a student's 10th unexcused absence, schools must report the family's information to the MPD.³⁶ Next, students under 14 years of age are referred to the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA).³⁷ Further, the DC Code defines a "neglected child" as a child who, among other things, "is without education required by law."³⁸ The requirement to refer a family to CFSA assumes that action or inaction on the part of the student's

caregiver is preventing access to education. However, for too many DC students with disabilities, the District's poor provision of special education impedes access to education as required by the IDEA. This is not the fault of the caregiver and leads to unnecessary and traumatic CFSA involvement, while doing nothing to improve attendance.

For example, we represented a child with an open neglect proceeding in Family Court due to extensive absences from school. DCPS had never identified or evaluated the student for potential disabilities. The student received comprehensive psychological, psychoeducational, and psychiatric evaluations at the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) Assessment Center, which revealed significant academic and cognitive deficits and a behavioral health diagnosis. The evaluator specifically recommended a school eligibility meeting to determine whether the student would benefit from special education services and supports. Despite these findings, and the LEA's legal obligation to meet and consider the evaluations' results, DCPS never held an Analysis of Existing Data (AED) meeting and, thus the student was not found eligible for special education services. With no additional supports from the school, the absences continued and CFSA indicated an intent to remove the student from their family.

Seeking a more supporting school, the student's parent used the school lottery to move them to a charter school that immediately convened an AED meeting to review the existing data and found the student eligible for special education under multiple disability classifications based on the same evaluations that DCPS had ignored. Even

before formalizing a robust IEP, the school began providing the student with informal supports that correlated with an increase in school attendance. After collecting additional data, the team created the student's current IEP which includes, among other things, a dedicated aide and a plan specifically targeted to improve school attendance. Since implementing the IEP, the school has noted significant progress in student's attendance. For now, CFSA has paused their plan to remove the student from their home.

In the end, this family was subjected to a child welfare investigation because DCPS failed to adequately support this student. Even after DBH covered the costs of evaluating the student, DCPS refused to meet and review the assessment results. This child needed a school that understood their complex needs and offered special education services. CFSA was not the right tool to address these needs. DCPS must be more proactive in supporting and educating students with disabilities. DCPS's failure to fulfill its IDEA obligations in the first instance creates significant costs – not just litigation costs but also the harms to students and families, and persistently high rates of chronic absenteeism.

Conclusion

Absenteeism has long been a challenge for the District, but the past two years have shown that focused attention on this issue can lead to meaningful change that supports students and families rather than punishing them. We encourage the Committee to continue its commitment to meeting the needs of DC all students.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and I welcome any questions.

¹ The State Board of Education held a panel on Identifying Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism Interventions in Schools, *see* District of Columbia State Board of Education, Public Meeting (Jan. 17, 2024), *recording available at:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vpEFsIIY30&list=PLc9Yooaf1xFR0Bf1O-6dvWvSleaVGZUO8&index=7> (panel begins at 20:42); the SBOE also passed a Resolution recommending policies that address chronic absenteeism and truancy, District of Columbia State Board of Education, SR24-7 Recommending Policies that Address Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy, *available at:* <https://sboe.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/sboe/publication/attachments/Recommending%20Policies%20that%20Address%20Chronic%20Absenteeism%20and%20Truancy%20SR24-7.pdf>; and the SBOE published an analysis of the four attendance bills considered by the Committee, District of Columbia State Board of Education, “Crosswalk: Chronic Absenteeism & Truancy” (Sept. 2024), *available at:* https://sboe.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/sboe/release_content/attachments/2024-09-17-SBOE_Crosswalk_ChronicAbsenteeism%26Truancy_0.pdf.

The Office of the State Superintendent has begun publishing mid-year data snapshots, *see e.g.,* Office of the State Superintendent of Education, “2023-24 Mid-Year Attendance Brief,” https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/Mid_Year%20Attendance_1_Pager%203_29_2024.pdf;

The Every Day Counts! Taskforce, housed within the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, undertook a year-long strategic planning process that culminated in their recent relaunch summit that brought together government and community partners to hear from panels comprised of national experts, DC school leaders, and DC students, *see*

<https://meetingthemomenteverydaycounts.splashthat.com/>. At this summit, Deputy Mayor Kihn announced that D.C. has joined 14 states in a commitment to cut chronic absenteeism by 50% over the next five years. For more information on the 50% Challenge, *see* Attendance Works, Toolkits, “50% Challenge: Crating a State Road Map” (Sept. 2024), *available at:*

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/the-50-challenge-crafting-a-state-road-map/>.

