

**Tyesha Andrews**  
**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 Tyesha Andrews and I am a Ward 8 resident. I am also a parent and my children currently attend Plummer Elementary and Jefferson.

Thank you all for being here today and holding this hearing. As a parent and resident of the District of Columbia, I have a lot of experience helping my family navigate the various modes of transportation in the city.

First, I have some data that I feel is important for those on this Council and at the Department of For-Hire Vehicles to know about the experience of parents getting their kids to and from school.

- In recent surveys, it was found that children living in Wards 5, 7, and 8 are often traveling over two miles to get to school and some are traveling over three miles.
- Though 50% of all students in DC live in Wards 7 and 8, they are the ones traveling further than any other ward, besides Ward 5, to get to and from school each day.
- During their travels, our youth are being targeted and enduring or witnessing violence. This often increases with distance to school, as many students travel across wards and even across the city to get to and from school. We must do a better job at protecting all of our children because they are our future.

As a parent, I have many concerns about getting my children to school safely. Just last year, my son was on his way to McKinley, where he attended school at the time, and had an incident happen to him on his way home from school while on a WMATA train. My son was jumped by other kids after getting off the platform at the Waterfront metro station. There was no trained adult, no WMATA PD, no MPD around to help him, and the only people present to intervene were his peers. When I filed a report to his school, nothing was done and the children who jumped my child were not held accountable. Our kids need to be safe traveling to and from school AND they need to get to school efficiently. Teenagers now are having a much different experience getting to school than what I received growing up. I didn't witness all of the violence that my children are. Times have changed and we as leaders of this city must create systems and



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put structures in place to help our kids, especially when they are doing something as simple as going to school or home.

I am not alone in these concerns, PAVE parent leaders have worked with schools, community organizations, and even agency staff to come up with specific solutions to address this issue. I am asking for an increase in the DC School Connect routes during school arrival and dismissal, prioritizing those with the greatest need. More routes will increase access and those that can utilize it will have safer and more efficient commutes to school. I am also asking WMATA to create a student-only metro car with WMATA PD, Safe Passage Workers, or MPD present to intervene if and when necessary. I would also advise that WMATA PD and Safe Passage Workers obtain the proper training to deal with youth, including youth development and de-escalation training. Overall, we need more eyes on the ground during pick-up and drop-off hours. This will help ensure that our young residents can get to school safely and efficiently.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tyesha Andrews

Citywide and Ward 8 PLE Board Member, PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education)