If you would prefer to hear me just read this letter, click this link:
https://youtu.be/tJ0OQrLJveQ

Dear Jeremy Crawford and the Wizards of the Coast Dungeons and Dragons division,

Hi Jeremy, we have never met, never spoken or interacted with each other before, so I should start by introducing myself. My name is Chris and I play D&D. I also talk about D&D a lot online and I'm really interested and engaged regarding the playtest of the new core books coming out in 2024.

In regards to the playtest so far, I can honestly say that there's a lot of content already I'm really excited about! I really like the idea of leveled feats and getting a feat as part of your background, (though I think these first level feats probably need some massaging to be more balanced against each other).

I love that you've explained how blindsight, blindsense and tremorsense work, and how they differ from each other. Making heroic inspiration something people remember and making it more integrated with the mechanics of the game has been a lot of fun in my experience so far.

I also really like how it feels like a lot of options are getting revamped, so they'll feel new instead of stale, like how grapple and shove are now options for an unarmed strike, though I don't know if I'm in the majority for that specifically, I expect most players like the idea of trying new things. I know I'm not alone in being excited to see some new subclasses, and I'm really curious to see what new concepts you and your team have developed.

I'm also really grateful that you've decided to collect player feedback for OneD&D to help shape the game we'll see in 2024. Since we're on that topic, that's what I wanted to contact you about, because I have some thoughts regarding how it could be a better experience for us players and produce more useful feedback for you and your design team.

You see, I have some concerns when I read discussions online, as well as conversations I've had with other D&D players and just my own impressions of what I've seen so far and how the player surveys are being handled.

When we see a change, and aren't part of your design team, we really don't know your ultimate goals for making the change, and when a survey asks us if we're satisfied with that change, there's no way to tell you that really, it depends. For example, when I see Eldritch Blast excluded from the spell lists, does that mean it's going to be a warlock class feature instead? Are you removing it from the game? Or was it just an omission or mistake? Without knowing the answer, I don't know whether to tell you if I'm satisfied or not.

But if you ask about the spell list, and ask if I'm satisfied, it really matters to my answer if Eldritch Blast was just forgotten, whether it's being removed from the game, or whether you have some cool new way you have planned to integrate it into the warlock class itself.

Now I recognize that I can add additional comments, but realistically I know you can't possibly read all the comments from thousands upon thousands. A simple addition of "Eldritch blast will be included in our Mage playtest as a Warlock class feature." would let me know what the plan is, which would help a lot when completing these surveys.

Speaking of confusion regarding the surveys, I know I would appreciate it and I expect many players would as well, could we get a clarification: Are our answers assuming we've actually tried these new options? Or do you just want our impressions after reading them? It's not really clear to me if these surveys are supposed to be for us to give our feedback on the playtest document, or our feedback on playtesting we've actually done using these new rules? I want to help provide my opinions, I'm just not sure if I'm providing them in the context you intended.

In regards to your intentions, this is what I want to know more than anything, and I think I can safely speak for a majority of players trying to provide you the best feedback we can when I say this: **What are the design goals of OneD&D exactly?**

I mean, when OneD&D was first announced, we were told that OneD&D was about giving you more options, building on the current edition and updating it to where we are today. All our 5th edition adventures and sourcebooks would be completely compatible.

I remember thinking that would be great. I would love official rules that clean up some of the more confusing elements of the current game, like how hiding works, how spell components work, how blindsight works, as well as getting new options to try in D&D.

What I've discovered in the first two playtest releases is that we are getting some of that with new races, new class and subclass features, new feats and new actions. As it happens, we're getting even more than you promised, with existing options being changed, and in many cases significantly. Every race has different features than they used to, some feats look nothing like what they did previously, determining what spells you can cast has been overhauled, combining different movements works differently, we've already seen familiar spells that do entirely different things than they used to, and class features we're used to work differently than they did before.

Also, we're already finding our 5th edition sourcebooks aren't fully compatible. For example, if I want to play an Eloquence Bard, multiple features don't work anymore. I mean a simple fix could be done for Unfailing Inspiration by just not expending the bardic inspiration, but what about Infectious Inspiration? That doesn't work at all with the new way that inspiration uses your reaction instead of giving out a die to hold on to. The playtest document says you follow the old progression, but it doesn't say what to do if the feature just doesn't work under the new system.

To be clear, I'm not against any of these things. When I look at the feats presented in Expert Classes, I see that I might not take the same feats as I have repeatedly over the past eight years, and that's exciting and fresh. However, this is where knowing your design goals would be so helpful in giving you meaningful and helpful feedback in the surveys.

