

Elizabeth Reddick
Committee of Transportation and the Environment
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Friday, February 16th, 2024

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

My family and I have a lot of experience commuting to school and work on WMATA like many other Washingtonians. I am here to testify to you all today to urge you to create a better infrastructure for kids to safely travel to and from school when utilizing public transportation.

My kids, along with many others, have experienced crime when traveling to and from school. My daughter has witnessed fights before and after school and it keeps her from wanting to go to school in fear that she may be next. The first altercation she witnessed took place at Good Hope and Naylor Road, then at Naylor and Alabama Ave, and also at Congress Heights metro. She is terrified to travel to school which sometimes keeps her from going at all. The WMATA buses and WMATA trains are not safe for all our children and the leaders of our city must do something about it.

My first solution is for WMATA to have youth-only metro cars and dedicated routes, with Safe Passage Workers and WMATA PD present on those routes, during the hours of arrival and dismissal. I have personally seen at the Pennsylvania and Potomac bus stop, bus drivers not pick up students when school was out, likely due to not having any support while driving. This is a public safety issue, but with bus and train car attendants, many problems could be mitigated before they even begin.

My other ask for WMATA is that they create routes that drop students off near their school. This would do a lot to help lower student absenteeism and truancy and lower incidents of violence. Far too often I see kids lingering in places they shouldn't during school arrival and dismissal because there are no trained adults present to help move them along nor is there an easy way to get to school in the first place. We already know that WMATA can change their routes based on schools because they already do different runs depending on if it's summer and schools are out versus during the year when schools are in session. Therefore, WMATA already has a system in place that allows for route changes based on ridership of students in schools. I ask each of



you to consider how we can all work together to create the infrastructure and routes that would do a better job of keeping our kids safe.

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)