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EDITORIAL

## PS 4 PTA to promote traffic safety

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ADVANCE SOUTH SHORE BUREAU

Parents at PS 4 have simmered down over a parking ticket blitz two weeks ago, and PTA officials have grudgingly promised to encourage parents to comply with traffic rules around the Arden Heights school.

But problems at the chaotic intersection of Arden Avenue and Nedra Lane will continue, they stressed, unless police, transportation and school officials make some changes.

At a meeting of the Community School Board's transportation committee yesterday, PTA officials reported that many parents have begun using a nearby supermarket parking lot to pick up and drop off students, as authorities suggested.

Answering chairman Jerry Cammarata's call for all-hands cooperation, the city Department of Transportation (DOT) promised to expedite the installation of new traffic signs; the Police Department will consider stationing an officer in the area and stepping up enforcement of illegal traffic on Nedra Lane; the Board of Education will explore creating an additional entrance to the school yard to enhance pedestrian safety; and the school will look into educating parents on discharging and picking up kids, perhaps even drawing up a "contract for safety."

"Parental behavior modification is going to be primary here," Cammarata emphasized.

The tone of the hour-long discussion was decidedly more civil than the confrontational one of Feb. 26 and 27, when nine police officers dealt with incensed mothers while issuing tickets for double parking on Hampton Green, a cul-de-sac adjacent to the Nedra Lane school. Residents there have complained for years about parents clogging traffic and blocking driveways while discharging or picking up kids at a path leading to the school.

Since the blitz, which netted 42 summonses, parents and police report less double parking on Hampton Green. Some parents continue to frequent the quiet loop but are careful not to linger. Most parents, however, are using the King Kullen lot, although reluctantly.

"We did send a circular out to the parents and 75 percent said Hampton Green was a better (alternative) than King Kullen," said PTA vice president Elise Glazer. "Before the blitz, it was uncoordinated but I still feel it's the safest drop-off."

Assistant Principal Joyce Fonollosa noted that parking in the King Kullen lot "has created another unsafe situation that we have to address." She was referring to kids — with or without adults accompanying them — crossing Nedra Lane amid truck and bus traffic, or walking on the sidewalk in front of cars exiting the parking lot.

"A (driver) exiting the shopping center may see the 9-year-old, but not the 4-year-old," Ms. Fonollosa said.

Ms. Fonollosa and parents said a crossing guard or police officer is needed at the middle of the dead-end block to direct kids walking to and from the parking lot. Simply shifting a crossing guard who now stands at the entrance of Nedra Lane to the middle of the block will not work, however, because the guard currently prevents cars from making illegal turns onto Nedra.

If the guard is moved, then enforcement at the corner must be maintained by a police officer, they said.

Most officials agreed that parents should get out of their cars and take more active roles in ensuring their children's safety.

"The problem we have is not the flow of traffic or crossing guards," said Borough Traffic Engineer Joseph Albano. "It's with the parents, and not just at PS 4, but at all schools."

PTA president Janey Moran said she will urge parents to comply with traffic laws on Hampton Green and to walk their children down Nedra Lane.