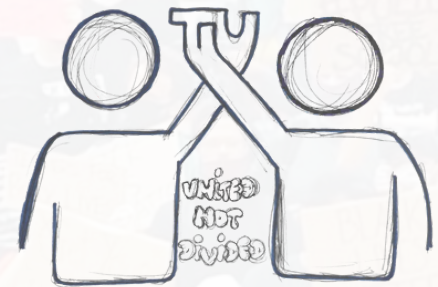


DEFENDING OUR WINS & BUILDING OUR FUTURE

Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report ▶

OUR MISSION

TEACHERS UNITE is a member-led organization of educators working alongside students and parents to end the school-to-prison pipeline, organize for racial and economic justice, and transform New York City public schools to meet the needs of young people.



**Artist
Credit**

mbathio m &
Ryan Clayton

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LETTER FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS

As we reflect on this past year, we are proud of what Teachers Unite (TU) has achieved and excited about where we're headed.

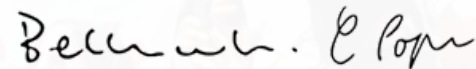
TU members and students have been creative, bold, and steady – they came together to push back against attacks on public schools, turned out to hearings, met with policymakers, and organized their schools. Members built power to move toward restorative, police-free schools by swapping organizing tactics and lessons, and by collaborating to create tools that will enable and grow school-site organizing for years to come.

While preparing this report in July 2023, TU has just wrapped up another contentious city budget advocacy cycle where, again, politicians have chosen to take public money away from schools, slash public sector jobs, and ramp up policing. In the face of this, we've been growing power around a unifying demand for just schools – a demand that can be heard at all corners of this city.


When last year began we had just moved into our roles as Co-Directors. We are thrilled to have since welcomed three new Board Members and completed year one of our strategic plan. Read on and you'll notice it was an ambitious year!

Through it all, TU is able to do this work because of the collective strength of our members, supporters, community, and the movement for education justice. Thank you all for your many gifts.

With Gratitude,



Bella Week



Charlotte Pope

LETTER FROM A MEMBER

This year I wrapped up my 9th year in the classroom, and it's the closest I've ever gotten to truly being the teacher I want to be. But I did not accomplish this on my own. As someone with an amazing paraprofessional, speech therapist, and a supportive admin team, I have the tools and flexibility that I need to not only center my students, but follow their lead. Together we flipped our curriculum upside down and followed their interests, we developed new routines that responded to their unique needs, and we had some of the most vulnerable and critical conversations that I've ever had in my teaching career.

Despite feeling successful and deeply connected in the classroom, as school chapter leader, I'm concerned with not only my own classroom, but our entire school community. Because of this, I've continued to grapple with questions about RJ on a larger scale. How can we reimagine and build sustainable RJ systems at the school level? How do we take care of each other when it gets hard, while also deepening our understanding and moving the work forward?

By questioning how to build systems of care through restorative justice practices, I anticipate the experiences my students had could be better supported and even replicated in other classrooms.