For example, the Sharpshooter feat obviously looks similar to the way it used to, other than it giving a plus one to dexterity. But the other change that was made seems very dramatic. The minus five to hit in order to get plus ten to damage was changed to the ability to fire a ranged weapon within five feet of an enemy without having disadvantage. I assume you already knew this was going to be a jarring change to players reading this document for the first time.

Because we don't know what your design goals are, we're not discussing these changes in ways that are going to be productive to you. We're instead discussing our wild speculations as to why you made this change. Maybe you want weapons to do less damage? Maybe you felt the minus five wasn't fun at the table? Maybe you want spellcasters to be more powerful compared to non spellcasters? Maybe you want to tone down the power combination of crossbow expert, sharpshooter and a hand crossbow? Maybe the plan is to take all the more powerful options and pull them back to the point where they're more in line with other options? Maybe that's just for weapons, or maybe we can expect the same treatment for spells?

When it comes to answering if we're satisfied with this change, how can we be without knowing the answer to these questions? If the design goal is to have all our options for our characters be just about making the character we envision, without having some options dramatically better than others, then I'm terrifically satisfied. If the intent is to just make weapon use worse compared to spellcasting, then I'm terrifically unsatisfied.

Should we expect weapon properties other than the light weapon property to have new exciting mechanics? Is the warrior playtest going to build on these

options? Your community would love to know the answer to these questions before we fill out whether we're satisfied with the current changes or not.

It occurred to me how helpful it would be to actually evaluate these playtests, if you even gave a quick blurb in the document explaining the intent whenever an existing rule was changed. At this time, we don't even know if there will be higher level feats than fourth level.

If you put even a couple sentences that said something like, "in future playtests you'll see higher level feats that build on these options. Weapons will be able to do things they never have before, and your high level weapon using character will feel more impactful than they ever have before, regardless of the weapon type you choose to specialize in." it would make such a difference. I can't emphasize enough what a difference that would make. You could put it in a gray box or italicize it or something to differentiate it from the actual content.

I mentioned before how much I appreciate that some things that were confusing are being clarified in OneD&D, but I do have a suggestion how they could be even more clear. Sometimes the words you choose leave us guessing.

For example, in the Expert Classes playtest, we see an important change to the Attack Action. Under "equipping weapons" it says, "You can equip or unequip one weapon before or after any attack you make as part of this action..."

If you're unaware, there is debate whether this means you can equip or unequip a weapon before any single attack, or each attack? This confusion seems avoidable to me. If you mean before a single attack, then it could read, "You can equip or unequip one weapon before or after a single attack made as part of this action." If you mean before each attack, then it could read, "You can equip or unequip one weapon before or after each attack made as part of this action." Clearer language would mean clearer understanding.

There is similar confusion with the light weapon property. "When you take the Attack Action on your turn and attack with a Light weapon in one hand, you can

make one extra attack as part of the same Action. That extra attack must be made with a different Light weapon in the other hand..."

Does "When you take the attack action" mean that the different light weapon needs to be in the other hand when you make the first attack? Or can you equip it after the first attack has been made? I'm not sure which you mean, and players I've spoken to aren't sure either.

They sometimes ask me which way it should be read, and I don't know what to tell them. Some simple changes in how the sentence is structured could make it clear how this is supposed to work, whichever of those two it's supposed to be. You're communicating entirely new rules to us here, and it seems like the communication could be clearer yet than we're seeing so far.

Those are the primary things I wanted to say that I can't express with a "satisfied" or "unsatisfied" answer, but since I'm writing this, I figure I might as well make the most of this and make a few requests regarding OneD&D:

I'm worried about the value of Strength as an ability score. Many of the fantasy character archetypes I enjoy playing in D&D are going to be not well represented with a low strength character. We no longer need a high strength to grapple, or shove. Rangers in the playtest are more designed to work off dexterity builds than ever before. The advantage of using a heavy melee weapon over a light one seems to have diminished. If you're planning new and exciting ways to use a high strength character in playtests yet to come, terrific! If not, please consider it.

Someone described the new version of the Lore Bard to me as "The Bardiest Bard" and the Thief Rogue as the "Roguiest Rogue". Here's what I would like to see. I would like to see any straight classed Bard be the "Bardiest Bard" and any straight classed Rogue be the "Roguiest Rogue".

By making subclasses that don't specialize a class concept but instead just double down on that initial class, it makes the initial class seem watered down to me. Honestly I don't know why a subclass called College of Lore is the Bardiest Bard

anyways? Wouldn't it make more sense if they got advantage on the study action or something? Why isn't a subclass you describe as "collecting bits of knowledge from sources as diverse as scholarly tomes and peasant tales." specialized more in lore than being better at bardic inspiration?

