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Teachers Unite Responds to NYC FY22 Budget Passed by Mayor Bill de Blasio and City Council:

Students, Families, and Educators Across New York Outraged by City Officials Decision to Fund Policing and Repression of BIPOC Youth Rather Than Invest in Their Futures

New York, NY - Yesterday, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and the City Council reached an agreement on the Fiscal Year 2022 city budget. A growing coalition of students, families, and educators came together over the past year to demand the city's elected officials invest in restorative, supportive, and safe schools. We are outraged and disappointed that city officials failed to heed our call and chose to invest in policing and repression rather than young people's futures. The \$98.7 Billion budget includes \$450 million for continued policing and repression of young people and fails to allocate much-needed funds to support schools' capacity for restorative justice and social and emotional supports that would ensure vibrant, creative, and nurturing environments for youth and community.

"Students across New York City public schools are beyond outraged that the City Council has chosen to invest in our harm and not our futures by voting against police-free schools in this year's budget despite repeated pleas from young people," said Alex, a student of Teachers Unite member Gabriella Mucilli at Bronx Academy for Software Engineering. "We will keep up the pressure on our elected officials to fund schools where we have what we need to learn and feel safe and cared for, without fearing police or being criminalized simply for showing up to school as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and young people of color."

"As parents and caregivers, we want what's best for our children," said parent Sister Eli from Al Madrasa Al Islamiya, Lower East Side resident, and member of Teachers Unite's Downtown Cohort who has her MSW from Fordham University. "My child attends a private school due to the lack of diversity and assistance from District 1 to get her IEP needs met in Kindergarten. Schools are supposed to provide a safe haven for our children, not instill fear in their hearts. That's why we've been calling for police out of New York City public schools, to ensure young people will be able to access safe, nurturing environments where they learn and grow. We know policing doesn't make schools safe, and in fact causes trauma and violence, while pushing many Black and Brown students out of our schools, robbing them of their futures. I fear for my child's emotional, physical, and spiritual wellbeing after seeing what an officer did to Elijah McClain. How can these school safety agents and community officers be entrusted with our most precious?"

For months, hundreds of students, families, and educators from Teachers Unite have demanded that the Mayor and City Council:

- End school policing and halt the harmful plan proposed by some members of the City Council to create a policing division in the city's Department of Education. We demand the city stop the hire of 554 new school police and instead direct that \$50 million to reinvest in young people and communities by hiring supportive school staff positions and funding restorative justice and social and emotional supports.
- Allocate funding for schools to hire community members into supportive school staff positions that care for students, make schools safe, strengthen community, and pay workers well. Positions include: Restorative Justice Coordinators, Paraprofessionals, Youth Advocates, Parent Coordinators, and Community Outreach Coordinators.
- Fully fund meaningful citywide restorative justice, starting with \$118.5 Million in FY22.
- Expand access to social and emotional supports for young people in schools, investing \$177 Million of the city's budget in FY22 to make this a reality.

Instead, the budget approved yesterday by the current Mayor and City Council will undermine racial and economic justice in our city and continue lawmakers' failed overreliance on policing Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and young people of color most harmed by the school-to-prison pipeline. The city's decision to double down on policing New York's young people contradicts a national call to defund police and the growing movement across the country to cancel police contracts with schools. Yet, New York's elected officials – including many running for office this year – claim progressive values when politically convenient.

We renew our call for the Mayor and City Council to stop the transfer of school police from the NYPD to the Department of Education, which will only lead to increased spending on school policing in a different department by another name. This is not the investment in young people's futures that students, families, and educators urgently call for. Meanwhile, the modest \$12 Million directed to restorative justice pales in comparison to the added \$200 Million for an already bloated \$5.4 Billion policing budget.

"This September will be my 8th year in the DOE. In that time I have seen more students placed in handcuffs than I have seen engaged in restorative circles," said Madeline Borrelli, middle school special education teacher and Teachers Unite member. "We refuse to let that be the legacy of New York City public schools. Alternatives to school policing exist but they require imagination, radical community care, and, ultimately, funding."

We commend City Council Members Inez Barron, Brad Lander, Antonio Reynoso, and Jimmy Van Bramer for standing up for young people and voting against policing and punishment.

Teachers Unite joins the widespread call by New York City's students to invest in young people and enact police-free schools. We're supporting young people and families to build community power to end the school-to-prison pipeline and mobilize investments in quality education that promote students' learning and well-being and take a restorative approach to conflict and harm.

Reinvesting resources in the city's students will also mean quality, restorative jobs especially for Black, Indigenous, and people of color in our communities while creating employment pathways for young people of color most harmed by policing and disinvestment. The supportive school staff positions that Teachers Unite and our partners demand funding for include restorative justice coordinators, paraprofessionals, youth advocates, community outreach coordinators, parent coordinators, and more.

Teachers Unite will continue to organize in partnership with students and families to ensure our vision of restorative, supportive, and safe schools becomes a reality.

Teachers Unite calls for police-free schools alongside students, families, and educators across New York City involved with Dignity in Schools Campaign - New York, Sistas & Brothas United, Urban Youth Collaborative, Parents Supporting Parents NY, Girls for Gender Equity, Teens Take Charge NYC, Alliance for Quality Education, Parent Action Committee, and more. [Teachers Unite](#) is an independent membership organization of public school educators in NYC collaborating with youth and parents to end the school-to-prison pipeline and transform public schools for safe, thriving communities.

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