

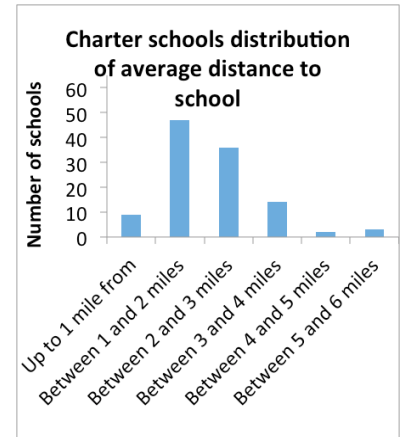
SAFE PASSAGE IN DC PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

Why are Safe Passages Important?

Guaranteeing the safe passage of our students as they travel to and from school is of the greatest importance to us all. DC is a large city, and many public charter school students are forced to travel long distances and rely on multiple forms of transportation to get to and from school. Furthermore, District parents are concerned about incidents of bullying and harassment that are happening far too often while students are walking or taking public transportation to and from school.

How Do Charter Schools Implement Safe Passages?

Metropolitan police officers serve as School Resource Officers (SROs) in 34 DCPS schools and 26 DC public charter schools. SROs do not replace contracted security guards, but are instead specialized police officers with experience working with youth. These SROs coordinate safe passage programs, build mentoring relationships with students to guide them away from engaging in risky behaviors, keep administrators informed about potential conflicts or criminal activity amongst students, and provide mediation as needed.



What is the Safe Passage Policy in DC?

In 2016, the office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) alongside the office of the Deputy Mayor of Public Safety and Justice (DMPSJ) created a School Safety and Safe Passage Working Group to enhance safety-related policies that affect both charter and DCPS schools, including safe passage initiatives. This working group represents a cross-section of community stakeholders, including PAVE. To date, the working group has:

1. analyzed existing DC safe passage programs;
2. reviewed safe passage best practices from across the nation;
3. surveyed students, parents, and schools on issues of safe passage; and
4. published a Safe Passage Resource Toolkit.



Spotlight on Richard Wright PCS
 Richard Wright Public Charter School for Journalism and Media Arts has led a Safe Passage Program in its school since it opened in 2011. The program calls upon staff, parents, and community volunteers to escort students to and from metro and bus stops every day. Richard Wright has expanded this program to a citywide Man the Block Safe Passage Initiative. On May 16, 2016, several city government agencies, civic organizations, community volunteers, and even the U.S. Marines came together to escort students from over 20 public charter schools to their modes of transportation. Founder and CEO Marco Clark plans to continue the program over the coming years.

How do we Make Our Passages Safer?

- Parents across the city are still concerned about how their children are getting to and from school each day.
- Parents need to be included in conversations and develop policy solutions to determine what actions city council, the Mayor, and other agencies can take to ensure easy, safe, and low-cost travel options for students and families.

How Much Does Safe Passages Cost?

- While students can take transportation at no cost, some parents with children who are not old enough to travel independently must still accompany their children to and from school.
- With rising transit fees and public transportation delays, assuring children arrive safely to their school building can be costly and/or disrupt the schedules of parents who need to get to work in the morning.

Get Involved

Stay Informed

- Learn more about Richard Wright PCS's Safe Passage Program by visiting their website, mantheblock.org.
- Follow the social media campaign for Safe Passage on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram using #DCSafeRoutes.
- Review OSSE's Safe Passage Working Group website, sboe.dc.gov/page/safe-passage.

Participate

- Volunteer for "Man the Block" by calling directly at (202) 388-1011.
- Take the Safe Passage Community Collaboration Working Group survey conducted by the Office of the Student Advocate on their website, sboe.dc.gov/page/safe-passage.

Become Empowered

- Email PAVE's Director of Community Engagement and Organizing, Raven Willoughby, raven.willoughby@dcpave.org, to see how you can organize parents at your PCS to improve safe passages to and from your school.