

Sherice Muhammad
Committee of the Whole
Deputy Mayor for Education, Office of the State Superintendent of Education,
and District of Columbia Public Schools Budget Hearing
Thursday, April 4th, 2024

Hello, Chairman Mendelson and the Committee of the Whole. I am Sherice Muhammad, a Ward 7 resident, parent of an alum of McKinley Technology HS and former three-term LSAT Chair, serving the community as a PAVE Ward 7 PLE Board member. Currently, I have a niece who attends Duke Ellington School of the Arts, my alma mater.

My testimony this afternoon focuses on Safe Passage, a contributing factor when considering the high levels of truancy and absenteeism in the school system. The Committee of the Whole is well aware when students and families aren't safe to travel to school, they opt to remain home, missing out on pertinent instruction. After initial review of the FY 2025 Budget, I'm pleased to see the proposed allocation of \$9.7M for Safe Passage. It is my hope that funding will continue to support and expand coverage through roving teams in neighborhoods experiencing increases in crime.

As community members, we will continue to coordinate with our ANCs and MPD Commanders to track safe passage for our children traveling to and from school as well as monitor the data to work more cohesively and drive fiscal responsibility of utilization of those funds.

Lastly, I have a budget-friendly request that the Office of the DME/OSSE/DCPS should regularly collect, aggregate and release data and other pertinent information on safe passage program effectiveness and usage. I would also venture to request the same diligence and transparency when releasing data and pertinent information to the public. As a former Local School Advisory Team (or LSAT) Chair at McKinley Technology High School, under the Open Meetings Act, we were transparent with the content of our meetings and diligently uploaded the minutes to every meeting on the school website. It is imperative that DCPS encourages this same transparency among all LSATs throughout the school system.

Thank you all for holding this hearing. I welcome any questions you may have.



Sincerely,
Sherice Muhammad
Ward 7 PLE Board Member, PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education)