



**PAVE Parent Leaders in Education (PLE) Board
Storybook 2023-2024**

Sharing WHY we do this work

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WHO WE ARE

Our Mission

PAVE connects, informs, and empowers parent leaders to give families in DC a voice and choice in the vision for education in our city.

Our Vision

Parents are partners and leaders with schools and policymakers to develop a diversity of safe, nurturing, and great schools for every child in every ward and community.

Our History

PAVE was founded in April 2016 because we believe that for too long, parents have been informed of our education policy decisions after they have already been made instead of being invited to the table to help make them. Since 2016, PAVE has grown into a network of over 5,000 DC parents and caregivers united behind a vision for an education system that is created not just for, but by and with families and guided by the following core values:

- Value #1: All families have access to high-quality schools and the information they need to make the best decisions for their children.
- Value #2: All schools have adequate and equitable funding to support the needs of children and families.
- Value #3: All students have a safe, healthy, and welcoming school environment.
- Value #4: All students have access to out-of-school time and summer school programs that allow them to foster their passions and enrich their learning.
- Value #5: All parents have the resources they need to support the success of their children at home and in school.

Learn more about PAVE parent leaders and their incredible work and accomplishments at dcpave.org.

PAVE Citywide Parent Leaders in Education (PLE) Board 2023-2024



Renee Davis, Ward 1

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage is important to me because of the needs of the older, high school aged and above, teenagers who have special needs. Students with IEPs that go beyond simply relying on OSSE DOT for school bus transportation need to have their transportation goals addressed. Those youth would like to have safe passage to after school programs, out of school programs, and any other vocational or rehabilitation programs. We need increased access to Kids Ride Free and have training for students on how to safely use Metro, and also have training in the school day to be safety aware. It is hard for my daughter, Alexa, to join programs that she would like (like dual-enrollment) because there hasn't been enough work done to accommodate special education kiddos. How can we provide and expand children and youth with disabilities in upper age ranges so that they can safely access opportunities and programming? When she's given the opportunity and has access to transportation, she has loved what she's been able to participate in and accomplish.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?

- I'm most passionate about broadening the depth and the reach of specialized programming in education in DC. I have lived and experienced how powerful the integrated arts curriculum can be - both personally and as a practicing artist. I hope we can talk explicitly about the role that art integrated programming can have in increasing achievement for all learners in our education sector. And especially for children with specialized healthcare and academic needs.

Christine Miller, Ward 1

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - As a commissioner in a neighborhood with continued violence and homicides, this was an ongoing conversation across our community. The limited scope of safe passage did not account for the needs of the many students who had to commute outside their immediate neighborhood, beyond the ward, and oftentimes across the city. It also did not accommodate those students doing after school or 3:30pm activities. Additionally, implementation was a continuing complaint, particularly when it came to coordinating with teachers and administrators. Conflicts that started inside the school were not tracked by safe passage monitors outside the building who did not know students or have any connection with the school to build a collaborative approach to mitigating these matters. As a result, we have seen escalation that has, unfortunately, resulted in too many fights, injuries, and deaths of our young people. We have made many requests to the Mayor and our Council to invest in expanding safe passage with an eye toward a long-term and broader understanding of what it means to create 'safe passages' to include collaborative community partnerships, communication with school leadership, and an expectation of positive school climates inside the building and across our neighborhoods.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Our kids have both benefited from the dual language programming available through DCPS. A lot of change is happening across the city through expanded XQ cohorts that are creating specialized schools at the high school level. Making sure that these are easily (and safely) accessible to all students across the city will be important.

Dominique Moore, Ward 4

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe Passage allows children to arrive at school feeling joyful and enthusiastic about what the day may bring by providing a sense of safety, security, and comfortability.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?

- With effective implementation, management, and oversight these programs expose youth to a world that some just may never have experienced otherwise. While generalized education is vital, specialized school programs are proven to be more useful.

Euclides Rengifo Cordoba, Ward 4

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - We need to guarantee that all students are learning in the safest way, and that the school building and school area, transportation, and school programs do not have gun use or threats.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Access to specialized school programs is important to me because we need to bring the students different choices for development and more opportunities with inclusion and equity.

Yolanda Anderson, Ward 4

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Attendance has long been a concern for school districts. Tardiness and absenteeism is real. When a student is making their way to school, it is obvious their education is important to them. Getting there safely, especially when many of our students may be traveling long distances just to get to school, should not be a concern. Safe passage is a right not an option.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Academic recovery has been a big focus for all our students since the pandemic. We learned during that time that we could do so much more to ensure our students were learning. We can no longer offer "school as usual". These specialized programs help students to learn differently and in ways that work with their learning styles. Specialized programs are important to have in every school to optimize students' overall success.

Yolanda Corbett, Ward 5

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - We are invested in the future of our children. That of course includes safety. We don't trust the system we have today to feel like our kids are safe unless they are in our own care. That's the reality of my family: no component or mode of transportation right now gets them to school safely and on time so I have to take matters into my own hands. That creates more job instability because I have to pivot to make sure my kids are getting safely to school and it also leads to

truancy. It is all especially difficult navigating different/multiple schools as a single caregiver. We need solutions.

- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized programming is of interest to me as I want to be a voice towards ensuring that we do not confuse the rights and needs of the disability community with the word Special.

Katrice Fuller, Ward 5

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - As an educator, I have had to bury too many of my students. As a mom of 4 boys, who are already pre-judged by the color of their skin, I worry daily any time they travel without me. Kids cannot even begin to engage in school if they do not feel comfortable being there or traveling there.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - In order to create a more equitable educational system in DC, ALL students should have an increased access to specialized programs despite area, ward, race, socioeconomic classification, age, etc. My boys LOVE robotics (STEM) and performing arts; they should be able to engage in their passions in their own neighborhood.

Ana Rodriguez, Ward 5

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - I don't really know the whole structure, however it's important to many parents in the city, so it's important for me too.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - It's the most important, that has been proven in my generation and my daughter's how to move to the next level in life and sometimes determines many positive outcomes, but equality and access is still a big issue.

Kisha Clark, Ward 6

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - It is imperative that our students be able to go to and from school safely. The increasing violence in the city in and around schools significantly impacts our students physically, mentally, and emotionally. I am eager to work with policymakers on solid strategies to reduce conflict, mediation services, and community relationship building to keep students safe and improve student attendance.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?

- Families deserve options that meet their individual needs. Specialized programs are one vehicle to allow families to select academic options that their students are passionate about and promote academic growth and curiosity. My daughters started in Montessori schools which gave them the foundational freedom to learn and grow through natural interests and activities rather than formal teaching methods. Langdon, where they attended, placed an emphasis on hands-on learning and developing real-world skills. It emphasized independence and supported their individual learning styles. That specialized program worked for my family and I'd like to see other families have those same opportunities.

Crystal Gray, Ward 6

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe routes are important to make walking, bussing, and bicycling to school safer and more accessible for children, including those with disabilities, and to increase the number of children who routinely walk, bicycle, or roll to and from school. It's important because it helps with the safety of our children to and from school, conflict resolution, mediation services, and community relationship building to keep students safe and improve student attendance.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - It is important because high-quality school programs and regular participation can lead to improved social and emotional competencies, including social behavior, intrinsic motivation, better concentration efforts, and higher sense of self-worth. Regular participation in specialized school programs has been linked to lower dropout rates and a narrowing of achievement gaps, particularly among low-income students.

