

**Quiana Lamons**  
**Committee of the Whole**  
**Deputy Mayor for Education, Office of the State Superintendent of Education,**  
**and District of Columbia Public Schools Hearing**  
**Wednesday, February 28th, 2024**

Greetings Chairman Mendelson, Committee of the Whole members, and Committee staff. My name is Quiana Lamons. I'm a PAVE Parent Leader and I live in Ward 7. My children attend DC Public schools.

I want to thank you all for being here today and for your continued leadership in this city. Today, I am here to testify on the need for specialized school programs and safe transportation of students to and from school.

Students without and with special needs like my sons, in every Ward should have access to specialized school programming that provides a variety of learning opportunities that meet their needs and interests. Specialized school programs are programs like Arts Integration, Dual Language, Career and Technical Education, STEM programs, and many more that provide unique learning opportunities that center on different topics and learning styles. These programs are good for all students and should be available to all students, regardless of where they live.

Before I get any further, I think it's important to ground ourselves in some relevant data. Nearly 50% of all DC students attend school outside of their Ward of residence, including my own child. Additionally, students living in Wards 5, 7, and 8 travel further to get to school and often travel over two miles, so they can access specialized school programs and schools with high-quality learning curriculum and styles. Not only are there not enough seats for all children in all Wards to access specialized school programs but there also aren't safe transportation passages available for them, creating a whole other problem.

I would like to work with you all to ensure that each student not only has access to a specialized school program but that they can get to that program safely and efficiently. Public transportation does not meet the needs, understand the conditions, or have the services that all children, especially special needs children, require and we as parents would like to have a safe passageway for our children.

This matters to me because our children should have an equal opportunity to grow and learn and have all of their physical and mental skill sets sharpened and utilized to provide them a chance to succeed in life.



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We want to ensure that every family has access to a high-quality specialized school program for their children that supports their individual needs where they can explore their passions and enrich their learning - regardless of level or where they live and that they have a safe way to get there.

To make this vision a reality, I would like to see you prioritize PAVE parents' requests and concerns, especially for students with disabilities.

Thank you so much for your time and partnership.

Sincerely,,

Quiana Lamons, Ward 7 PAVE Parent Leader