



# OFFICE OF THE STUDENT ADVOCATE

Office of the Student Advocate supports students, parents, and families in their advocacy through parent education, one-on-one coaching, resource supports, and trainings in order to amplify the voices of families and communities in processes and decision-making; to provide avenues for access to resources and understanding systems; and to support power families and communities already possess.



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# Student Safety Data Over Time



# What is Student Safety?

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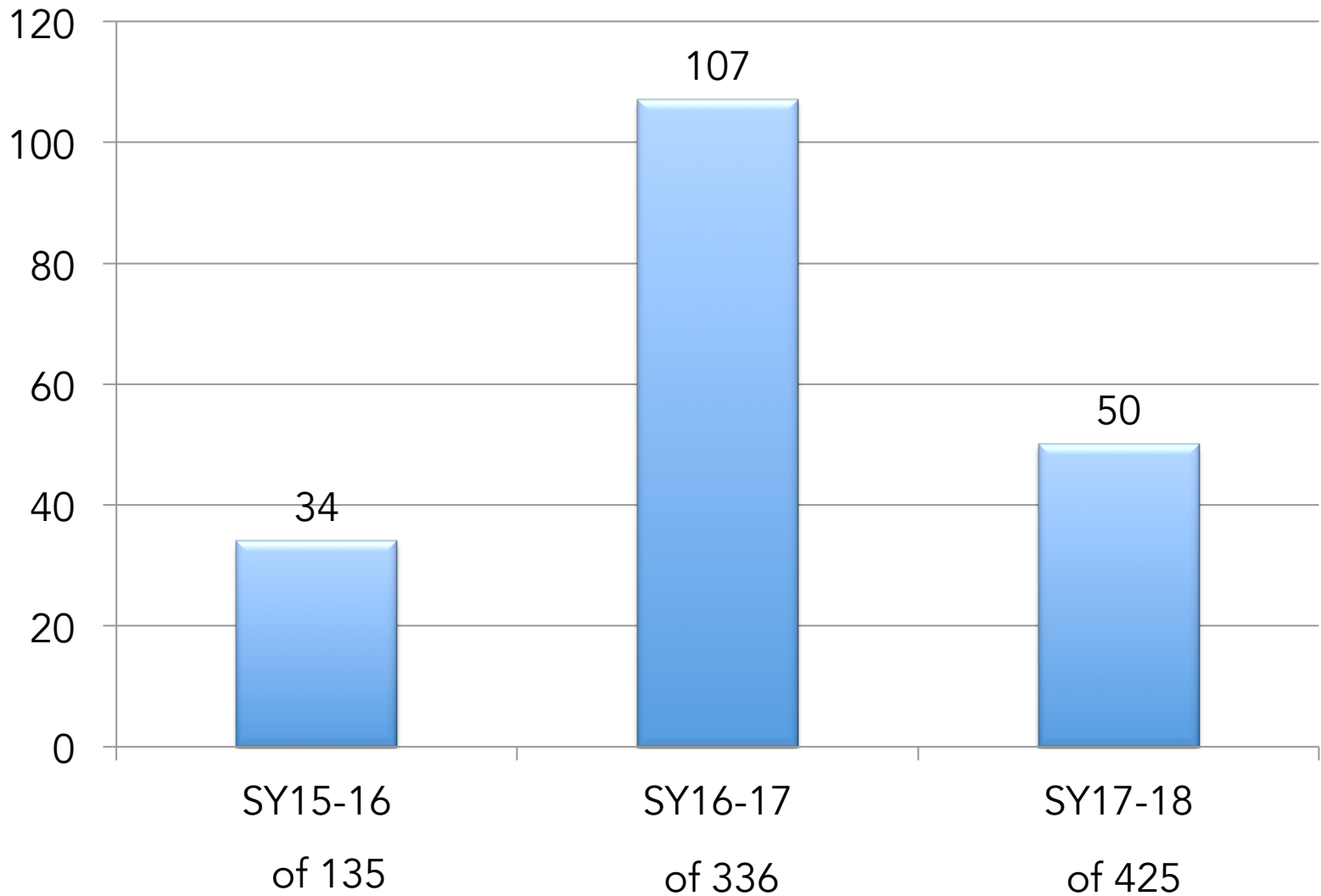
We define student safety as any issue or question regarding student environment, student wellbeing, safe passage, supervision, and facilities maintenance.