Russchelle Moore, Ward 6

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage is important to me because, as a grandmother, the thought of something happening to my grandchild makes me so uneasy because all children need to feel safe traveling to and from school in our city and should not feel afraid of something terrible happening to them while trying to get their education. I've grown up in this city, I've raised my children in this city and now I have a grandchild who's growing up in this city and she shouldn't have to worry about anything that may disrupt her learning and possibly be harmed in the process.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - I believe that specialized school programs are an essential part of our kids' growth process in their education. The fact that other countries and even other

nationalities have a widespread educational system that our kids really don't get the opportunity to experience is very disheartening and concerning to me because my son, who just graduated high school, had the opportunity to be apart of a STEM based high school and a lot of the things that they were privy to, most kids in DC have never had that experience. I think that STEM and other specialized programs should be considered for all grade levels for ALL students in this city.

Carolyn Bowen, Ward 7

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - School needs to be a safe place where children feel welcome and ready to learn. Exposure to danger or violence on the way to or from school or during school can detrimentally affect students' mental health and academic experience and prohibit children from attending school.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Every child in the city should have access to high quality, specialized programs in their Ward. Families should not need to travel or lottery into schools far away from their house to access these programs. All families deserve the right to choose programs that best fit their child.

Simone Scott, Ward 7

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - I drive/pickup my kids to and from school everyday to ensure they get to school as safely as possible. Due to their school and career schedules, I am not able to work the traditional 9am-5pm shift. And due to their age, I cannot work a night shift. Thus in order to be an informed, engaged parent I rely on ethics and innovation.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - As a Native Washingtonian, Dual Parent Board Member, Social Impact Founder, Edutainer, and parent residing in Washington, D.C. I live for a purpose. Life skills are crucial for our scholars. Vocational trade skills, leadership, and critical thinking are not just for academic achievement but life fulfillment. Many parents, scholars, and educators over the past year have increased their support for specialized programming. In addition, are asking the District to support this initiative to increase scholar access to SBMH and OST programming. With the increase of youth engagement in the youth employment programs, our youth are asking for more career-readiness programs to support their passion for business entrepreneurship. Many of our off-track scholars have one thing in mind, capital. How can I get it? Who can I get/take it from? I believe adding and funding more

specialized programming in the schools during and after school can combat and reduce juvenile recidivism, decrease youth violence, increase our graduation rate, increase scholar attendance and participation, and increase their respect for themselves, their community, and their peers. I believe it's important we remember what happens at home usually shows up at school. That's if the scholar shows up at all.

Dawn Smith, Ward 7

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage is important for me and my family because we want the knowledge that goes about with day-to-day dealings; it's comforting to know that going to school or work should be a truly happy and safe experience. I should not struggle thinking "If I take this route to school or work will I be assaulted?"
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized school programs enhance the knowledge for our children to broaden their horizons by stimulating their minds with learning through different facets of programming that are accessible and available within our schools.

Tyesha Andrews, Ward 8

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - I support and advocate for safe passage because we need to improve our students' safe passage to and from school and/or after-school activities. I use public transportation myself and have been a victim of verbal assault and subject to men exposing themselves. Incidents have increased over the last 5 years. Our current public transportation system isn't even safe for adults, why would we expect it to be safe for our children?
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized school programs are important to me because there are not enough of these programs in DC public schools and the ones that do exist cannot provide an adequate education to every child in the district that could benefit from the program. For instance, there are not enough STEM or Dual Language/Language Immersion public schools, there are none in Ward 8. How can an out-of-boundary student without the same family or economic status compete with the students who live in the same wards where our few STEM and Dual Language/Language Immersion public schools are housed?

Sharnetta Boone-Ruffin, Ward 8

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?

- Safe passage to school is important to me because ALL DC students have to find their own transportation to and from school. DC students do not have the privilege of riding a school bus that will take them to and from school safely. This means that these students have to go through multiple neighborhoods, sometimes even the ones their neighborhood is beefing with to get to school. Some school areas do not have crossing guards or safety personnel. Not having a responsible adult(s) to help students cross the street is extremely dangerous and at times deadly.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Giving students access to specialized school programs is important to me because it allows students to try new things. By giving these students real world experiences, it can play a huge part in preparing and/or creating a brighter future. Specialized school programs also help students build a stronger foundation towards their goals whether that's to college or earn a license before finishing high school. Some specialized programs give students not only internships while earning a high school diploma, but licenses/certifications by the time they graduate high school, a permanent job making 60-80K starting salary with full benefits. This can change a student's perspective on not just school but their future.

Tara Brown, Ward 8

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - My daughter has been assaulted and groomed while traveling to school. I'm interested in advocating around this topic.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - We should leverage all of the resources available to prepare our children for success after high school. Specialized programs give them options.


Andrea Jones, Ward 8

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Studies show many children in Wards 7 and 8 travel outside of their ward to attend school. This means children are utilizing public transportation daily. When my daughter attended KIPP, it took her over an hour to get to school daily. Safe passage is important because kids need to feel safe when traveling to school, and parents need to know that their kids are safe as well. There have been many stories of students being robbed at train stations, fights happening, and innocent students being injured. This has to stop and there have to be laws put into place to protect all students.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?


- All schools should have access to specialized programs because STEM careers are growing and all children should have access to learn and succeed in those fields.

PAVE Ward 1 Parent Leaders in Education (PLE) Board 2023-2024


PAVE Ward 1 PLE Board 2023-24




Caitlin Bergo




Renee Davis
Citywide PLE Board member



Jake Fishbein
Advisory Board member



Yael Meirovich



Christine Miller
Citywide PLE Board member

Caitlin Bergo

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - DC kids deserve safe passage to and from their schools. Safe passage to school is important to me because it is essential for students to feel safe and ready to learn when they are in school. If we want children to be enthusiastic about school, which I do, they need to be able to safely get there each day and get home each evening. Drop-off and dismissal should not be stressful times for students and parents because of the safety around the school building. Instead, it should be a safe, fun, and rewarding time each day that sets up students for learning or allows them to unwind at the end of the day.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Access to specialized programs is important because it allows students to pursue their interests and thrive. Students all learn differently, and with specialized programs, they can find and pursue areas where they excel or have interest. Without these programs, kids are put on a single track that might not be best for them for all sorts of reasons. An increase in specialized programs will lead to students who are more engaged at school because they were encouraged to follow their interests.

Renee Davis, Citywide PLE Board member

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Jake Fishbein, Advisory Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Everyday I walk my son to school, we see familiar faces. Other children are heading to the same place. Families, neighbors, teachers all gathered around the building, laughing and playing and chatting before the doors opened. To me, safe passage is about creating a community connection, where our youth feel like they belong. Not just in the walls of the school, but on the streets and sidewalks along the way. When the neighborhood is all out there with you, it feels safe. It feels like belonging. Our young people need to feel physically and emotionally safe. And that is what a strong community can do.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Since kindergarten, my daughter knew her purpose in life was to be a star. A singer, actor, and dancer. The triple threat. Now, as a 7th grader, that dream is still alive, thanks in part to having the opportunity to be in schools that have had

a unique focus on the arts. This has led not only to following a dream, but to also focusing more on academics as she generally feels successful and engaged. The arts have helped her thrive because she sees school as a place that supports her dreams, and that has made a world of difference.