² *See* B25-0912, *the Pilot Truancy Reduction Emergency Amendment Act of 2024* and B25-0913, *the Pilot Truancy Reduction Temporary Amendment Act of 2024*.

³ DC Department of Human Services, “Truancy Reduction Pilot Program: Final Report Year One,” (Oct. 7, 2025), *available at:* <https://lms.dccouncil.gov/downloads/LIMS/60478/Introduction/RC26-0105-Introduction.pdf?Id=224535>.

⁴ *See* DC Department of Human Services, “Truancy Reduction Pilot Program: Final Report Year One,” *supra* note 4, at 14 (Figure 10).

⁵ *Compare id. with* Attendance Works, “Identify the root causes of absence” (rev. Sept. 8, 2025), *available at:* <https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/root-causes/>.

⁶ *See* DC Department of Human Services, “Truancy Reduction Pilot Program: Final Report Year One,” *supra* note 4, at 14 (Figure 10).

⁷ *See* Danielle Robinette, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the Council of the District of Columbia, Committee of the Whole, Public Roundtable on Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy (Nov. 13, 2024), p. 11, *available at:* <https://childrenslawcenter.org/resources/testimony-chronic-absenteeism-and-truancy/>.

⁸ *See* Office of the State Superintendent of Education, *District of Columbia Attendance Report 2022-23 School Year*, p. 38, 41 (November 30, 2023), *available at:*

https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/2022-23%20Attendance%20Report_FINAL_0.pdf.

⁹ See Office of the State Superintendent of Education, *District of Columbia Attendance Report: 2018-19 School Year*, p.24 (November 30, 2019), available at:

<https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/2018-19%20School%20Year%20Attendance%20Report.pdf>

¹⁰ See Office of the State Superintendent of Education, *District of Columbia Attendance Report: SY 2016-17*, p. 17-18 (November 30, 2017), available at:

https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/SY16-17AttendanceReport.FINAL_.pdf

¹¹ See Office of the State Superintendent of Education, *District of Columbia Attendance Report: SY 2017-18*, p. 16-17 (November 30, 2018), available at:

<https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/2017-18%20School%20Year%20Attendance%20Report.pdf>

¹² See DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education, “2025 Statewide Assessment Results: English Language Arts (ELA) and Math” (Aug. 21, 2025), at 40-41 (Appendix 13 & 14), available at:

https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/Assessment%202025_PublicDeck%20_FINAL.pdf; see also DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education, “DC’s 2018 PARCC Results” (Aug. 16, 2018), at 13, available at:

https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/2018%20PARCC%20Results%20Release%20%28Aug.%2016%2C%202018%29.pdf.

¹³ See Danielle Robinette, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the Council of the District of Columbia, Committee of the Whole, Public Roundtable on Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy (Nov. 13, 2024), p. 11, available at: <https://childrenslawcenter.org/resources/testimony-chronic-absenteeism-and-truancy/>.

¹⁴ 34 CFR 300.111(a)(1)(i).

¹⁵ See Office of the State Superintendent of Education, “D.L. v. District of Columbia at a Glance,” available at:

https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/D.L.%20v%20District%20of%20Columbia%20at%20a%20Glance.pdf

¹⁶ See Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc., “D.L. v. District of Columbia: How Does this Ruling Impact Me and My Child?” (October 10, 2019), available at: <https://www.aje-dc.org/2019/10/10/d-l-v-district-of-columbia-how-does-this-ruling-impact-me-and-my-child/>

¹⁷ See Defendants’ February 28, 2025 Report on Programmatic Requirements at 6-7, *D.L., et al. v. District of Columbia, et al.*, No. 05-1437-RCL (D.D.C. Feb. 28, 2025), available at:

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a2af8a0f14aa1cbbcf14079/t/67c75b306197ea0f983715c9/1741118257435/0704-](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a2af8a0f14aa1cbbcf14079/t/67c75b306197ea0f983715c9/1741118257435/0704-001+Defendants%27+February+28+2025+Report+on+Programmatic+Requirements%28252682.1%29.pdf)

[001+Defendants%27+February+28+2025+Report+on+Programmatic+Requirements%28252682.1%29.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a2af8a0f14aa1cbbcf14079/t/67c75b306197ea0f983715c9/1741118257435/0704-001+Defendants%27+February+28+2025+Report+on+Programmatic+Requirements%28252682.1%29.pdf)

¹⁸ “Part B services” refers to those services required by Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which covers school-aged children (defined as students age 3 to 22). This includes preschoolers, but does not cover students under the age of 3. See e.g., Center for Parent Information & Resources, “Part B of IDEA: Services for School-Aged Children (Oct. 2018), available at:

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/partb/>.