*Safe passage refers to a student's journey to school, their movement within school, and how they navigate their way home from school.*

Students' zone of safety should extend beyond the school's footprint.

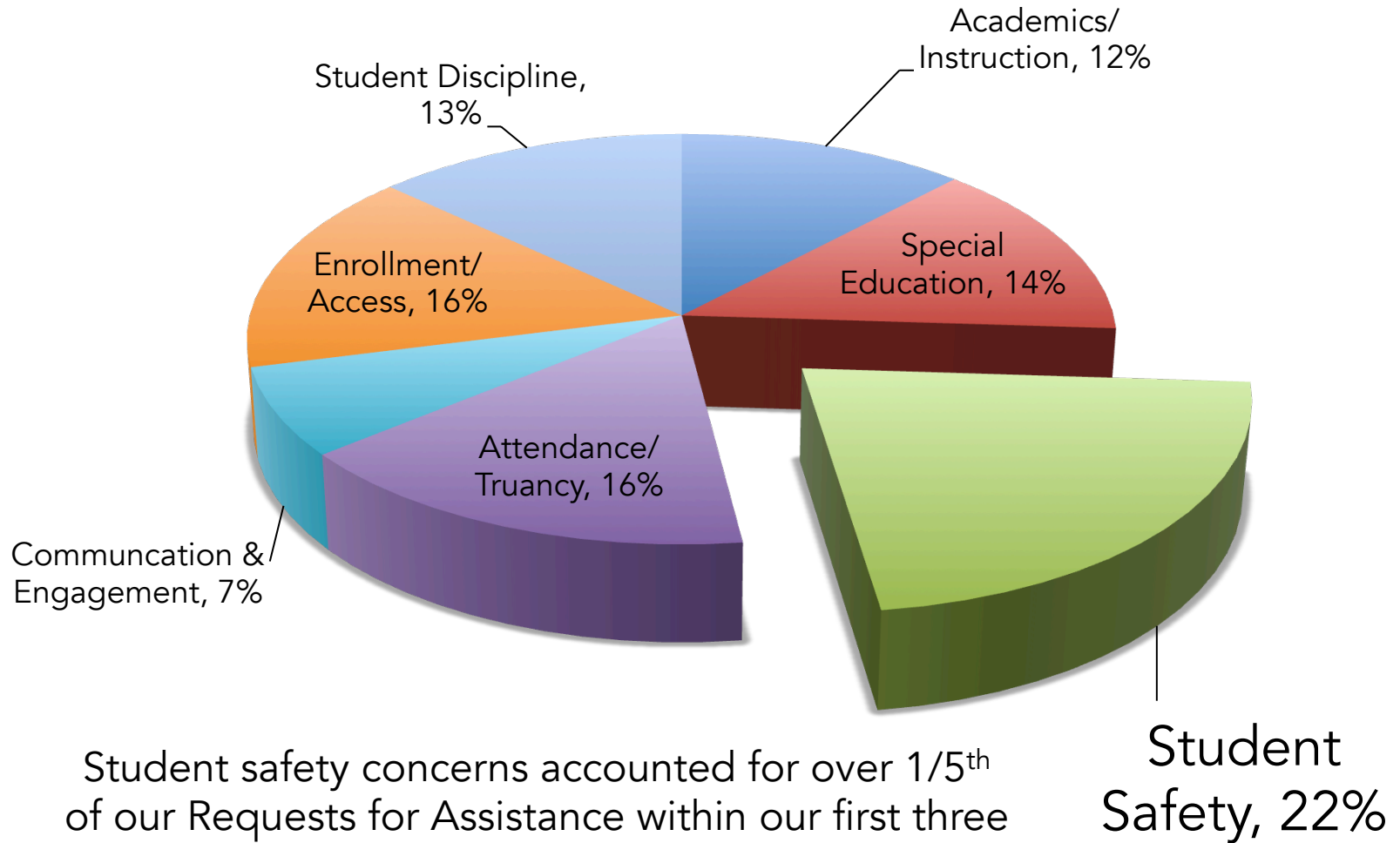
# Three Year Comparison of Student Safety & Safe Passage RFAs

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# Student Safety & Safe Passage RFAs