Yael Meirovich

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - All children should feel safe going to school.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Education with specialized schools allows students to receive education that helps them find their potential. They can discover new subjects that interest them and give them tools to improve their school outcomes. We want the children to thrive and get specialized in different areas, a bit deeper. They can discover new things, allowing them access to resources and opportunities for their learning experience and future.

Christine Miller, Citywide PLE Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - As a commissioner in a neighborhood with continued violence and homicides, this was an ongoing conversation across our community. The limited scope of safe passage did not account for the needs of the many students who had to commute outside their immediate neighborhood, beyond the ward, and oftentimes across the city. It also did not accommodate those students doing after school or 3:30pm activities. Additionally, implementation was a continuing complaint, particularly when it came to coordinating with teachers and administrators. Conflicts that started inside the school were not tracked by safe passage monitors outside the building who did not know students or have any connection with the school to build a collaborative approach to mitigating these matters. As a result, we have seen escalation that has, unfortunately, resulted in too many fights, injuries, and deaths of our young people. We have made many requests to the Mayor and our Council to invest in expanding safe passage with an eye toward a long-term and broader understanding of what it means to create 'safe passages' to include collaborative community partnerships, communication with school leadership, and an expectation of positive school climates inside the building and across our neighborhoods.
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that these are easily (and safely) accessible to all students across the city will be important.

PAVE Ward 4 Parent Leaders in Education (PLE) Board 2023-2024



Charlia Acree

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - The American workforce is not afforded the privilege of actual work-life balance. Standard posts of duty extend substantially beyond children's school hours and even additional time allotted for the commute. Safe passage to schools is an apparent benefit that all residents should be able to access to ensure an available, sustainable and effective solution.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized school programs allow students at an early and impressionable age to engage in building and acquiring invaluable skills for long term success.

Yolanda Anderson, Citywide PLE Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Attendance has long been a concern for school districts. Tardiness and absenteeism is real. When a student is making their way to get to school, it is

obvious their education is important to them. Getting there safely, especially when many of our students may be traveling long distances just to get to school, should not be a concern. Safe passage is a right not an option.

- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Academic recovery has been a big focus for all our students since the pandemic. We learned during that time that we could do so much more to ensure our students were learning. We can no longer offer "school as usual". These specialized programs help students to learn differently and in ways that work with their learning styles. Specialized programs are important to have in every school to optimize students' overall success.

Mariam Aydoun

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe Passage is extremely important to me as it's not just a way to protect our children and make them feel safe at school and beyond, but also because I strongly believe that safe passage as an initiative has the potential to be the best community centric harm reducing response to our current youth crisis.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - It is important to me because I feel that it is about time to let our children explore their full potential and give the maximum to what they are passionate about. The myth that you have to go to school for everything in your early learning years should be abolished. It only delays the pursuit of fulfillment that a child is meant to have.

Kimberly Carter

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Every child should feel safe, be safe and arrive at school in a safe, positive and productive mindset. No child can learn, if they are afraid. Every parent wants to know and feel that their children are going to school safely and that they are in a safe environment.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - In order for our kids to grow, compete, and thrive in a growing society, they have to have the same advantages as their counterparts. Equal education means a better world for everyone. It also prevents prejudice, poverty, and inequality. All children should be equally educated, encouraged and exposed to all that life has to offer. The more educated and exposed our children are, the better they become in their own lives. This will in turn, teach each generation to be better and do better.

Euclides Rengifo Cordoba, Citywide PLE Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - We need to guarantee that all students are learning in the safest way, and that the school building and school area, transportation, and school programs do not have gun use or threats.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Access to specialized school programs is important to me because we need to bring the students different choices for development and more opportunities with inclusion and equity.

Kimberly Emerson

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - I believe kids should have an expectation that when they leave their homes to go anywhere, but especially to school, that they will arrive safely. They should be able to trust the law enforcement to aid them in making sure their safety is their priority.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized school programs are important in developing a well rounded person. If we can introduce STEAM, dual language to include ASL and many other programs, our kids will be open to many opportunities to grow. As the world grows and life experiences take on so many different looks, it's important that our education can keep up!

Marisa Goldstein

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Ensuring the physical safety of our children is one of our most important jobs as parents. The idea that children could be assaulted, harassed, or worse on their way to or from school is a parent's worst nightmare. Safe passage is not just important for baseline physical safety, but also has implications for chronic absenteeism and young people's ability to feel a sense of safety and belonging in school that allows them to learn and build healthy relationships. Because my son is still so young, I walk to school with him, but I hope that one day he is able to travel independently and safely, and I want to be part of building a city where that feels like a safe choice for our family. Our school is in the Petworth-Brightwood Safe Passage Priority area and I want to work with other Ward 1 and Ward 4 parent leaders to make this area safer for all of our children. I also want to partner with parents from across the city to build meaningful action

and change for young people so that they never have to worry about their safety when they go about their day.

- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - We know that specialized school programs are important to ensuring that young people are engaged with their learning and can follow their passions. We also know that access to high-quality, specialized school programming is inequitably distributed across the city and we need to do much more to ensure that students can access these programs. Our elementary school is dual language, and it has been incredible to watch my son learn to read, do math, and play with friends in Spanish and English. As he gets older, I hope he can continue to develop these language skills and explore other specialized programs that help him prepare for college, career, and life. I want to ensure that all families have access to these programs, and that we are building a strong pipeline of teachers to teach in these schools.

Quentin Hairston

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage to school is extremely important to me. Children in DC are exposed to many different things; they should not have to fear for their safety while going and coming from school. There needs to be a better way, a better approach to ensure that students can arrive at school safely, and arrive home safe from school.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - We live in a very multicultural and diverse world. As we work to prepare children for college and career, we need to make sure that we are opening our children's eyes to all possibilities that will allow them to live productive, happy, inclusive, and successful lives. Additionally, we need to understand that children- and adults- learn differently, and to tailor our educational approach so that children are free to explore their interests.

Tanya Johnson

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - All students need to feel safe going and coming home from school. No children should ever worry about which path they go to, would someone bother them or see drugs being sold within their path. A safe space to learn and play should be a priority.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - It supports students that need to get the most out of their education. This may include accommodations, modifications, or remediations. Getting qualified

teachers is important. Teachers are trained in different areas of special education. Instruction is tailored to individual students to meet their unique learning needs. Special resources and services may be available. This may include academic and psychological counseling, tutoring programs, speech-language therapy, physical and occupational therapy, and learning aids. As a result, students will learn and interact with peers who also have challenges. This may include learning, developmental, behavioral, and physical challenges.

Sherry McDaniel-Thomas

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage to school is important to me because it meets one of the basic and perhaps first things we should be responsible for in making sure our scholars are educated...getting them to school safely. They have to arrive free from harm so that they can have a chance at settling into their day of learning. There are many communities throughout this country, throughout the world, where children traverse through dangerous paths to travel to basic locations. In this city, a child should not be fearful of riding public transportation or walking to and from their neighborhood school. To make it safe for our children, to have safe passage to school will require not only policies to be in place, but a collaborative effort by all adults responsible for the well-being and safety of our precious ones.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized school programs address the diverse needs and interests of our scholars. Having access to various appropriate programs at each level of learning throughout the city is crucial to providing our children with the tools necessary for success in the future. Our children are not lab designed AI beings. They are not all cut from the same mold and long before they are adults, their unique gifts and differences should be noted, addressed, and applauded. Help them find what works best for them, what helps them to excel in their learning. Opportunity and access equals power.

