

RESOLUTION # 7E-22-020
Recommendations Related to Public Safety in our Schools

WHEREAS, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs) were created to “advise the Council of the District of Columbia, the Mayor, and each executive agency with respect to all proposed matters of District government policy,” including economic development;

WHEREAS, the government of the District of Columbia by law under DC Code § 1–309.10 is required to give “great weight” to comments from ANCs;

WHEREAS, public safety guarantees people’s wellbeing and safeguards them from crime, disaster, and other threats;

WHEREAS, government agencies and institutions should be held accountable and responsible for treating public safety as a human right to all, regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, age, or disability;

WHEREAS, members of the D.C. community, including youth, have been exposed to high levels of physical violence, which has caused an increase of concern for their public safety;

WHEREAS, the Vice President and Ward 7 Representative of the D.C. State Board of Education, Eboni-Rose Thompson, raised her concerns related to public safety at the September 7 Working Session, advocating for increased and immediate protection of her constituents and all residents in D.C.;

WHEREAS, there are multiple initiatives to prevent and interrupt community violence, such as Cure the Streets, Safe Passage, and Peace for DC; however, there seems to be little communication or coordination between these efforts;

WHEREAS, the State Board held a panel on the topic of public safety at its October 19 Public Meeting to discuss ongoing instances of violence occurring in D.C., specifically discussing the effects that violence has on youth and hearing directly from representatives of the Office of the Student Advocate, Office of the Attorney General, Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, Growing Up!, and PENDMV;

WHEREAS, the panelists illuminated the varying levels of work happening in the District at the government-, school-, community-, and student-level, the need for safe and consistent funding streams to support public safety work, and the necessity and importance of maintaining active engagement with schools and communities;

WHEREAS, the State Board held a debrief on the panel at its November 2 Working Session and discussed the importance of interagency coordination as it relates to incident reports and student safety; and

WHEREAS, at the November 2 Working Session, the Office of Student Advocate presented its 2022 Annual Report and noted that about 13 percent of their requests for assistance were related to student safety.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Advisory Neighborhood Commission 7E recommends the District’s immediate adoption of recommendations made by the Office of the Student Advocate:

- Increase funding for the Safe Passage Safe Blocks (SPSB) Initiative,
- Transition from school resource officers (SRO) to Safety Advocates¹,
- Provide funding for a restorative justice coordinator in every DC Public School (DCPS) and public charter school, and
- Adapt existing street harassment trainings for students in grades 6–12;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 7E recommends that the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) and other relevant agencies take the following actions related to the public safety of all D.C. communities:

- Ensure Safe Passage workers receive training in violence interrupter best practices,
- Develop standardized communication and coordination plans between all Safe Passage workers, school leaders, and other institutions responsible for the safety of students,
- Ensure student voice in the decision-making process and support youth-led social media campaigns that speak to student safety,
- Provide mental health supports for students after instances of violence,
- Ensure adequate and equitable funding for social emotional/mental health support resources and programming in every DCPS and public charter school to create safe-learning environments,
- Ensure each school hires at least one full-time alternative staff person—trained in best practices like restorative justice and mediation,
- Create a campaign, similar to the Every Day Counts! Taskforce (EDC), that puts together a Safety Advocacy Team—heavily informed by youth and student voice—to study, campaign for, and ensure data-driven strategies for elementary, middle, and high school levels to reduce youth violence, empower youth to be role models, and ensure the safety of students and communities,
- Develop professional learning opportunities for school staff in violence interruption and conflict resolution, and
- Develop standards for success within Safe Passage training;

Delia Houseal

Delia Houseal, ANC 7E06
Chair