

PGCPS Parent Leaders: Our Kids Can't Wait for Safe Routes to School

As parent leaders within PGCPS, we all mourn the tragedy that occurred on November 20, 2023 at Riverdale Elementary. We are heartbroken for the two students whose lives were lost, their families, and the entire Riverdale community.

This tragedy was preventable and should never have happened. Parent leaders have spent years warning county officials about the dangers of unfilled crossing guard positions and a lack of pedestrian safety around our schools. We are tired of excuses, and this tragedy in Riverdale proves our kids can't wait.

Doing everything possible to protect the safety of our students, teachers and staff is not a choice. It is the core responsibility of every leader in Prince George's County. This failure of leadership must never happen again.

- We call on the Prince George's Police Department (PGPD) to take immediate action and fill all vacant crossing guard positions by January 1, 2024 or sooner. If more funding is required in order to offer the increased competitive pay and benefits needed to successfully fill these positions, we urge county officials to provide it.
- **If PGPD *cannot* do this, we call on them to immediately coordinate with local governments and PGCPS to provide unspent funds so municipalities and PGCPS can recruit, hire and pay their own crossing guards on an emergency basis.** Every school community is unique and specific needs may vary, but this crisis is universal: these positions must be filled now. This would allow the county and PGCPS to assign crossing guards to schools in unincorporated areas, while allowing local municipalities to fill guard positions with residents from and most invested in their own communities. Provide grants to local governments, draft MOUs, work out some other arrangement - but get the job done.
- Finally, we call on local, county and state leaders to explore and urgently act upon any additional ways to ensure safer routes to and from school. From infrastructure investments like crosswalks and traffic calming to increased funding for traffic enforcement around our schools to allowing municipalities the flexibility to implement deterrents like stop sign cameras, all options must be on the table to protect our children and keep our school zones safe.

No more excuses. No turf wars or passing blame between various departments or levels of government.

Every child has the right to get to and from school safely – and our kids can't wait.

-Mount Rainier Elementary School PTO
-Thomas S. Stone Elementary School PTO Executive Board
-Hyattsville Elementary School PTA
-UPES PTA Board
-César Chávez Dual Spanish Immersion School PTO Executive Board
-Hyattsville Middle School PTSO
-Glenarden Woods Elementary School PTA Executive Board
-Buck Lodge Middle School PTO
-Cherokee Lane Elementary School PTO
-Greenbelt Elementary School PTA Board
-Eleanor Roosevelt High School PTSA