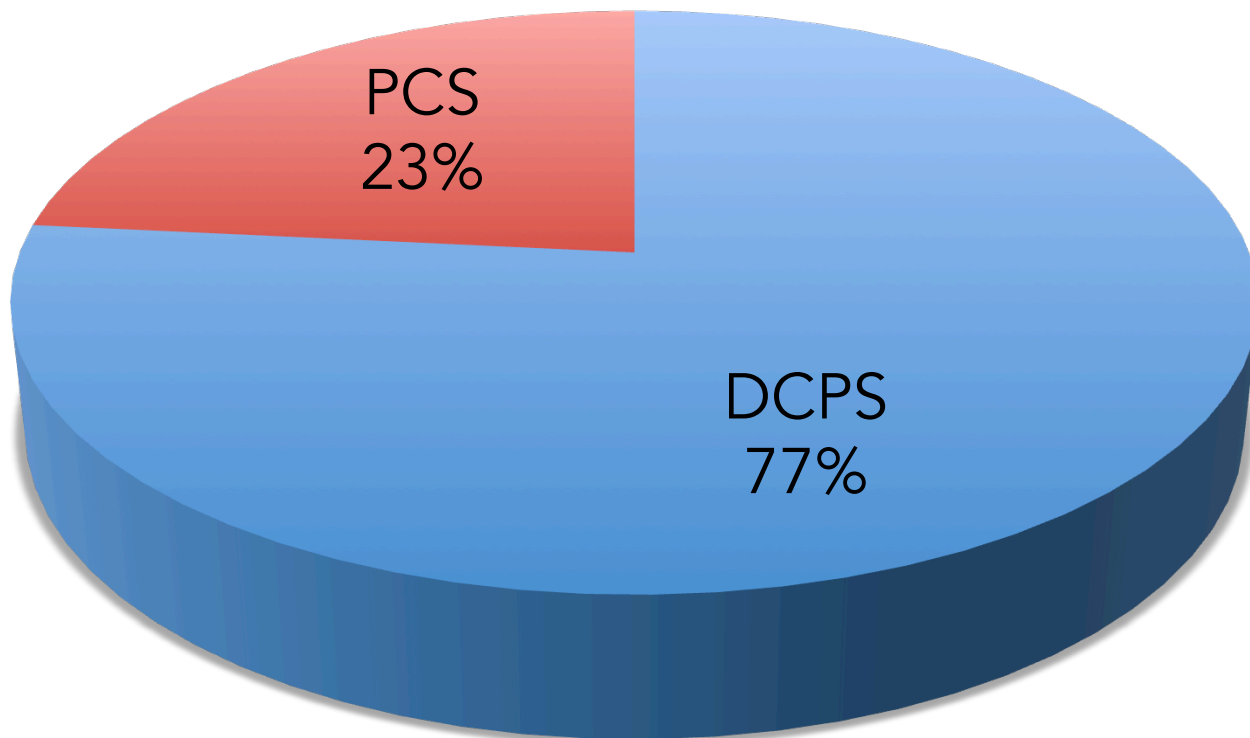
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Student safety concerns accounted for over 1/5<sup>th</sup> of our Requests for Assistance within our first three years of operation. While these are primary topic areas, there could be co-occurrences with other areas, like enrollment or student discipline.

# Student Safety & Safe Passage RFAs by Sector

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# A Closer Look: SY 17-18 Student Safety & Safe Passage RFAs

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## Examples of student safety RFAs we've received:

### Incidents of Violence

Guardian shared that their student was jumped by students from another school during dismissal. When presented the option to attend the neighborhood school, the guardian felt uncomfortable not knowing if the other students also attended the neighborhood school.

### Bullying

Parent shared that their student, placed at another school after a safety transfer, was now experiencing bullying at their new bus stops due to lack of school staff presence.

### Criminalized Conduct

Parent shared that their student was robbed at gunpoint by another student. Though granted a safety transfer, the student was offered placement in a STAY program though not overage or under credited.

### Transportation

Parent with three preschoolers who cannot get themselves to school shared that they are unable to walk the distance due to a medical condition.

**Most often, our office's resolutions involve coaching parents on engaging non-school based agencies such as OHR-Bullying, ONSE, DDOT, and MPD.**

# Our Entrance Into Safe Passage Work

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In 2015, Faith joined DME's school safety committee.

