

Quiana Lamons
Committee of the Judiciary and Public Safety
Metropolitan Police Department
Tuesday, February 13th, 2024

Hello, Councilmember Pinto and DC Council staff. My name is Quiana Lamons. I am a Pave leader and resident of Ward 7

Thank you all for being here today and for listening to the voices and experiences of DC residents like myself. I am here today to speak about the safety of children as they travel to and from school each day. This should be on the minds of all the leaders in our city, including officers of the Metropolitan Police Department. I feel I am uniquely qualified to speak about this topic given my background and long withstanding experiences of living and traveling within the District. I was an OSSE bus driver for students with disabilities for 16 years from 2007-2023. I was rewarded with the relationships I built with the students and seeing them grow up from babies to having babies of their own. I eventually had to stop driving for OSSE, not ever because of the children, but because of the management and the many issues they created, but that is another story. Today, I want to focus on MPD and how they can play a big role in getting our students to and from school safely. From being a OSSE bus driver and a PAVE Parent Leader in the District for many years, I feel that I have unique insight on the safe passage for traveling students that need to be heard and how MPD can help make students safer.

Before I get any further, I think it's important to ground ourselves in some relevant data. Nearly 50% of all DC students attend school outside of their Ward of residence, including my own child. Additionally, students living in Wards 5, 7 and 8 travel further to get to school and often travel over two miles. With that being said, many students are traveling long distances to get an education. I witnessed this first hand as an OSSE bus driver. Students need to have more adults and MPD around that have their safety and best interests at heart so that their parents do not have to worry about the safety of their child while they are traveling.

I believe there should be metro and WMATA youth-only cars with supervision from Safe Passage Workers and MPD on the cars around the train stations, platforms, and bus stops. There should also be WMATA student-only routes that take children to and from school during dismissal and arrival times with MPD spread out on those routes to make sure students are actually making it to their school safely. A well-informed and highly trained MPD presence is crucial in making sure



students are getting to school safely. I think it's time we start working together as parents, Councilmembers, MPD, WMATA, and more to ensure this happens. I know and am speaking from experience as an OSSE bus driver just how helpful having a second set of eyes on students while on my route was and I think it should be the norm for all kids. Regardless of how a child gets to school, there should be trained adults along the way who are there to keep our kids safe.

To conclude, I believe, not only from being a parent of two boys in school and a former bus driver, that it is important for children to feel safe when going to and from school and that parents feel good sending their child to school. Students cannot get their education if they don't have a way to make it to school in a safe and efficient way. I urge you to work together, consider these asks, and help make safe passage a reality for all of our children. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Quiana Lamons

Ward 7 Member, PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education)