

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the City Council Committee on Education to hold public hearings to examine the progress of the school safe corridor program, to understand its effect on violence reduction.

WHEREAS, The School District of Philadelphia's Office of School Safety launched their "Safe Paths" program to ensure student safety on their way to school. This program functions similar to a town watch where volunteers provide extra supervision for students traveling to and from their classes. These individuals patrol the areas around schools at the beginning or end of the day, or they can watch from their homes and businesses to report any unsafe or suspicious activities they observe; and

WHEREAS, The goal of the safe school corridor program is to make the areas around our schools safer for children, but unfortunately, schools are still facing issues. Roxborough High School suffered the death of a member of their football team in September of 2022, students have been shot on their way to school in the morning, and many schools in divested communities deal with the threat blight brings to their buildings; and

WHEREAS, According to the School District's website, every District school has a "Safe Paths" program in place. It is essential to understand the effect that this has on each neighborhood school. For example, if there is a particular branch that has seen success in violence reduction, how are their practices being replicated at other schools? In addition, for programs that have been unsuccessful in curbing threats in their school, what is being done to strengthen these programs to ensure their success; and

WHEREAS, In order for students that attend District schools to succeed, they must feel safe in their classrooms. If our students feel safe, they will be more likely to attend and be engaged in class. If a student is worried about being shot, avoiding a specific corner because of illegal activities, or stepping over blight, they will not be as engaged and therefore not be as successful in their educational pursuits; and

WHEREAS, It is essential to know how the District manages these programs, recruit's volunteers, oversees implementation, and examines their benefits. This Council body must understand how the School District manages these groups and oversees their success to make plans for school safety in the future; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes the City Council Committee on Education to hold public hearings to examine the progress and efficacy of the school safe corridor program, to understand its effect on violence reduction.