The committee was comprised of DC government representatives, LEA senior level leadership, and law enforcement. There was a void of student, parent, family, community, and school-level leadership

To be more inclusive of school-level leadership and community stakeholders, we created our Safe Passage Working Group at the end of SY 2015-16.



# Safe Passage Work

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In SY 2015-16, we established the  
**Safe Passage Community and Collaboration Working Group.**

The working group was comprised of government agencies, leaders of community-based organizations, and administrators within the public education governance structure. Members of the group included:

- Office of the Student Advocate
- Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education
- Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety & Justice
- Office of Family & Public Engagement (DCPS)
- Mayor's Office of Community Relations & Services
- DC Public Charter School Board
- Citywide Youth Bullying Prevention Program (Office of Human Rights)
- Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE)
- Man the Block (Richard Wright Public Charter School)
- Collaborative Solutions for Communities
- Department of Parks & Recreation's Roving Leaders
- OSSE's Division of Health & Wellness.

# Working Group Deliverables

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Our working group deliverables include:

- 1) Cross-Jurisdictional Review
- 2) Analysis of Existing DC Safe Passage Programs
- 3) Community Surveying
- 4) Safe Passage Resource Toolkit
- 5) Social Media Campaign to Support Safe Passage

# Working Group Deliverables

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## Community Surveying

We were able to organize safe passage community canvassing with the goal of capturing, sharing, and amplifying community voice.

- The school-facing survey focused on safe passage challenges, supports needed, and relevant contacts.
- Community surveys, dialogue-centered, took place in high-traffic areas, with questions about transportation and safety concerns and available safe routes.

# Working Group Deliverables

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## Safe Passage Toolkit

Our Safe Passage Resource Toolkit was designed to create and sustain the safe passage of our students and communities based on the “6 E’s” from National Safe Routes to School:

1. Education
2. Encouragement
3. Engineering
4. Enforcement
5. Evaluation
6. Equity

The toolkit is available on our website at [studentadvocate.dc.gov](http://studentadvocate.dc.gov) under *Information & Advocacy Resources and Tools*.



# Working Group Deliverables

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## Social Media Campaign

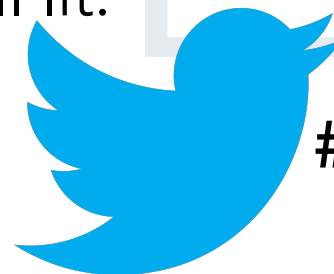
Our social media campaign supporting safe passage was used to engage all community members in supporting our students and establishing **#DCSafeRoutes** within our neighborhoods.

Messaging was centered on creating opportunities for community buy-in, including suggestions to support safe passage like trimming hedges and ensuring areas are well lit.



A screenshot of a Twitter profile for the DC Student Advocate. The profile picture shows a group of students in a classroom setting. The profile name is "DC Student Advocate" with the handle "@DC\_Advocate". The statistics are: 2,266 Tweets, 1,409 Following, and 1,503 Followers.

Tweets	Following	Followers
2,266	1,409	1,503



**#DCSafeRoutes**

# Current Initiatives Around Safe Passage

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In school year 2017-18, our working group was merged into the DME's safety committee in order to streamline the work and reduce duplication of efforts.

Throughout the summer and into the 2018-19 school year, we've been meeting with school leaders in hopes of facilitating school leader discussions to support safe passage efforts within communities.

In addition to these conversations, we are still sharing our other resource supports, including our Safe Passage toolkit, Education and Community Resource Guide, and Parent & Family Go-To Guide.

# Work That Needs To Be Done

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- Through our conversations with school leaders, there needs to be **greater school-level and community-level organization**.
- Our focus has been on a law enforcement model instead of a **community-driven model**, resulting in lack of community buy-in. More people aren't taking responsibility for safe passage because they don't know what their roles are and/or what they can be.
- **Broadening our safe passage efforts**, as they cannot solely be concentrated at metros and bus stops, is vital. While those are places where kids are, they are not the only places. There are areas for partnership with out-of-school-time providers, specifically those within the Learn24 Network.
- **Policy and legislation development** should be a result of school-level, community-level, and LEA-level convenings, along with the DCPL, DPR, DME, and DC Council.