

Simone Scott
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 Simone Scott. I am a Ward 7 resident and I serve as a PAVE Citywide and Ward 7 PLE Board member. I am also a parent of two young kids. My son attends Digital Pioneers Academy and my daughter attends I Dream.

I want to start by thanking each of you for being here today. I will keep my testimony brief and straightforward. I am here to talk about WMATA, MPD, and Safe Passage Workers and how I believe they can all play an integral part in our communities. One of PAVE's parent priorities this year is Safe Passage. I feel that WMATA, WMATA PD, MPD, and Safe Passage Workers can help with the safe passage of students when they are commuting to and from school in many ways, one of which is by WMATA creating a student-only metro car for students to utilize when commuting to school with WMATA PD, MPD, and Safe Passage Workers present to intervene if and when necessary. The other way is for MPD to engage more with the community and build relationships with students and families.

Students in Ward 7, where I live, Ward 8, and more are traveling so far to get to school, often two miles or more. When traveling, students are sometimes engaging in activities they shouldn't and are hanging out in their neighborhoods rather than getting to school. If WMATA had student-only metro cars, equipped with WMATA PD, MPD, and Safe Passage Workers, they could help direct students to the places they need to be.

Other than WMATA PD, MPD, and Safe Passage Workers becoming more of a presence on popular routes for students and student-only metro cars, they should also be encouraged to familiarize themselves with the communities and students they are serving and receive training on youth-focused interventions. All law enforcement in DC knowing how to de-escalate students when problems arise could be a huge preventative measure in making sure students are safe during their commute to school and back. Though it is, of course, important and necessary for WMATA PD and MPD specifically to be trained in responding to youth in crisis, it is also reasonable for them to have training on restorative practices and general youth development. Law enforcement and WMATA transit police need to focus on showing students



that they don't need to be feared and that they are there to help people feel safe at all times, not just during a crisis.

I urge WMATA to create student-only metro cars and student-friendly bus routes and for WMATA PD, MPD, and the leaders of our city to reimagine what Safe Passage Workers, WMATA PD, and MPD's presence look like on routes students frequently travel. We must keep students at the center of discussions around safety and expand training on youth-focused interventions, then we can begin to develop meaningful solutions and strong connections that benefit us all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Simone Scott

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