

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
ANNOUNCES A PUBLIC HEARING**

**on**

**B25-800 “Mathematics Education Improvement Amendment Act of 2024”**

**on**

**Wednesday, November 6, 2024, 12:00 p.m.**

Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson. I am testifying in my individual capacity as Ward 5 member of the State Board of Education, and I am not representing the views of the Board as a whole.

As you know from Councilmember Parker’s introduction letter and the testimony of many today, as measured by our statewide standardized tests, more than three-fourths of DC students are not meeting expectations in math. To me, this signals not only that we are not doing enough to support our students currently, but also that what is needed has to be scaled proportionally. We have to ask why our current approaches are falling so short.

Bill 25-800 calls for a math task force. We now have that task force. It is imperative that the task force work quickly. We can’t let another budget cycle pass by without stronger and better investments in math supports. The State Board hosted an expert panel on math at our June public meeting. There was remarkable consensus across the experts about promising practices to implement — those are included<sup>1</sup> in the [State Board resolution](#) that President Thompson referenced. The point I want to make now is that the task force doesn’t need to reinvent the wheel. The National Council of Mathematics Teachers, for example, has already done considerable work in vetting and curating high-quality, evidence-based practices and resources. The task force should lean on the work of reputable organizations like NCMT to expedite its work. Of course, we should be continually evaluating and adjusting, but we have actionable information now, let’s use it.

We need to use broad levers to support our students. This includes acting on the structural factors that we know are related to student performance like food security, income security, healthcare, and housing stability. And at the school level, we need to equip and support the teachers doing

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<sup>1</sup> Promising practices identified by the panel included: Develop teachers’ and students’ mathematical mindset and confidence; Use high-quality instructional materials with a systemwide, coherent strategy; Blend conceptual understanding, procedural knowledge, active learning, and math fact fluency as part of a daily holistic instructional approach; Support teacher preparation, ongoing development, and cross-grade and cross-LEA collaboration; In consultation with current math educators, develop training programs and comprehensive professional development for math coaches and teachers to learn and implement evidence-based strategies to accelerate student proficiencies in mathematics, particularly for those below grade level or struggling; Integrate technology to personalize learning and increase student engagement in mathematics; Emphasize early learning of foundational mathematics skills, supported by instructors with math expertise; Align curricula with higher education and real-world applications to ensure relevance and continuity in learning; Notify parents or guardians of students below grade level or struggling in mathematics and provide them with a list of interventions and acceleration strategies to assist with mathematics at home, including a list of free, high-quality supportive resources, referrals for mathematics tutoring, or other intervention opportunities; and Support families and caregivers to continue math learning at home.

math instruction daily through professional development, coaching from math subject experts, and collaboration with other teachers. These supports won't be effective unless teachers have time to do them and feel that their time is well spent. This can't be a case of top-down impositions of training that teachers do not find relevant or additional tasks or tests that take time from planning and learning. The best way to achieve that is to include and incorporate teachers in every aspect of planning and implementing.

Finally, you have and will continue to hear about high impact tutoring. I urge the council to carefully consider the effectiveness of this intervention. We've allocated tens of millions of dollars to high impact tutoring to reach a small percentage of students (about 6%), many at lower than optimal doses, across both reading and math. While there are undoubtedly benefits to one-on-one or small group tutoring with highly trained tutors meeting three or more times a week for a sustained period — I simply see no cost-effective pathway for scaling this intervention to fidelity for the students who have received it much less to all the students who need it, remembering that 75% of students are not meeting expectations in math. I think that investment would be better spent on broader levers that touch more students, inclusive of those already receiving high impact tutoring.

Thank you. I invite you to refer to State Board Resolution [SR 24-24](#) and I am happy to answer any questions.

Robert Henderson

Ward 5 Member, DC State Board of Education