

**Caitlin Bergo**  
**Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety**  
**Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice**  
**Tuesday, February 27th, 2024**

Hello, Councilmember Pinto and DC Council staff. My name is Caitlin Bergo. I am a Ward 1 PAVE PLE Board member and Bancroft Elementary School parent.

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to attend this hearing and for listening to all of us today. I am here to talk about my experience with safety, particularly with safety around schools, and the need for many safety improvements across the District.

I live right by Bancroft Elementary School which is where my 5-year-old daughter attends. At Bancroft, we came together as parents and neighbors and successfully advocated to close the road directly in front of the school during drop off and pick up times, so for just two hours a day. This road closure was very needed in my community because people would often drive by the school speeding while on their way to work and traffic would get congested making it nearly impossible for parents to get their children to school on time. The road was so dangerous during school arrival and dismissal times that many parents and school staff would frequently witness accidents and near accidents.

After a year of a huge push by the dedicated people in the neighborhood and by everyone in the school community, including parents and teachers, we finally got the road in front of the school closed during drop and pick-up times. In Ward 1 and at Bancroft there are a lot of parents with knowledge of the system, financial ability, time, and more which helped move this project along. This success was important, but I want to see this spread to other schools with parents who maybe don't have the privilege to advocate for as long as we did to get something like this done. Once this change was in place, it was much less stressful getting my child to school and the lift on parents and families has been a lot less.

With that being said, students deserve to feel safe when they travel to and from school and there are many ways that the Deputy Mayor of Public Safety and Justice, the DC Council, and other city leaders can work together to make this happen. We need to talk about some of the ways we can ensure schools get needed traffic safety improvements quickly, as well as improve safe transportation options and coordination. Safe Passage Workers and MPD need to collaborate to help get kids to school safely, WMATA can work to implement supervised student-only metro cars, and we must improve safety around school entrances and replicate what happened at Bancroft to other schools across the city while removing the barriers and



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long wait times. All in all, I urge all of our city's leaders to work together to improve Safe Passage for the youth in DC.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to future collaboration and am available for questions at the end.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Bergo

Ward 1 PLE Board Member, PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education)