Dominique Moore, Citywide PLE Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage allows children to arrive at school feeling joyful and enthusiastic about what the day may bring by providing a sense of safety, security, and comfortability.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - With effective implementation, management, and oversight these programs expose youth to a world that some just may never have experienced otherwise.

While generalized education is vital, specialized school programs are proven to be more useful.

Meaghan Mountford, Advisory Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Striving for equity in our DC schools goes beyond the school walls. Children who do not have literal access to schools will never shift the gross inequity in who thrives and who stumbles in our schools. I would like to see more aggressive intervention in getting our kids to school safely, not just with crime prevention/mediation, but with traffic compliance. Personally, the number of cars I've dodged with outdated tags, unpaid moving violations, etc, especially with non-DC tags, is infuriating.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized school programs help cater education to individual needs for the greatest hope of success. However, as is not surprising, the inequity between access to these programs (or even the existence of these programs) is dramatic between west and east. I would love more resources to be poured into schools, especially in high-risk neighborhoods, (as hours-long commutes is another layer of inequity). I would also love to see coordination between the PCSB, OSSE, and DCPS to develop programs that are consistent and high quality, and to encourage the mayor to reach out to community partners.

Miguelina Zapata

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage is important to me because it allows our students to go to school safely without having to worry about their safety.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized school programs are important because not everyone learns the same way. Each student has the potential to succeed if given the opportunity to do so by having access to specialized programs.

PAVE Ward 5 Parent Leaders in Education (PLE) Board 2023-2024



Shaniola Arowolaju, Advisory Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage is important to me for many reasons. Most especially because next year my oldest will be starting high school and she will need to get herself to and from school everyday.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized school programs are important to me because I think they assist tremendously with building a love for learning. It exposes kids to possibilities and circumstances that may not be available in regular schools.

Tracy Barnes

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage to school is important to me because students deserve to get to and from school safely daily. This should not be a privilege for some and a hindrance for others. Getting an education is, or should be, the most important

responsibility of a child's life that affects the rest of their life. Being and feeling safe in the process should not even be a factor.

- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized school programs add an extra dimension to the learning process. These programs are usually unique, fun, and fostering. They can foster creativity, curiosity, excitement, and a new form of learning for exceptional and different types of learners. These programs are the programs that usually (and I know this first hand) give an advantage in college and career.

Yolanda Corbett, Citywide PLE Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - We are invested in the future of our children. That of course includes safety. We don't trust the system we have today to feel like our kids are safe unless they are in our own care. That's the reality of my family: no component or mode of transportation right now gets them to school safely and on time so I have to take matters into my own hands. That creates more job instability because I have to pivot to make sure my kids are getting safely to school and it also leads to truancy. It is all especially difficult navigating different/multiple schools as a single caregiver. We need solutions.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized programming is of interest to me as I want to be a voice towards ensuring that we do not confuse the rights and needs of the disability community with the word Special.

Katrice Fuller, Citywide PLE Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - As an educator, I have had to bury too many of my students. As a mom of 4 boys, who are already pre-judged by the color of their skin, I worry daily any time they travel without me. Kids cannot even begin to engage in school if they do not feel comfortable being there or traveling there.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - In order to create a more equitable educational system in DC, ALL students should have an increased access to specialized programs despite area, ward, race, socioeconomic classification, age, etc. My boys LOVE robotics (STEM) and performing arts; they should be able to engage in their passions in their own neighborhood.

Aliesha Maye

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - I think every child and every family should be able to get their child(ren) safely to and from school everyday without fear, concern, or obstacles preventing them from doing so safely. Students and families should be excited to run to school daily, not fearful of the journey there.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Access to specialized school programs is important because students should be exposed to a variety of programming to stimulate, challenge, and ignite their curiosity and interest in learning!

Lakisha (Queen) Myrick

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - I have three high school scholars who travel independently. Safe passage is important because children should always feel safe and secure to travel to and from school, to the next point, without anxiety. We have a lot of scholars who travel to hazardous areas, and we need safe passage to ensure they get to their destinations safely and without delay. Safe passage would encourage the parents and the scholars to see OST activities without fear of hurt, harm, danger, or delays.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized school programs expose our scholars to programs outside of their regular school hours. We have children with so many interests that they don't have the opportunity to explore the possibility. We also have children like my 9th grader, who has no idea what interests her because of the lack of exposure. Then, the activities that do exist are not located in the area and require long-distance drives, which at times can become inconveniencing.

Moraeme Pasikhani

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - There are a number of students who are not able to advocate for themselves and predators know this.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Children with special needs have been under serviced.

Tiffany Richards

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?

- Safe passage is of utmost importance for kids in school for several compelling reasons. Firstly, it ensures that children can commute to and from school without facing any potential dangers or threats. By providing a safe environment, students can focus on their education, fostering a conducive learning atmosphere. Additionally, safe passage promotes parental peace of mind, knowing that their children are protected during their journey to school. Moreover, it instills a sense of trust and confidence in both students and their families, encouraging regular attendance and active participation in school activities. Ultimately, safe passage contributes to the overall well-being and academic success of students, allowing them to thrive in a secure educational setting.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and dual language programs hold immense importance for me due to several reasons. Firstly, in an increasingly interconnected world, these programs equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in a global society. By fostering an understanding of diverse cultures and languages, dual language programs promote cultural competence and effective communication across borders. Secondly, STEM education cultivates critical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation, which are essential in addressing complex global challenges. It empowers students to explore, discover, and contribute to advancements in various fields, ultimately driving societal progress. Additionally, these programs promote inclusivity by providing equal opportunities for students of different backgrounds, ensuring a more diverse and representative workforce in the future. Lastly, STEM and dual language programs encourage lifelong learning, enabling individuals to adapt to the ever-evolving demands of our interconnected world.

Ralea Roberts

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - The traffic, crime, and obstacles we encounter traveling to work and throughout the city is the same traffic, crime and obstacles our children face when traveling to and from schools. When I was my son's age (11) I walked to and from school, but unfortunately, I'm not comfortable with my son walking the short distance to school alone. As DC residents, we are fortunate to have so many schools to choose from. But many of us are limited in options due to transportation and the fear of our children encountering trouble en route to school. A safe passage to school is very important to me because it allows children the opportunity to

safely take advantage of the educational programs and opportunities available throughout the entire city.

- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Parents should not have to travel across town to other wards to get access to specialized education programs. Specialized programs are great but if they are only concentrated in certain wards that does not benefit all. I am a strong advocate for specialized educational programs and I believe parents in all wards should have equitable accessibility.

Ana Rodriguez, Citywide PLE Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - I don't really know the whole structure, however it's important to many parents in the city, so it's important for me too.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - It's the most important, that has been proven in my generation and my daughter's how to move to the next level in life and sometimes determines many positive outcomes, but equality and access is still a big issue.

Tyra Russell

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - It's important for students to feel safe going to school, in school, and coming home from school. As adults, it is our job to ensure students have all they need to focus on their education. That means helping to limit stressors and distractions.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - It is important that schools address the whole child. Programs like STEM, Montessori and dual language meet students where they are and provide additional learning opportunities and differentiation.

