

**Letisha Vinson**  
**Committee of Judiciary and Public Safety**  
**Deputy Mayor of Public Safety and Justice**  
**Tuesday, February 27th, 2024**

Good afternoon, Councilmember Pinto and DC Council staff. My name is Letisha Vinson and I am an Advisory and Ward 7 PLE Board member and KIPP DC parent.

As a concerned parent, resident, and advocate, I write to you about the critical challenges faced by students commuting to school in the District of Columbia. Our children's safety should be our top priority, we NEED to create a safer and more coordinated environment. After extensive discussions with other parents, community members, and experts in the field, the following recommendations are being proposed:

**1. Disconnected Safe Passage Workers (SPW):**

Establish model SPW program partnerships with schools to share best practices and shift program management structure from Community-based organizations to schools/school clusters.

**2. Inconsistent Quality of CBOs:**

Re-evaluate the Safe Passage grant process to ensure that awardees have trusted relationships, provide training, and involve school leader input.

**3. Lack of Coordination:**

Convene citywide meetings between DCPS, public charter school leaders, MPD, WMATA PD, and Safe Passage program leadership for collaboration.

**4. Unsafe Public Transportation:**

Pilot youth-only WMATA metro cars during school hours with stationed SPWs and WMATA PD. Create dedicated "youth to school" bus routes with similar support.

**5. Limited DC School Connect Scope:**

Expand DC School Connect routes to transport more students, prioritizing areas with the greatest need.

**6. Bus Driver Shortage:**

Collaborate with DFHV, DOI, and DCHR to address recruitment and retention of bus drivers, ensuring adequate staffing during school hours.

7. Youth-Centered Police Programs:

Expand training on youth-focused interventions for MPD and WMATA PD.

8. School Resource Officer Program Review:

Review and re-implement the school resource officer program with input from DCPS, public charter schools, DME, MPD, and DMPSJ.

9. Expedited Traffic Safety Infrastructure Approvals:

Expedite the approval process for schools to request changes/improvements to traffic safety infrastructure.

10. Consistent Crossing Guard Placement:

Ensure consistency in crossing guard placements, hiring, and training, focusing on partnerships with schools.

11. Public Information Transparency:

Regularly aggregate and release public data on safe passage program effectiveness and usage.

By implementing these solutions, we can create a safer and more efficient commuting experience for our children. As a community, we must come together and take action to ensure our children's safety. I urge you to prioritize this issue and take immediate action to implement these solutions. Our children are our future, and we must do everything in our power to protect them. Your commitment to collaboration, transparency, and accountability will undoubtedly result in positive change. As parents and advocates, we stand ready to support these efforts for the well-being of our children.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Letisha Vinson

letishavinson@gmail.com

781-964-1311

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

ERN Education Reform Champion

KIPP DC Parent Advisory Board

Leaders of Color Alumni and Civic Leader