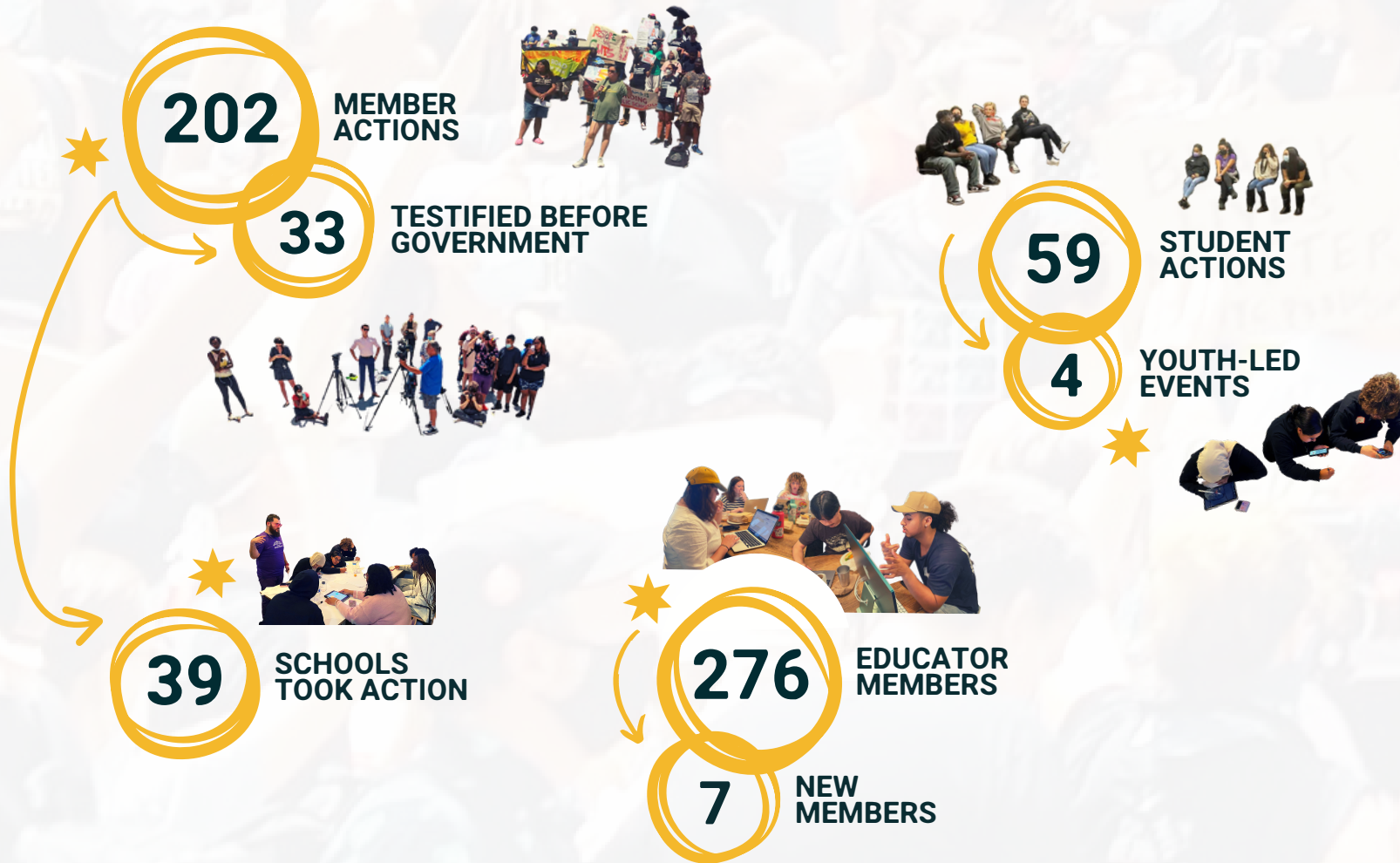
These questions are not easy to grapple with, but the TU community provides a space and community to collectively pursue answers. Working on the toolkit this year has been inspiring and revitalizing. Whether it was listening to interviews first hand, or highlighting connecting threads, the toolkit has brought me hope. The toolkit highlights our interconnectedness – despite borough or age or experience, we're all organizing towards transformative schools. Too often, this work is done in isolation, but this toolkit brings our stories into the light, allowing us to listen and learn from each other – something that is inherently restorative in and of itself. I am so grateful for the TU community for building something so powerful and so special.

In Solidarity,

Jennifer Finn

Jen Finn

OUR MISSION IN ACTION



CAMPAIGNS & PROJECTS

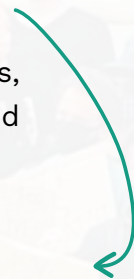
Toolkit Team ▶



On the heels of last year’s interview project – which collected dozens of organizing stories from school communities across the city – a dedicated crew of ten TU members and their students set to work consolidating strategies and advice into an organizing toolkit.

The team has met monthly to coordinate and build plans; they organized teacher-led “study hall” sessions and youth-led workshops to produce content, reflect together, and draft the toolkit. A student and a teacher from the team have already shared some of their learnings from the toolkit publicly at a NYCoRE panel on Restorative Justice.

For this coming school year, Teachers Unite cohorts will launch spaces for educators, students, and parents to come together and use these strategies to move practices and culture at their own schools away from policing and towards restorative justice.



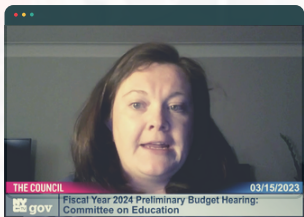
Citywide Budget Advocacy >



Teachers Unite was vital to putting restorative staffing and police-free schools on the agenda as city lawmakers negotiated the city budget.



Linking up with young people and parents in the Dignity in Schools Campaign, TU members and their students turned out to testify at public hearings, met with key council members, and contributed a strong educator voice and support for police-free schools to media attention.