Meladie Tatum

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - There is so much happening in the world today that we can't always be on the forefront. With that being said, my love for family and children in the local area stands for a lot. My goal as a mom and educator is to provide a quality, healthy learning environment to all.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Access to a special program means quality care and thought put into learning and development. It gives children and families a part to be themselves.

Yvette Selby, Advisory Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage is important to me because all kids deserve a supportive and safe environment for learning. Educational spaces cannot be deemed safe if students have issues with getting to and leaving the school and any events. We as parents, communities, officials, and decision-makers have an obligation to ensure safe passages for our kids.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Access to specialized school programs is essential in today's environment. Most of these programs give students what is needed for their future endeavors. Many involve application based learning opportunities that allow for students to grow and develop skills that will help them in the workforce. Equitable access to specialized programs in all Wards is key to successful students. Building solutions to getting more access to specialized programs is our responsibility as parents, educators, officials, communities, and decision-makers.

Sandra Wright

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - PAVE's top parent priorities are important to me because they advocate for students with special needs. This is important because I think schools need to have more inclusive programs for students with special needs. Also, safety and better security for our students in DCPS. Myself and other PAVE parents care for our students' education and growth.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - This is important to me because no student/child should be left behind. Implementing these types of programs in our schools will prepare and help our students to achieve their goals while in school and after graduating high school it will help prepare them for the future.

PAVE Ward 6 Parent Leaders in Education (PLE) Board 2023-2024

PAVE Ward 6 PLE Board 2023-24



Dawan Alford



Kisha Clark
Citywide PLE Board member



Monique Cole



Fari Ghamina Tempe



Ebony Goddard



Crystal Gray
Citywide PLE Board member



Russchelle Moore
Citywide PLE Board member

Dawan Alford

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - My background studying the impact of Community Violence Exposure (CVE) deepens my concern for the importance of safe passage. I have deep knowledge in community organizing and advocacy in this area.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - I am the parent of an exceptionally bright child without the resources to have her in an educational school environment that supports her.

Kisha Clark, Citywide PLE Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - It is imperative that our students be able to go to and from school safely. The increasing violence in the city in and around schools significantly impacts our students physically, mentally, and emotionally. I am eager to work with policymakers on solid strategies to reduce conflict, mediation services, and

community relationship building to keep students safe and improve student attendance.

- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Families deserve options that meet their individual needs. Specialized programs are one vehicle to allow families to select academic options that their students are passionate about and promote academic growth and curiosity. My daughters started in Montessori schools which gave them the foundational freedom to learn and grow through natural interests and activities rather than formal teaching methods. Langdon, where they attended, placed an emphasis on hands-on learning and developing real-world skills. It emphasized independence and supported their individual learning styles. That specialized program worked for my family and I'd like to see other families have those same opportunities.

Fari Ghamina Tumpe

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage to school is important to me because of the rise in crime as it relates to our children. We have seen more sex trafficking in the District of Columbia than in the history of our city. We have seen a rise in gun violence since the beginning of 2023, we have seen terrifying acts of group fights that have become popular to post on social media. Our community response teams are reporting a rise in snatching chains and rap battles that have created cyber wars that have yielded elaborate plots to target specific neighborhoods and persons of interest. We need safe passage to school in order to protect our innocent youth from hurt, harm, and danger. We know that systemic oppression is deliberate and that unjust suffering provokes crime. Low income Black and brown communities have been brainwashed by social and economic propaganda which has created decades of self hate; aka black on black crime.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - For far too long, ableism has been the driving force of implementing specialized school programs. WE NEED TO SMASH ABLEISM. PAVE has the power and numbers that demand comprehensive inclusion for all students. For two generations I have watched differently abled students in my family be overlooked. SHAME SHAME SHAME! Differently abled doesn't translate into dumb or incompetent. Many of our children are even more competent than those in general education. If given equal opportunities, the sky could be the limit. We've seen what the government looks like when it works for the people with the public health emergency; now it's time to see what our educational system looks like when it works for everyone!

Ebony Goddard

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - It is important due to the high crime and child abductions that have been occurring throughout the city. As a parent, I still walk my children to school.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - It gives the children an opportunity to learn different skills that would allow them to demonstrate the new skills that they've learned. As a parent, I attended the first LEGO robotics event last 2022-2023 school year with my oldest son and it was very educational. The children should be able to have the same opportunities in each school throughout the district. Being a native Washingtonian and attending DCPS, those programs open my mindset to a world that I never knew. Those programs would help towards scholarships in the future to further their education.

Crystal Gray, Citywide PLE Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - SaferRoutes are important to make walking, bussing, and bicycling to school safer and more accessible for children, including those with disabilities, and to increase the number of children who routinely walk, bicycle, or roll to and from school. It's important because it helps with the safety of our children to and from school, conflict resolution, mediation services, and community relationship building to keep students safe and improve student attendance.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - It is important because high quality school programs and regular participation can lead to improved social and emotional competencies, including social behavior, intrinsic motivation, better concentration efforts, and higher sense of self-worth. Regular participation in specialized school programs has been linked to lower dropout rates and a narrowing of achievement gaps, particularly among low-income students.

Russchelle Moore, Citywide PLE Board member








- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage is important to me because, as a grandmother, the thought of something happening to my grandchild makes me so uneasy because all children need to feel safe traveling to and from school in our city and should not feel afraid of something terrible happening to them while trying to get their education. I've grown up in this city, I've raised my children in this city, and now I have a grandchild who's growing up in this city and she shouldn't have to worry

about anything that may disrupt her learning and possibly be harmed in the process.

- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - I believe that specialized school programs are an essential part of our kids' growth process in their education. The fact that other countries and even other nationalities have a widespread educational system that our kids really don't get the opportunity to experience is very disheartening and concerning to me because my son, who just graduated high school, had the opportunity to be apart of a STEM based high school and a lot of the things that they were privy to, most kids in DC have never had that experience. I think that STEM and other specialized programs should be considered for all grade levels for ALL students in this city.

PAVE Ward 7 Parent Leaders in Education (PLE) Board 2023-2024

PAVE Ward 7 PLE Board 2023-24

 Carolyn Bown <small>Citywide PLE Board member</small>	 Veronica Branch	 Shakuwra Camphor	 Gaby Fraser <small>Advisory Board member</small>	 Tawanda Johnson	 Desean Jones	 Sherice Muhammad
 Vickey Nelson	 Kirsten Pelzer-Clark	 Elizabeth Reddick	 Karla Reid-Witt <small>Citywide PLE Board member</small>	 LaShawn Robinson	 Simone Scott <small>Citywide PLE Board member</small>	
 Dawn Smith <small>Citywide PLE Board member</small>	 Letisha Vinson <small>Citywide PLE Board member</small>	 Maya Warren	 BreJanee Williams	 Takiyah Worthy		

Carolyn Bowen, Citywide PLE Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?

- School needs to be a safe place where children feel welcome and ready to learn. Exposure to danger or violence on the way to or from school or during school can detrimentally affect students' mental health and academic experience and prohibit children from attending school.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Every child in the city should have access to high quality, specialized programs in their Ward. Families should not need to travel or lottery into schools far away from their house to access these programs. All families deserve the right to choose programs that best fit their child.

