

Good evening. I am Dr. Doris Mann, PhD, the Coordinator for SPAVA (Society for the Prevention of Aggressiveness and Violence Among Adolescents), and I am sending this written Comment regarding the Metro External Funding Grant. SPAVA is a character development program, which supports emotional and social intelligence focusing on helping students understand that conflict can be resolved through nonviolence and better understand their role as peace makers in their own communities. Many of the students served by SPAVA mentors are in the JCPS schools that serve many at-risk students. Some of the schools include Olmsted North Middle, Olmsted South Middle, Iroquois High, Semple Elementary and many others. SPAVA also serves students in private schools in Jefferson County.

During such a tragic time as this, in the history of our country and our community, it is often these at-risk students SPAVA serves that are more at-risk of being disenfranchised regarding their own agency. Data have already begun to point to those of color and poverty are being impacted more negatively than any other segment of our population. Feelings are raw right now for many reasons. Reports are showing that increases in the following are running concurrent with the tragedy our country and our community are facing. They include increases in neighborhood violence, domestic violence, child abuse, and food insecurity among others.

SPAVA is a program designed to address issues of violence and the baggage that comes with it, such as those raw feelings. Volunteer mentors work with classrooms of students, K-12, once a week for 10 weeks. Using the SPAVA Curriculum, the mentors address anger, aggression, violence, and feelings providing these students coping skills to deal with these adversities in their lives. The students are taught about cool down strategies to help deal with anger, empathy, compassion, kindness, the Golden Rule and Peace Makers. SPAVA gives each student the opportunity to decide how to become ambassadors of Peace, countering violence in their own communities.

This is a time in the history of this community that SPAVA is needed more than ever before. If you choose not to recommend funding SPAVA through this Metro External Agency Funding process, I would like to ask each of you to contemplate another funding source for SPAVA. Would each Metro Council member consider allocating a portion of your own district budget to support SPAVA Volunteer Mentors working with students in schools within your own district? SPAVA is offered free to the schools, but funding is needed to cover the costs of the SPAVA t-shirts each student is given, teaching materials, mentors training and other expenses.

As you move forward with your decision regarding the many funding sources you oversee, can you please keep the following quote in mind? "It takes a whole village to raise a child" (Anonymous). SPAVA is inviting you to be a part of that village. My contact information is [doris.mann9@gmail.com](mailto:doris.mann9@gmail.com). If you have any questions and would like to speak with me, please email me and I will provide my phone number. Or you can go to the SPAVA website, [spava.us](http://spava.us), for additional information about SPAVA as well as contact information. Thank you for your continued support of this village.