¹⁹ See Order at 4, *D.L., et al. v. District of Columbia, et al.*, No. 05-1437-RCL (D.D.C. Feb. 28, 2025), available at:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a2af8a0f14aa1cbbcf14079/t/5a733adfc8302533f763b937/1517501153872/Order%2C+dated+May+18%2C+2016.pdf>.

²⁰ See Defendants' February 28, 2025 Report on Programmatic Requirements, *supra* note 17, at 6.

²¹ "Part C services" refers to early intervention services for babies and toddlers (birth to 3) as required by Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). See e.g., Center for Parent Information & Resources, "Part C of IDEA: Early Intervention for Babies and Toddlers (May 2023), available at: <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/partc/>.

²² Order, *D.L., et al. v. District of Columbia, et al.*, *supra* note 19, at 4.

²³ See Defendants' February 28, 2025 Report on Programmatic Requirements, *supra* note 17, at 6.

²⁴ District of Columbia Public Schools, DCPS Special Education Family Guide, "SY24-25 Self-Contained Classrooms by High School Feeder," available at: <https://dcpsspecial.ed.wixsite.com/home/self-contained-feeder-patterns>.

²⁵ See Email from Margaret Kohn to District of Columbia Special Education Attorney Roundtable (October 1, 2025), (on file with author).

²⁶ See Office of the State Superintendent of Education, *District of Columbia Attendance Report: School Year 2023-24*, at 4 (November 12, 2024), available at: https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/2023-24%20Attendance%20Report%20%28Final%29.pdf.

²⁷ Faith Connolly and Linda S. Olson, Baltimore Education Research Consortium, "Early Elementary Performance and Attendance in Baltimore City Schools' Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten," at 15 (March 2012), available at: <https://www.baltimore-berc.org/pdfs/PreKKAttendanceFullReport.pdf>

²⁸ See Arya Ansari & Kelly M. Purtell, "Absenteeism in Head Start and Children's Academic Learning," 89(4) *Child Dev.* 1088-1098 (May 15, 2017), available at: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5685942/>

²⁹ See Danielle Robinette, Children's Law Center, Testimony Before the Council of the District of Columbia, Committee of the Whole, Public Hearing on B25-0847: Advancing Equity in Special Education Protocols Amendment Act of 2024 and Oversight of Education For Students with Special Needs (Nov. 20, 2024), available at: <https://childrenslawcenter.org/resources/testimony-advancing-equity-in-special-education-protocols-amendment-act-of-2024/>

³⁰ See e.g., Danielle Robinette, Children's Law Center, Testimony Before the Council of the District of Columbia, Committee of the Whole, Public Hearing on FY24 Performance Oversight for the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (Mar. 7, 2025), available for download at: <https://lims.dccouncil.gov/Hearings/hearings/664>

³¹ See Office of State School Superintendent, Responses to FY22 Performance Oversight Questions, Answer to Q85(i)-(j), available at: <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/2023OS1.pdf>.

³² See D.C. Code § 38-251.01 *et seq.*

³³ See e.g., Judith Sandalow and Danielle Robinette, Children's Law Center, Testimony Before the Council of the District of Columbia, Committee of the Whole, Public Roundtable on Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy (Dec. 12, 2023), p. 12-15, available at: <https://childrenslawcenter.org/resources/hearing-committee-of-the-whole-chronic-absenteeism-truancy/>

³⁴ Dorothy Roberts, *TORN APART: HOW THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM DESTROYS BLACK FAMILIES – AND HOW ABOLITION CAN BUILD A SAFER WORLD*, 168 (2022) (citing Kelley Fong, *Getting Eyes in the Home: Child Protective Services Investigations and State Surveillance of Family Life*, 84.4 *AM. SOCIOLOGICAL REV.* 610, 620 (Aug. 2020)).

³⁵ See Casey Family Programs, *Issue Brief: How does investigation, removal, and placement cause trauma for children?* (Updated May 2018), available at: https://www.casey.org/media/SC_Investigation-removal-placement-causes-trauma.pdf.

³⁶ D.C. Code § 38-207(c)(1).

³⁷ D.C. Code § 38-208(c)(1)(A).

³⁸ D.C. Code § 16-2301(9)(A)(ii).