Veronica Branch

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - With the uptick in violence in the city, it is important for the children to feel safe coming to and leaving from school. The kids are our future and more must be done to protect them.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - I attended an all girls public high school in Philadelphia which was an application school and totally academic. It prepared me for my future endeavors at Howard University. I think children should have the opportunity to soar and learn beyond their wildest dreams.

Shakuwra Camphor

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage to school is extremely important to me. Kids deserve the right to go to school without worrying if something will happen to them before they even get there or coming home. We currently have one crossing guard assigned to my child's school but I want to have at least one more. People speed in the neighborhood and every child is not fortunate to have their parents walk them to school. The additional crossing guard would not only help them cross the streets safely but be an extra pair of eyes to report any dangerous or suspicious situations.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Before my children started school I researched Spanish immersion schools and realized we had one right in my neighborhood. I was excited that I could walk my children to school and they could learn a second language that would keep them in competition with other multilingual people in our country. Having access to these specialized schools will help children in DC realize their full potential and encourage them to think outside of the box. I feel all children and parents should have the choice to choose the style of education that is best for them and that

they can relate to. Our kids will get to stay on top of the latest technology and have access to tools that will facilitate their success in the future.

Kyanna Cole

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage is extremely important to me because living in Ward 7 we hear too often about the crimes that surround our neighborhoods, that us parents don't feel safe letting our children play outside. It's becoming very unpredictable and more aggressive to see other children harming other children on buses and by foot over the smallest "beef". I want to feel less anxious about my child traveling to school and back home, because this is not sustainable to live a full life.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - It's very important that we bring more programs to children to help support them now while they are younger to give them tools to see them thrive in their independent studies later. Most times children go undiagnosed because the struggles are found out later on and not as small children. Then they become anxious about learning that may lead to behavioral issues. I've witnessed a child being judged as bad or hard headed; far too often instead of being lost or unsupported at home. The parents may not know how to help which can have a negative reaction to learning totally. Also, not every child learns the same and different techniques need to be introduced to see what best fits that child's learning style.

Gaby Fraser, Advisory Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Well, it is very important that all children receive the best possible education they possibly can. It is equally important that they arrive and return from school safely every day. The way things are in the city right now I'm sad to say Paris are worried when their children leave the house in the morning that they will return in the evening. That is no way to live.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Prior to Covid, it was a known fact that schools east of the river receive programs that children on the other side of the river do not receive. Covid opened the eyes of people and brought to the forefront the staggering differences that our children are facing across the city. It is our responsibility to ensure that every child receives a good education regardless of their income environment or social economic conditions.

Tawanda Johnson

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - There is a lot of crime happening in the District which poses a problem for its residents- especially the children. Safe passage provides support in that area. Sets of eyes on the street that have our children's best interest at heart helps to ensure that children in the community have that extra layer of safety protection as they navigate to and from school. Safe passage is a safety net for children who may be targeted by criminals or someone trying to harm them. Children should have to be afraid in our communities to go to school, fearing that something bad may happen to them, they should be able to focus on their studies. Specialized school programs are necessary for educational success.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Having educational options to meet the unique needs of a child is key to a successful learning environment. Children have individual learning styles and the chosen school should give the child an opportunity to flourish. Also, understanding the child's needs from an institutional perspective allows preparation for a diverse population, geared toward producing successful students. Specialized school programs are necessary for educational success.

Dasean Jones

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safety to and from school is important to maintain a healthy well-being and safe livelihood for future growth and development. The added security and safety enables a secure state of mind that can transfer to greater improvement educationally and socially.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized school programs give a distinct advantage preparing children for college and career readiness. Children will see and experience increased opportunities as they continue their journey into adulthood as well trained and skilled professionals seeking careers to provide a well established life.

Sherice Muhammad

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage is quite critical to the overall education of the children of any community. If a child is unsafe in his/her commute to and from school, the effects can range from truancy to severe mental health impacts. It is equally imperative for students to be safe traveling to and from school as it is securing school grounds to ensure children receive a quality education. Safe passage is

very important because it demonstrates our commitment to providing an environment of wellness and the freedom to be a child and explore without harm. A safe environment is clear communication to our children that they are valued, supported and integral to the community.

- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Access to specialized school programs is very important to me because data has proven that STEM, dual language, Montessori programs facilitate exceptional brain development, cognition, motor, and analytical skills. Exposure to STEM and languages at early ages and its impacts are noted by the third grade. The trajectory of a child is determined by the third grade. STEM and dual language programs provide children with skills to advance them into the global marketplace. Overall, the benefits of specialized school programs are enormous and life-lasting. Personally, I am an avid advocate for STEAM (including the arts), Montessori and dual language programs with my own daughter having educated her with strong STEAM and language exposure. I've observed first-hand the benefits of her critical thinking, analytical skills and ability to navigate problem solving. I encourage specialized school programs for all children to cultivate their minds and abilities.

Vickey Nelson

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage is important because when I was a school we didn't have a voice for parents to advocate around this. I want to be a voice for my kids and other kids to get them more safe passage programs.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized programs are important because students should have more opportunities to do different activities and find more activities to help broaden their perspectives.

Kirsten Pelzer-Clark

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Parent Priorities are important to me because I am an advocate for my child's education to ensure that he received quality services if need be.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Currently Kristopher school is STEM. Kristopher enjoys the solar system astronauts' things of that nature that helps him focus. The STEM program works for him. To channel is focus and energy

Elizabeth Reddick

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage is important because environmental trauma is a huge barrier to whether a child can adequately access their education. It's a matter of equity that all children have an opportunity to arrive safely at school and feel safe on their journey home.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized school programs give children exposure to new experiences. We are a diverse population, therefore we should present as many opportunities for children to practice success as we can. It is much easier for children to find their purpose in life if they have exposure to different cultures and careers. I believe it will stabilize the mental health crisis, to learn, there really is a community for everyone, even if it's not the one you were raised in.

Karla Reid-Witt

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Kids need to arrive at school ready to learn. Having to run an obstacle course to get to school is not conducive to that. This is a stressor we have the power to remove. Without safe passage parents have to rethink transportation to school and sometimes forgo job opportunities because of it. Safe passage to school is a civil right.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - There is no such thing as a standard kid. Our kids come with all kinds of interest and temperaments. Students should be exposed to and have access to a variety of options. Not all families have the capacity to provide enrichment. School is an appropriate place for that to happen. Specialized programs help produce a more well-rounded workforce.

LaShawn Robinson

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe Passage is very important to me as we struggle with violence in our Region/Community. Student safety in the District is my number one concern. I am dedicated and committed to support, assist the improvement, and enhancement of safety related policies that impact our students in the District of Columbia.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized programs are important to me simply because it helps to promote positive youth development. It can lead to a more inclusive community life such

as improved social skills, improved behaviors, increased academic accomplishment, increased self esteem, and self-efficacy. Gaining a sense of self control, building character increases empowerment for a healthy life style.

