

Elizabeth Reddick
Committee of Public Works and Operations
Department of For-Hire Vehicles
Friday, February 16th, 2024

Hello, Councilmember Nadeau and DC Council staff. My name is Elizabeth Reddick. I serve as a PAVE Ward 7 PLE Board member.

I am here today to talk about the DC School Connect program that falls under the Department of For-Hire Vehicles. While the DC School Connect program has expanded slightly, from 300 students at 24 schools to 44 schools and up to 1760 students, it still is widely inaccessible for many students and only available to students in Wards 7 and 8.

DC School Connect needs to be expanded to include more seats. Many students and families would benefit from this service if it were more readily available. When expanding seats, the Department of For-Hire Vehicles needs to make sure the process to apply for the program is equitable and prioritizes those with the highest need. Expanding Safe Passage Programs like DC School Connect can help decrease student absenteeism and truancy and decrease the likelihood of students witnessing or engaging in bullying or violence when traveling to and from school.

Right now so many families are struggling to find ways to get their kids to school and many have to rely on older siblings and cousins to get the younger kids in the family to school. When we have children trying to get other children to school, we are putting a lot of stress on kids and the family unit overall. Some students are traveling to one Ward to take their sibling to school and to another Ward to get to their own school. DC School Connect could take some of that pressure off parents and families just by having more routes during school arrival and dismissal times.

My final ask is for the Department of For-Hire Vehicles to aggregate and release public data on the Safe Passage DC School Connect program. I think DC residents would benefit from seeing which schools children in the program are traveling to, how often the buses are on time, and more so that we see if there are any correlations between DC School Connect and school attendance or DC School Connect and violence or crime during student commuting hours.



Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to the solutions you develop and am available for questions.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Reddick

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