

Takiyah Worthy
Committee of Public Works and Operations
Department of For-Hire Vehicles Hearing
Wednesday, April 24th, 2024

Greetings Councilmember Nadeau and DC Council staff. My name is Takiyah Worthy. I am a Ward 7 resident and I serve as a PAVE PLE member. I am also a proud mother of a ten-year-old son who attends Anne Beers Elementary School.

Thank you all for being here today and holding this hearing. I am here today as a parent and longtime Washingtonian to urge the Department of For-Hire Vehicles to:

- 1) Regularly aggregate and release public data on DC School Connect program effectiveness and usage and,
- 2) Increase the amount of DC School Connect routes to transport more students across Wards, prioritizing those with the greatest need

As the adults and leaders of this city, it is our job to make sure that kids have a safe and reliable way to get to and from school. It is also our job to ensure that all our kids are getting to school on time so they can maximize their learning time. Students in the District deserve a more consistent and reliable expanse of transportation options and the Department can go a long way in making that happen. While student transportation programs do exist in DC, there are issues with timeliness, access, and accountability. All student transportation options, including DC School Connect, need to have more accountability and expand the programs and contracts currently offered to other organizations that will do the best job at picking kids up and getting them to school on time.

I know from experience the extreme stress of having to do school drop-offs for my child, and I am not alone in this as it is a regular theme for many parents in DC. There simply aren't enough trusted and dependable options available. My son yearns for more independence and would love to utilize a transportation option, other than myself. He got a small taste traveling to and from soccer games after school w/ DC Scores. Unfortunately, our options for comparably safe, reliable and accessible transportation to and from school are not ones I trust enough to allow my son to utilize.



DC School Connect can be a wonderful program for students as it already has made a difference, but only for a very small amount of families. I've seen DC School Connect pick up children from Stokes, where my son used to go, and students loved it. Unfortunately, the school my son now attends doesn't offer a DC School Connect program. When I'm thinking about middle school options, I would want a trusted source where he could be picked up and transported across town due to the limited options where we live. It would be extremely challenging for my family to get him to where he needs to go for school and school activities which can lead to truancy issues, such as chronic tardiness. I once again urge the Department to utilize funds in the budget to expand access and increase seats to the DC School Connect programs and to release data on program usage and effectiveness.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to future collaboration and am available for questions.

Sincerely,

Takiyah Worthy

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