

Parent and Family Perspectives on the Impact of Active Shooter Drills and Other School Security Measures: A Listening Session Series
Speaker Biographical Sketches

Sharnetta Boone-Ruffin MD *General Education Teacher, PAVE Ward 8*

Sharnetta (Sharn) Boone-Ruffin is a passionate public school educator with 14 years of experience teaching elementary students. She also works as a Resident Marriage and Family Therapist in Virginia, with plans to become fully licensed by Spring 2025. Sharn is deeply committed to advocacy and community involvement, particularly in her role as a Citywide and Ward 8 Parent Leader for PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education), where she has been advocating for DC students for over five years. Sharn holds a Bachelor's in Psychology with a minor in Sociology, a certificate in Clinical Mental Health, and a Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy. She was recently awarded a full scholarship to pursue a Master's in Special Education, demonstrating her commitment to both professional growth and the betterment of the education system. As an active leader, Sharn serves on the Women's Concerns Committee and is completing a women's leadership cohort with the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA). She has also been featured in the UNCF interview series Hear Us Believe Us: Centering African American Parent Voices in K-12 Education, highlighting her dedication to amplifying the voices of marginalized communities. Additionally, Sharn has testified at numerous hearings on various educational issues, always striving to improve opportunities for DC students. Outside of her professional life, Sharn enjoys spending time with her loving husband, children, family, and sorority sisters of The Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., balancing her busy career with her personal life. Through her work and advocacy, Sharn continues to make a meaningful impact on both her students and the wider community.

Michele Gay *Co-Founder/Executive Director, Safe and Sound Schools*

Mother, educator, and co-founder of the national non-profit, Safe and Sound Schools, Michele Gay has built a powerful legacy in her daughter's honor, and as a nationally recognized advocate for the improved safety and security of schools and communities across our country. A former public-school educator, now a nationally recognized leader, public speaker, school safety advocate, Michele teaches and trains diverse audiences and works alongside local stakeholders and national experts from across the disciplines of safety. She regularly serves as a consultant to all levels of community institutions including schools, municipalities, houses of worship, educational and public safety leadership, state and federal leaders, law enforcement agencies and top news media sources. The recipient of numerous national awards, Michele is a regular contributor to print, radio, and television outlets. As the primary author of Safe and Sound's programs and materials, Michele is recognized as a visionary thought leader in the national policy discussions shaping school safety across the country. Guided by a strongly held belief in the power of communities working together, Michele unites stakeholders of all disciplines and perspectives around Safe and Sound Schools' Framework for Comprehensive School Safety, a holistic, community-based approach to support crisis prevention, response, and recovery. An educator, mother, and survivor of tragedy herself, Michele is uniquely positioned as a leader in the field. She has dedicated her life to honoring Josephine's memory by ensuring that every school, every child, and every community is truly safe and sound.

Joseph La Belle *Director of Program Impact, Family Network on Disabilities*

Joe La Belle is a pioneering figure at the intersection of AI and education, serving as the Director of Programs Impact at Family Network on Disabilities. In Florida, he oversees four key programs and lends his expertise to OSEP-funded Technical Assistance centers, enhancing support for students with disabilities through technology. Notably, Joe has played a crucial role in advocating for AI's role in education, engaging with the Secretary of Education, presenting to the US Department of Education staff, and sharing insights nationwide. His efforts focus on how AI can personalize learning and increase accessibility, making him a respected voice in the field.

Robert Murtfeld *Parent and Member, Community Education Council*

Robert Murtfeld is a parent of two young children in the NYC public school system. He currently serves as a member of Community Education Council (CEC) in District 1. Over the last three years, Robert has worked with parents, educators, lawmakers and experts to reform lockdown drill laws in NY state and nationwide. He is a frequent commentator in the media on the subject matter and works as a policy professional in the corporate sector. He has a BSc in Psychology and Economics and MA in International and Comparative Law with an expertise on genocide and war crimes.