

Quiana Lamons
Committee of Transportation and the Environment
District Department of Transportation
Tuesday, April 30th, 2024

Hello, Councilmember Allen and DC Council staff. My name is Quiana Lamons. I am a PAVE Parent Leader and resident of Ward 7.

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, especially during this budget season. 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. 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 the Department of Transportation and how it can play a big role in getting our students to and from school safely, just as I did. From being an OSSE bus driver and a PAVE Parent Leader in the District for many years, I feel that I have unique insight into the safe passage of traveling students and how these entities can help make students safer.

I am here to ask the Department to find funds in the budget that will go directly to increasing the recruitment and retention of school crossing guards and to ensure they are being paid a livable wage and treated well. I also ask the Department to prioritize areas with the highest needs because the students in those areas need the most assistance and protection to get to school safely. Students need to have more adults around who have their safety and best interests at heart so that their parents do not have to worry about whether or not their child made it to school in one piece.

School crossing guards are but one piece of the system. I also believe there should be WMATA youth-only metro cars with supervision from Safe Passage Workers and PD on the cars and around the train stations, platforms, and bus stops. There should also be WMATA student-focused bus routes that take children from their neighborhoods to school during dismissal and arrival times with WMATA PD spread out on those routes to make sure students are making it to their school safely.



I know and am speaking from experience as a former bus driver just how helpful having a second set of eyes on students while on my route was and I think it should be the norm for all kids. Regardless of how a child gets to school, there should be trained adults, like school crossing guards, along the way who are there to keep our kids safe.

To conclude, it is important for children to feel safe when commuting to school and that parents feel good sending their children to school. Students can only get their education and be great DC citizens if they have safe routes to travel on. Please work together, consider these asks, and help make safe passage a reality for all of our children. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Quiana Lamons

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