

PPS recently finished some impressive work around rebooting their Safe Routes to School programming. I was excited to see the documents that came out of the committees and sessions; those involved should be proud.

However, when it comes to implementation, I have been very disappointed. For the last year-plus, I have been working on making my local elementary school easier to walk and bike to. There are 9 lanes of street access, all entirely devoted to cars. I have invested hundreds of hours building support and evidence for the required traffic changes, and there is a wide base of support for them.

As we were working with PPS and PBOT SRTS teams earlier this month to roll out those changes, the district stepped in to stop us cold. I was told categorically by a PPS Senior Director that "PPS will not support any action that limits driver access to school frontage" and "PPS will not support any action that removes any parking near a school." Spurious, and in some cases entirely fictional, reasons were given for this opposition. The school and district were unwilling to even run a pilot that would allow us to collect evidence so we could answer questions. It turns out that all of the grassroots effort, which I was told was so vital for any sort of change, became irrelevant at the whims of the administration.

Given that the danger on our school routes is due to the intense concentration of cars around our children during dropoff and pickup, it doesn't appear that PPS is in a position to execute on any Safe Routes changes, if the quotes above represent the stance of PPS directors. I ask the Board to work with PPS and PBOT Safe Routes members to develop a cohesive strategy that their principals and administrators are willing to implement, in support of existing PPS policies equity, climate, and safety.

Thank you,
Rob Galanakis
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Glencoe Bike Bus Leader
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Business owner