Dear (X),

All children deserve safe and equitable access to education. The Pittsburgh Public

Schools (PPS) have historically ensured that students have appropriate transportation to school – until now. This past week, PPS made the surprising and

distressing decision that they would not provide school buses to middle school

students who attend the Environmental Charter School (ECS).

As parents, we are deeply concerned for the safety of our children. In order to get to school and home each day, many of our students would need to take multiple buses and spend several hours of their day commuting through the city, in all weather and without any responsible adult supervision. Further, some students lack access to a bus stop anywhere near their home, nor is there a Port Authority bus stop in front of the school. Our children will no longer have the safety of crossing guards, and flashing lights telling drivers to stop. Similar proposals have previously been made for other PPS and parochial schools and were deemed unsafe. Why should it be any different for our children?

Moreover, consideration must be given to the issue of fair and equal access. Our school represents an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse slice of the community. By limiting children’s means of arriving at school, PPS is effectively limiting access to school choice for those of us without the means to arrange for alternative transportation or private tuition.

As tax-paying city residents with children who attend a PPS school, we have the same right to safe transportation as everyone else, and we pay dearly for the privilege. PPS made their decision without ever bringing us to the table or even informing our school this was a possibility. PPS offers no evidence it considered how this would affect the safety of hundreds of children who are in their charge. It is no more appropriate for our school than it would be for any other middle school in the city.

We urge you to help us begin a discussion involving parents, schools, PPS, and our elected representatives to reconsider their plan so that we may come up with a more appropriate path forward and one that puts children’s safety as the top priority.

Sincerely,