Getting an Epic Boon at 20th level in a class just waters it down further. A 20th level Rogue should get the "Roguiest Rogue" feature of all, instead they get a feature that regardless of what they pick, the Ranger or Bard could just pick the same thing. If you had Epic Boons that were restricted by class instead of class group, maybe that could work.

By the way, Epic Boons don't feel very epic anyways. You have an Epic Boon that allows me to turn a miss into a hit, but two levels earlier my rogue got a feature that turns a miss into a **critical hit**. You have races that get a feature that works like the misty step spell but with additional bonuses on top that they can use multiple times in a row right at level one, and you have an Epic Boon that allows casting Misty Step once. The Epic Boons in the Dungeon Master's Guide just aren't impactful enough to be capstones unless you really give them some oomph.

Also, are you getting rid of the Use an Object action? Because we sure noticed it was missing from the Thief's Fast Hands feature. If you're getting rid of it, fine, but if you're not, we would sure like to know why it was removed? I guess this goes back to telling us your design goals as context for these changes.

Speaking of the Thief, Second Story work allows a Thief to use their Dexterity when they take the Jump action, but what I sure noticed was that you made jumping into an action but you didn't give Rogues any way to jump as a bonus action. If Cunning Action included the Jump Action, Second Story Work sure would have been a lot more cool.

While we're on the subject of Rogues, we obviously noticed you prevented Sneak Attack being used when it wasn't your turn. I imagine that using reaction attacks to get more than one Sneak Attack in a round wasn't ever the plan, and this does prevent that, but making it so Rogue's can't even hold their attack action and get

Sneak Attack is really going to suck for Rogue players. I'm wondering if this was an unintended consequence of preventing two sneak attacks per round?

Then again, I had a conversation with another player who opined that maybe you intend to allow "on your turn" abilities and features to work with held actions? If you do, that would be great! It wouldn't just make Sneak Attack better, but holding your action to attack when you have Extra Attack has always been something that feels like you've been swindled out of one of your attacks, and you would hit two birds with one stone.

Again, this comes down to seeing changes without knowing what you have planned ahead and trying to guess so we can determine if we're satisfied or not. That said, if it wasn't your plan to change held actions this way, please feel free to use it.

I also have to ask, just what is happening with tools? Is the intention that any time we use a tool it's in conjunction with some kind of skill? Or will they be used apart from each other? Players of Rogues who can't select expertise in Thieves' Tools anymore would love to know I'm sure.

I recently had a conversation with another player who mentioned that moving features like Jack of all Trades to later levels prevents class dipping when multiclassing, but then the Ranger looks like a terrific one level dip using our current rules for multiclassing. I know this is a big ask, but if there is a way to make multiclassing more in line with just going with one class, that would be terrific!

Ideally what I would like to see is a multiclass system where multiclassed characters were more about adjusting the character theme than bagging level one goodies from other classes. Also, currently there's a pretty big disincentive to multiclass two spellcasting classes with any kind of level equity, if there's something you could do about that, it would also be very appreciated.

One design goal we are aware of is that you want D&D to be as inviting to new players as it could possibly be, and I completely support this goal. Playing D&D with someone who is new to the game has generated many of my favorite experiences playing this game, and I see this design goal reflected in these playtests. Like having bardic inspiration being a reaction, or spell preparations matching spell slots, these types of changes remove a step, and fewer steps is easier and faster, and I'm all for it.

So that said, what gives with spell selection? You have these three lists, and my character choosing spells needs to go through this big list and then search for spells of specific schools to know which ones they can prepare? Rather than us taking the time to do that, you could just print the available list for each spellcasting class.

By all means, tell us the mechanics of which category of spells and which school of spells the list comes from, then when you release new products we know what spells are available to our character, but for the Player's Handbook at least, print the list of available spells to each spellcasting class just like in our 5th edition Player's Handbooks. Maybe you just aren't bothering with doing that with the playtest and have every intention of these spell lists being printed in the Player's Handbook when it's officially released, in which case fine, but please do it for the actual book.

Oh, and if I could make one final plea, during this playtest, if I make a character on D&D Beyond, I should be able to flip a tab and access the playtest for my character. I know you aren't personally responsible for this, but I bet you have an email address for someone you could make that suggestion to. I personally guarantee to you, that anyone who actually is playtesting these documents and uses D&D Beyond for their characters would appreciate this option immensely.

If you do get a chance to read this letter, thank you for all you've done for D&D and taking the time to read this one player's opinions on what's to come.

Sincerely,

Chris