

**Testimony to the Committee on Education  
For the Performance Oversight Hearing on District of Columbia Public Schools**

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Hello Chairman Grosso and other Committee members. My name is Tatyannah Hazelton. I am junior at Anacostia High School. I am seventeen years old, have three siblings, and am interesting in fashion and music. My goals for the future are to become an lawyer for Criminal Justice. I currently work for the Young Women's Project. At YWP, I am a peer educators that notifies our student body about ways to prevent teen pregnancy and also provide information to youth who sexually active or want more basic knowledge.

Today I will testifying about DCPS school lunches. I would like to talk about issues I have noticed occuring during lunch time. Thank you for hearing my testimony.

When it comes to portion size, they don't give you enough food. They are super stingy with the food as if they are taking it home with them. I am too old to be getting half a spoonful of rice and greens. They serve us like we are little kids. They serve the 11th and 12 grader like we are still freshmen. I get angry. They serve us like with no type of enthusiasm. They serve the boys and girls separately and they give the boys more food.

My school always runs out of the good food really fast. They only make a little of the good stuff and there is nothing left when I get to the front of the line. If they run out of a meal, you will get a fruit and a cold sandwich instead. In addition, salad bar is also a beast of its own. Don't get me wrong, the vegetables are fresh. However, the ham and sliced up meat are not fresh. The eggs are old and look weird and the salad bar attendant is stingy with the cheese and the meat. And they don't have a lot of variety when it comes to the salad bar. They only have lettuce, tomatoes, croutons, meat, cheese, and eggs. They control the amount of meat, cheese, and eggs you get, but they do not control the amount of croutons you get. To me it seems they control the part of the salad that really fills you up.

Food quality is poor. A great deal of the food at lunchtime is not eating material. They don't have any spices, seasoning, etc. The food quality is definitely not where I believe it should be. The cafeteria serves

the same food over and over. For example, when they serve chicken and rice the chicken has no taste and the plain rice is either undercooked or overcooked. When they serve pizza - the bread is soggy, the tomato sauce taste as if it was in the freezer too long, there is too much cheese, and the pizza is not heated properly. In addition, the juices taste as if they are held too long in the freezer and when they come out they are freezer burnt.

Lunch staff is unhappy, have problems, disrespectful.

I have several recommendations for changes that would make the school lunches better:

Portion Size. They should give us more than one serving. Right now, the serving size is too small. I am too old to be getting half a spoonful of rice and greens. We are at school from 8am-3:15pm. When lunch is served at 11am, and the portion sizes are small, you are very hungry by the end of the school day. My suggestion would be to include an afternoon snack time between 4th and 5th period. Some would argue that having a snack time would be distracting to students, but I would argue that being hungry in class is a way bigger distraction.

Food availability. They should put every lunch option out at one time which would include different types of meals. For example, line one could have pizza, line two could have two different hot food options, and line three could be the salad bar and sandwiches. They should always have extra food. A student should not be forced to have a cold sandwich when you are promised a hot option. They should not be stingy. As for the salad bar, I believe students should have more options. Instead of just two meats per salad or two eggs and one cheese students should be given more options.

Lunch staff. The lunch staff should have a guide book. This guide book should guide the training they each have and their daily work activities. I believe that part of the interview process should be to see how the lunch staff interact with the kids during lunchtime. Rude and disrespectful workers should be fired. A part of your job is to respect the children and to be happy. Even if students are disrespectful to the lunch staff, they need to maintain their professionalism unless someone physically harms or threatens to harm you. There should also be standards for the students so they are not rude and disrespectful to the lunch staff and adult staff.

Food quality. I believe the lunch staff needs to put more effort into the cooking. Don't rush the cooking. Each lunchroom should be provided with a cookbook that includes clear instructions on how to prepare each meal. This book would be the same for each school which would maintain a high standard of food quality between different schools in the district. This book would suggest ways to enhance the flavor of the meals being served. This book would ensure that food is prepared with love, care, and flavor.

Thank you for hearing my testimony.