Simone Scott, Citywide PLE Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - I drive/pickup my kids to/from school everyday to ensure they get to school as safely as possible. Due to their school and career schedules, I am not able to work the traditional 9am-5pm shift. And due to their age, I cannot work a night shift. Thus in order to be an informed, engaged parent I rely on ethics and innovation.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - As a Native Washingtonian, Dual Parent Board Member, Social Impact Founder, Edutainer, and parent residing in Washington, D.C. I live for a purpose. Life Skills are crucial for our scholars. Vocational trade skills, leadership, and critical thinking are not just for academic achievement but life fulfillment. Many parents, scholars, and educators over the past year have increased their support for specialized programming. In addition, are asking the District to support this initiative to increase scholar access to SBMH and OST programming. With the increase of youth engagement in the youth employment programs, our youth are asking for more career-readiness programs to support their passion for business entrepreneurship. Many of our off-track scholars have one thing in mind, capital. How can I get it? Who can I get/take it from? I believe adding and funding more specialized programming in the schools during and after school can combat and reduce juvenile recidivism, decrease youth violence, increase our graduation rate, increase scholar attendance and participation, and increase their respect for themselves, their community, and their peers. I believe it's important we remember what happens at home usually shows up at school. That's if the scholar shows up at all.

Dawn Smith, Citywide PLE Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage is important for me and my family because we want the knowledge that goes about with day-to-day dealings; it's comfort to know that going to school or work should be a truly happy and safe experience. I should not struggle if I take this route to school or work will I be assaulted.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?

- Specialized school programs enhance the knowledge for our children to broaden their horizons by stimulating their minds with learning through different facets of programming that are accessible if available within our schools.

Letisha Vinson

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage to school is important for several reasons, primarily centered around the well-being and development of children and the overall safety of the community. Ensuring safe passage to school protects children from potential dangers and hazards they might encounter while traveling to and from school. This includes reducing the risk of accidents, injuries, or incidents such as bullying, harassment, or abduction. Safe passage to school helps ensure that all children have access to education. When children feel safe going to school, they are more likely to attend regularly, concentrate better in class, and perform academically. This promotes educational equity and reduces the achievement gap. Safe routes to school encourage physical activity by walking or biking, which contributes to better overall health. It also reduces the reliance on motor vehicles, decreasing air pollution and traffic congestion in the vicinity of schools. A safe journey to school reduces stress and anxiety for both children and their parents or guardians. Knowing that their child can travel to school without unnecessary risks alleviates the worries of parents and caregivers. Safe passage initiatives can contribute to reduced absenteeism due to health issues or safety concerns. When children can travel to school safely, they are less likely to miss school, which improves their educational outcomes.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized programs can cater to a student's specific interests, strengths, and learning styles. This tailored approach can enhance engagement and motivation, leading to better academic outcomes. These programs offer a diverse range of learning experiences beyond the standard curriculum. For example, STEM programs emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation, while dual language programs foster bilingualism and cultural understanding. Many specialized programs align with high-demand fields, preparing students for future careers. STEM programs, for instance, equip students with skills needed in technology-driven industries. Montessori and other alternative education models emphasize individualized instruction, allowing students to progress at their own pace and explore topics in-depth. Specialized programs often promote inclusivity and diversity by attracting students from various backgrounds who share a common interest or educational approach. This can lead to more inclusive and culturally rich learning environments. Some specialized programs are designed to

address specific learning needs, such as gifted and talented education or language development for English learners. They can help bridge educational gaps and provide necessary support. Graduates of specialized programs may have a competitive advantage in college admissions and the job market due to their specialized knowledge and skills.

Maya Warren

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage is very important to me because I have a son. I worry about the bullying, and school violence which has been ending up into school shootings. The children are misguided because nobody is there to listen to their issues or to help guide the children in the right path.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - To provide each child with learning support that will help each child in their own way of learning. I call it "Learning with Equality Options/ No Limits".

Takiyah Worthly

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage is important to me because students and families should be able to learn without worrying about being harmed. Safe passage is larger than the journey to school, it's all the threats to safety which occur throughout the entire school day, inhibiting a student's ability to learn in a stress-free environment. I have a 4th grader, his 3rd grade year was filled with more shelter-in-place drills than I care to share. I didn't learn until the end of the year that he was silently contemplating ways to send me "I love u" messages because he thought each drill was an indication of an active shooter on campus...he didn't realize the threat was coming from the community at-large, his community. I am an advocate for the protection of childhood innocence, each drill inflicted trauma on my child and stole small parts of his innocence. This is why safe passage is a personal priority for me.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - I have a 9yr old son, who attended the only language immersion elementary school in Ward 7 from K-3rd grade. When I was ready to switch schools for 4th grade, there was not a comparable programming available for him East of the River. My son, Naafi, also loves science and math. STEM options in our area are present but at capacity the waitlist for these schools are impossible. There are plenty of schools with special programming in the district, the issue is the lack of equitable distribution and access.

PAVE Ward 8 Parent Leaders in Education (PLE) Board 2023-2024



Tyesha Andrews, Citywide PLE Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - I support and advocate for safe passage because we need to improve our students' safe passage to and from school and/or after-school activities. I use public transportation myself and have been a victim of verbal assault and subject to men exposing themselves. Incidents have increased over the last 5 years. Our current public transportation system isn't even safe for adults, why would we expect it to be safe for our children?
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized school programs are important to me because there are not enough of these programs in DC Public Schools and the ones that do exist cannot provide an adequate education to every child in the district that could benefit from the program. For instance, there are not enough STEM or Dual Language/Language Immersion public schools, there are none in Ward 8. How can an out-of-boundary student without the same family or economic status compete with the students who live in the same wards where our few STEM and Dual Language/Language Immersion public schools are housed?

Ricky Arrington

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - It's important to me because our kids shouldn't have to worry about if they going to school or not because of the growing violence in our communities
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - It gives our kids some different things to learn about and maybe become great at.

Sharnetta Boone-Ruffin, Citywide PLE Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage to school is important to me because ALL DC students have to find their own transportation to and from school. DC students do not have the privilege of riding a school bus that will take them to and from school safely. This means that these students have to go through multiple neighborhoods, sometimes even the ones their neighborhood is beefing with to get to school. Some school areas do not have crossing guards or safety personnel. Not having a responsible adult/s to help students cross the street is extremely dangerous and at times deadly.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Giving students access to specialized school programs is important to me because it allows students to try new things. By giving these students real world experiences, it can play a huge part in preparing and/or creating a brighter future. Specialized school programs also help students build a stronger foundation towards their goals whether that's to college or earn a license before finishing high school. Some specialized programs give students not only internships while earning a high school diploma but licensed/certified by the time they graduate high school, a permanent job making 60-80K starting salary with full benefits. This can change a student's perspective on not just school but their future.

Tara Brown, Citywide PLE Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - My daughter has been assaulted and groomed while traveling to school. I'm interested in advocating around this topic.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - We should leverage all of the resources available to prepare our children for success after high school. Specialized programs give them options.

Tawanda Clemons

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - My son had a gun pointed at him and was robbed. He was coming from the gym on his way to a recreational center to play basketball with his friends. Our children need to be able to commute without worrying about being harmed.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Our children need to be exposed to different fields to broaden their knowledge and to develop skills that will be used to improve their lives.

Nicole Cook

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage is an ongoing and constant battle with getting a child to and from school. Although my young men are in college, I struggled with this while they were in middle school and high school and because getting to school was so unsafe to travel to and from on public transportation my mom took them to school before going to work. My children were not allowed and had no desire to catch public transportation to and from school.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized school programs help children to grow and become a success in society. However, a lot of the teachers volunteer after working all day and some programs do not last. Extracurricular activities will help the child to be well-rounded. The specialized programs are needed in the schools and should be funded by outside source so that the teachers can be relieved after school.

