

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

Hello, Councilmember Pinto and DC Council staff. My name is Tyesha Andrews. I am a Ward 8 resident and I serve as a PAVE Citywide and Ward 8 PLE Board member. 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 with the Metropolitan Police Department. However, I do also recognize that different people in our city have different experiences. Today I am here to urge you to put yourselves in my shoes and in the shoes of many other parents in DC like myself, who live in places where our local schools aren't what is best for our children and we are forced to send them to school miles away from home. Parents like me are the majority of parents in DC. We need your support to protect all of our children.

First, I want to say that I agree and support Mayor Bowser for setting aside \$7.2 million to maintain the DC School Connect program and the \$6.5 million increase for the OSSE special education transportation program. 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. I hope that the officers that are freed up to focus on more critical tasks include placing officers along all routes students are taking between home and school because, 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 school. We must do a better job at protecting all of our children because they are our future.

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 MPD to be present at train stations, station platforms, and along popular routes that students take while commuting to school each day. However, I do not just want MPD to be present, I also want them to be well-trained in dealing with youth, which brings me to my second solution. I believe that MPD should expand training on youth-focused interventions to



all MPD officers who will be engaging with students. Those youth-focused interventions can include de-escalation training, restorative practice training, and responding to youth in crisis.

MPD is not alone in this work, so I am also asking city leaders to work together to create a student-only metro car for students to travel to school with Safe Passage Workers, MPD, and/or WMATA PD present to intervene if and when necessary. Overall, we need more eyes on the ground during pick-up and drop-off hours. This will make our students safer and help ensure that they can get to school safely and efficiently.

Again, I repeat that we must collaborate and develop solutions to make this great city better for ALL our children. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to the solutions you develop and am available for questions.

Sincerely,

Tyesha Andrews

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