

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Bill 25-571, “Seizure- Safe Schools Amendment Act of 2023”
Wednesday, July 10, 2024

Thank you, Chairman Mendelson, for convening this hearing.

I thank Councilmembers Allen and White for introducing The Seizure-Safe Schools Amendment Act of 2023. I also want to acknowledge SBOE Representative Brandon Best for helping to bring this issue to the attention of the State Board and working with Councilmember Allen. My name is Robert Henderson. I am the Ward 5 member of the State Board of Education. These views are my own and do not represent the views of the Board as a whole. I can say, as you know, that the State Board unanimously passed [State Resolution 23-6](#) recommending that the Council pass legislation on seizure safe schools that incorporates five key components recommended by the Epilepsy Foundation.¹

On May 17, 2023, the State Board of Education heard moving and persuasive testimony from Oliver Tineo Coppola and Mollie Ellis, both of whom you will hear from today, about the need for training in seizure recognition and response in our schools. It so happened that on the same panel of witnesses was an educator who had a student experience their first seizure in her classroom and shared that she had received no training on how to respond and very much wished that she had. On the basis of this testimony, Representative Best worked with witnesses and experts to craft the resolution that I mentioned previously.

I am conscious of the need to resist the temptation to require training before the school year for all the many things that we want teachers to do, and be able to do, but this is a light lift with potentially life-saving impact and is absolutely necessary. Similarly, I support the Cardiac Planning and Response Amendment Act of 2023. I hope the Council will pass both these bills and that they will be faithfully implemented by the appropriate parties.

Thank you.

Robert Henderson

¹ “1. Mandating seizure recognition and first-aid response training for all staff; 2. Mandating that the Seizure Action Plan is made part of the student’s file and made available for school personnel and volunteers responsible for the student; 3. Ensuring that any FDA-approved medication prescribed by the treating physician is administered to the student living with epilepsy; 4. Educating and training students about epilepsy and first-aid response; and 5. Including a Good Samaritan clause.”