Marquis Cotton

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage matters to me because it represents a fundamental commitment to the safety and well-being of our communities, particularly our children. It acknowledges that the journey to and from school should be free from unnecessary risks and dangers. Safe passage programs provide a sense of security, not only for students but also for their families, knowing that their children have a safer route to school. Every child deserves the opportunity to learn and grow in an environment free from fear and harm, and safe passage initiatives play a crucial role in making this a reality.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized school programs matter to me because they recognize that every child is unique, with their strengths, challenges, and learning styles. These programs prioritize inclusivity and personalized education, ensuring that students

receive the support and resources they need to thrive academically and personally. When we invest in specialized school programs, we invest in the potential of each student, regardless of their abilities or differences. It is about creating an educational environment where every child can reach their full potential and pursue their dreams.

Laura Fitzgerald

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Safe passage is important to me as a mother, administrator, board member and special education advocate because I believe that every child should be able to arrive at school and return to their home without being confronted by violence, harassment, intimidation and bullying. We need to be able to support children and families with comprehensive support from multiple agencies across the city. This work cannot fall solely on the shoulders of already overwhelmed educators. Most importantly of all, safe passage needs to be available to ALL children and families in the District. We cannot accept that some neighborhoods are safer than others. ALL neighborhoods need to be safe for ALL children.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Access to specialized school programs is important to me as a mother, administrator, board member and special education advocate because I believe specialized programs are the key to success for children growing up in our rapidly changing, globalized society. For secondary students, we need to offer specialized workforce development pathways beyond traditional diploma pathways and vocational programs in order to equip our youth with the skills they need to thrive in the digital economy. Above all, students with disabilities need more equitable access to the digital economy as adults with disabilities are wildly underrepresented in the general workforce but even more so in the digital economy. Lastly, with so many distractions in the modern age, it is vitally important for youth to identify their passions, talents and interests at an earlier age so that they are engaged in a deliberate fashion as they advance in their education. It is far too easy to lose students along the way when they are disengaged in their education from a young age.

Beatrice Rena Holland

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Growing in DC where walking to school was the norm, safe school passage is important for a couple of reasons. First, I believe that all children should be able to transition to and from school without being traumatized. Second, the communities with the greatest need are the same areas with the lowest poverty

rates. Hopefully safe school passage can incorporate additional resources that can better serve students overall. Poetry on the corner is an example of safe passage and education combined. Hopefully moving forward school and community can work together and serve our children.

- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Being a parent of Montessori it saved my SUPER busy son. Starting school he could have easily been identified as ADHA or some other special education identification. However, Montessori allowed him to move around the classroom while still learning. In addition, I have a grandchild who is leaning towards dual language and STEM. It is my hope that as she matriculates the opportunities will be available for her to pursue her passions. Accessing children's talents benefits the child and society. The children get to live a life doing what brings them joy and society gets a citizen who is providing a service that they enjoy doing.

Andrea Jones, Citywide PLE Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Studies show many children in Wards 7 and 8 travel outside of their ward to attend school. This means children are utilizing public transportation daily. When my daughter attended KIPP, it took her over an hour to get to school daily. Safe passage is important because kids need to feel safe when traveling to school, and parents need to know that their kids are safe as well. There have been many stories of students being robbed at train stations, fights happening, and innocent students being injured. This has to stop and there have to be laws put into place to protect all students.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - All schools should have access to specialized programs because STEM careers are growing and all children should have access to learn and succeed in those fields.

Cristen Jones

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - It is important that children can get to and from school safely. Some children are responsible for getting to and from school on their own. As a community we should be able to make sure they are safe. Going to school should be a safe place for them.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - My daughter would benefit from an elementary school that focuses on arts. She is a talented singer, dancer and actor. However, in DC we only have a high school that children can attend.

Loretta Jones

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - With so much happening in this world I need my children to arrive and return from school safely. Not have to worry about being harmed.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Every child learns differently. With most schools focused on reading and math or standardized testing specialized programs can help in other ways.

Latiya Loring

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - The SAFE PASSAGE to school PAVE Parent Priority is EXTREMELY important to me for many reasons. I grew up in THIS GREAT CITY called Washington, DC (That by now SHOULD HAVE BEEN DECLARED A STATE) during a time when crime was high and so were many of our people, who were suffering, battling and grappling with substance abuse addiction. I recall and remember the unfortunate effects it had on us as children. As a child, I remember the many challenges and obstacles encountered trying to get to school. During that time, most of the community children would band together to walk to school. The walk to school was not safe and there were times when street turf neighborhood wars would be in session during our walk to school. This left many of us from that generation with deep embedded wounds of mental and physical trauma that many of us are still trying to soothe, repair and HEAL. I don't want this life or kind of horrific experience for the children of today. We owe it to them to ensure that they will get to school safe and have a pleasurable journey getting there. Ensuring that ALL students have a SAFE PASSAGE to school will also help improve the learning experience. Can you imagine how much better a student will focus and learn in school without having to think or deal with the negative effects of witnessing unsafe and criminal behavior(s) on their way to school???
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - We have a generation of FUTURE public servants (Engineers, Carpenters, Plumbers, Electricians, Scientists, Nurses, Producers, Writers, Etc who will rely and depend on obtaining HANDS ON TRAINING from Specialized School Programs.

India Patrick

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - To ensure my son makes it to school and home without being scared of losing his life.

- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - To ensure my son has opportunities to explore and develop a variety of skills that he can implement once he has a career.

Tiffany Randall

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - We are losing a lot of our youth in spaces that are supposed to be the safest. It's extremely important to me because their lights are being put out too soon. They deserve to be able to thrive in these spaces.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - All children should have access and opportunities for them to grow and learn and find their passions.

Jeanette Staton

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - As a Ward 8 PLE Board Member, community safety is not just important to my ward, it's important for every ward. Each ward has children who deserve a safe commute to and from school, as well as a safe and violence-free community. Councilmember Trayon White, Sr. stated that Public Safety is a vital part of the quality of life in his Ward 8 Six-Month Progress Report for 2022.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Our children deserve a multifaceted approach to education. They deserve education options that will translate into real life, and functioning knowledge and skills that will help them thrive.

Anise Walker, Advisory Board member

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - As an employee of DC Public Schools, I often support student behavior issues during safe passage before and after school. Unfortunately, most of the issues I am involved in are not favorable. Too many students have to navigate unsafe and sometimes frightening routes to school through our neighborhoods and even our public transportation system. Safe passage to school is important because every student should be free from care or concern when heading to school and prepare for learning.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Every DC student deserves to have a top-notch education, no matter the ward they reside in. Specialized school programs like STEM, art integration, dual language, college prep, etc., are not specific to Wards or even to neighborhoods.

Being able to benefit from specialized school programs prepares our students to be ready to engage in a more well-rounded future.

Vondre Walston

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - I work for a safe passage program and it is important that children get to school and home. Safely ensuring parents that their kids are ok also makes it a better learning experience when kids have no worries about transportation.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Because we are building up future leaders of tomorrow and they need every opportunity they can have to be great.

Tynisha Wright

- Why is safe passage to school important to you?
 - Families want to make sure their kids can go to school, get an education, and make it home each night. Some parents cannot drop their kids off at school daily, so they depend on public transportation and DCPS.
- Why is access to specialized school programs important to you?
 - Specialized school programs are essential because they allow kids to learn new skills they could use on the job or in the world.