

Quiana Lamons
Committee of the Judiciary and Public Safety
Metropolitan Police Department
Tuesday, April 9th, 2024

Hello, Councilmember Pinto and DC Council staff. My name is Quiana Lamons. I'm a PAVE Parent Leader and I live in Ward 7. All my children attend DC Public schools.

Thank you all for being here today and for listening to the voices and experiences of DC residents like myself. I am here today to speak about the safety of children as they travel to and from school each day. This should be on the minds of all the leaders in our city, including officers of the Metropolitan Police Department. I feel I am uniquely qualified to speak about this topic given my background and long withstanding experiences of living and traveling within the District. I was an OSSE bus driver for students with disabilities for 16 years from 2007-2023. I was rewarded with the relationships I built with the students and seeing them grow up from babies to having babies of their own. Today, I want to focus on MPD and how they can play a big role in getting our students to and from school safely. From being a OSSE bus driver and a PAVE Parent Leader in the District for many years, I feel that I have unique insight on the safe passage for traveling students that need to be heard and how MPD can help make students safer.

Before I get any further, I want to say that I support the \$7.2 million to maintain the DC School Connect program and the \$6.5 million increase for the OSSE special education transportation program outlined in the Mayor's Budget. I also fully support the \$8.7 million set aside to create 40 new community safety officers and fund new civilian positions within MPD to free up sworn officers for more critical tasks. A well-informed and highly trained MPD presence along student's school routes is crucial in making sure they are getting to school safely. However, even with these increases, they do not guarantee students in Wards 7 and 8 will have a safe mode of transportation to and from school. I urge the Council and MPD to use this funding to work together to increase seats and access to safe passage all over the city, especially for students with special needs.

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. Along with the funding for the DC School Connect and OSSE special education bus programs which I fully support, I and other PAVE parents would like to see



MPD, PCSB, DCPS, safe passage workers, and WMATA PD convene regularly both at the city level and hyper local to discuss and make plans for the safe passage of students. Many people in the safe passage collective do not know each other and that has to change if we are to make the city safer for our kids to travel in.

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 Member, PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education)