

OUR SCHOOLS OUR FUTURES



DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS
NEW YORK



A FY24 BUDGET FOR SAFE & JUST NYC SCHOOLS

Dignity in Schools Campaign - New York (DSC-NY) is a coalition of NYC public school students, families, educators, and advocates organizing to ensure that every young person – regardless of which neighborhood they live in or school they attend – has access to safe and thriving school communities.

We call on NYC's elected officials to adopt a FY 2024 budget that shifts funding towards the resources and restorative practices that support every young person to learn and grow, and away from the police presence and culture that directly disrupts learning and violates the dignity and safety of students who are Black, Brown, immigrant, low-income, trans and gender non-conforming, and students with disabilities.

1. HIRE 1,000 NEW YORKERS TO STRENGTHEN SCHOOLS

When students arrive at school, they should be greeted by community members and teachers, not police. But for years, the NYPD and school police union have successfully pressured lawmakers to instead direct school funds into hiring and training school police. When politicians outsource school-based jobs to cops who harm Black and Brown students, and other marginalized young people, they eliminate opportunities for everyday New Yorkers to access jobs in schools where they can contribute positively to young people's lives and education.

We want accessible school-based jobs that support students, contribute to the safety of our school communities, and which hire Black and Brown community members and pay them well.

+ \$75 million directly to 500 high schools to hire school-based Restorative Justice Coordinators.

This funding should increase by an additional \$55 million each year for the next 3 years to have an RJ Coordinator in all public schools, ultimately a sustained annual expense of \$240 million.

+ \$75 million directly to schools to hire 500 community members into supportive positions based on need.

Positions should include Youth Advocates, Parent Coordinators, Paraprofessionals, Community Outreach Coordinators, Counselors, and Social Workers; and staff to greet students at the door and check-in visitors.

✗ Reject the Mayor's proposal to cut 1,180 jobs from NYC Public Schools.

In addition to creating 1,000 new school positions, the City must protect the pedagogical and civilian DOE positions that the Mayor plans to eliminate.

* All new positions must build safety for students and good lives for workers. Priority for these positions must be given to Black and Brown community members and recent NYC public high school graduates. These must be well paid union jobs in the DOE which are exempt from the typical barriers to entry such as an advanced degree. All positions must require training in and commitment to de-escalation and restorative justice; and hiring and training must be overseen by school communities (students, teachers, principals, and parents). These must not be NYPD or policing positions.

2.

FUND SCHOOL-BASED RESTORATIVE JUSTICE & SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELLBEING



NYC public schools should be safe, welcoming places for young people to grow and learn important concepts, including how to resolve conflict and navigate challenges. For decades, politicians have denied schools the resources they need to build restorative practices and culture, and have instead chosen to send police in to monitor and target young people. They have tied up restorative justice funding in centralized DOE programs that have been ineffective at delivering impact to schools, and to NYPD-led trainings that increase students' contact with the criminal legal system.

Commitment to and funding for a school-led restorative justice model will make schools safer for all students, reduce the role of police in schools, and provide opportunities for young people to develop lifelong skills to resolve disagreements, practice empathy, and take ownership.

\$10 million directly to schools to:

- + **Access ongoing restorative justice training** for all school staff, and make it available to the broader school community (e.g. students and families) (\$2.2 million). Include opportunities for educators and students to develop restorative justice curriculum at the school level (\$800,000). No money shall be used for training school cops.
- + **Fund restorative justice electives, clubs, and/or advisories**, including opportunities for students to obtain course credit (\$5 million).
- + **Sustain paid school-based opportunities and work-based learning internships for young people to lead restorative justice practices** and build skills that will set them up for the future (starting at \$2 million).

\$5 million in baseline funding for the Mental Health Continuum.

This would sustain the Mental Health Continuum, the first-ever cross-agency partnership (DOE, H&H, DOHMH) to help students with significant mental health needs access expedited mental health care in schools. At a time when we have a youth mental health crisis, this model is urgently needed so that students at each of the 50 pilot schools in South Bronx and Central Brooklyn do not lose access to critical mental health services.



Implementation of restorative justice must be overseen and inclusive of long-time restorative justice practitioners, students, educators, parents, and community groups. Restorative justice trainings should integrate an anti-racist, anti-ableist, queer-inclusive, and trauma-responsive approach that highlights restorative justice as an indigenous practice that has applications both in and out of contexts of harm. Funding must be allocated directly to school communities leading the way to ensure money is spent according to individual schools' needs. It should not go to the NYPD or to private contracts with nonprofits that have no relationship to those school communities.

3.

MOVE MONEY AWAY FROM POLICING

School is a place where young people should be free to feel safe, try new things, and learn. But punitive discipline and policing creates barriers to learning and violates the safety and wellbeing of students – particularly Black, Brown, and other marginalized young people, who are targeted most harshly by school police.

The hundreds of millions of dollars the City currently chooses to spend on the NYPD's school policing division should be redirected away from school cops and instead fund the resources, staff, and restorative practices that support every young person to learn and grow.

Redirect \$475 million from school policing to opportunities for young people:

- ✗ Disband the NYPD's School Policing Division (\$369.2 million).
- ✗ Eliminate the Youth Coordination Officer position (\$106.2 million), the rebranded name for the 462 uniformed officers that surveil young people and patrol school buildings.
- ✗ Cease the NYPD's active recruitment and training of school cops.

Reject the Mayor and NYPD's plan to hire 500 new school cops.

- + Funding proposed to hire school cops to fill vacancies (\$41.5 million) must be redirected to fill supportive staff positions detailed in Demand #1.

No NYPD-involved programming during or after school.

- + Redirect public funding for these police projects toward enriching school programs for students that do not involve police.

No funding for new or existing student surveillance and scanning equipment.

- ✗ Halt the Mayor's \$47.5 million "Enhancing Security Measures" plan that would install remote surveillance technologies in our schools.
- + This should be a first step toward the full elimination of metal detectors and student surveillance technologies by 2025.



The city must reject Mayor Adams' dangerous exploration of strategies that increasingly seek to hide policing infrastructure from sight — such as his proposal to replace metal detectors with "high-tech" scanning technology, and police uniforms with plain-clothes. Giving a makeover to scanning and school cops will not make them any less harmful to the Black and Brown students they target, but will only make that harm more insidious.

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