Our members organized and led meetings with the key decision-makers, joined by over a dozen school community members pushing for our demands to move money away from policing young people, and towards the resources and a restorative staffing model that builds safety.



“POLITICO

HOW A BUDGET BATTLE SOWED CHOAS ON THE CUSP OF A NEW YEAR

Teachers say the academic year has already suffered irreparable damage.

"Our plan and our hope was to hire at least two more school aides that would be taking part in the restorative justice plan," **Martin Urbach** – who serves as the restorative justice coordinator – said. "Now that's no longer going to be possible."

[Read More >](#)



1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE 581
2 They need social and emotional support. Yet, year
3 after year, the City cuts the schools budget and then
4 funnels an egregious amount of that dwindling budget
5 into criminalizing our students through policing and
6 surveillance. I'm tired of being asked to do more
7 with less. I'm tired of my students not having access
8 to programs and supportive staff, and I'm tired of
9 working within a system that pushes children out
10 instead of meeting them with compassion and care.

Organizing to Defend Restorative Justice >

Before the school year started, City Administration set in motion a plan to quietly strip funding for restorative justice resources and staff that build safety and support young people engage in school.

Teachers Unite members were the educator voice in a groundswell of advocacy that shone a light on these attempted cuts and successfully pressured the administration to back down. As a result of these efforts and those of of parents, students, and advocates, 100% of existing RJ funding was kept intact.



Chalkbeat
NEW YORK

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FUNDING UNDER THREAT, NYC SCHOOLS ADVOCATES WARN

Martin Urbach, a school restorative justice coordinator, said that funding cuts would likely mean less training and the end of a department program that provided funding to pay students to help organize training at their schools. “We will no longer have access to coaching and to a network of outside providers who do this work for a living and have been doing it really well,” Urbach said.

[Read More >](#)

“Gothamist A non-profit newsroom, powered by WNYC.

LOCAL YOUTH ADVOCATES SAY THEY ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE FATE OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAMS

“We need more transparency and we also need for teachers, for parents, for youth, for school leaders to be involved in the conversation,” said Gabriella Mucilli, a teacher in the Bronx who helped her school implement restorative justice.

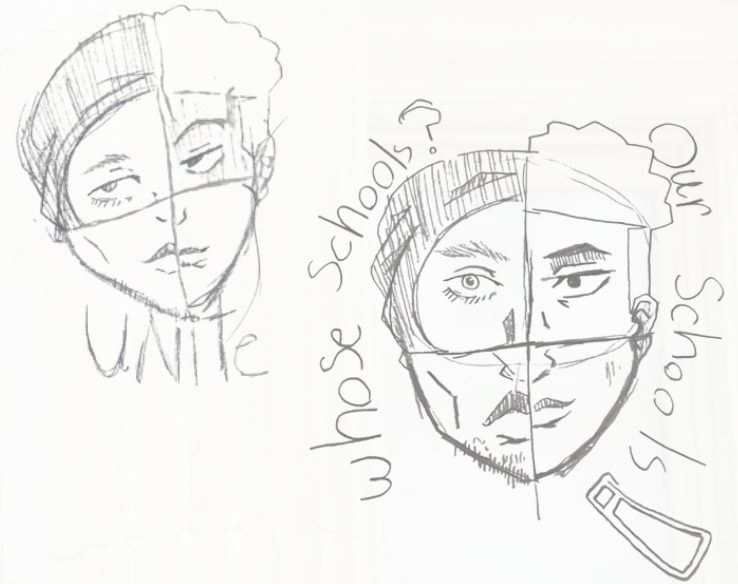
“All schools should have not just trainings but ongoing active support from the DOE, somebody that I could call as a restorative justice coordinator to help work through difficult situations and connect with other restorative justice coordinators,” said Oliver Cannell, who teaches seventh grade English as a second language. “It’s frustrating to see the funding go in the other direction.”

[Read More >](#)

Youth Art Build ►

Starting with the idea that Teachers Unite was looking to fund original artwork created by student artists to help amplify our advocacy efforts, young people from TU member schools came together across boroughs for art-making and community building.

In conversation with TU members, student artists had free-reign to draft designs that represent TU's vision and values of intergenerational organizing. Art-making fostered a connection between students and the work their teachers are up to outside the classroom. Keep watch for an announcement releasing more of their work!



ARTIST CREDIT

mbathio m
Ryan Clayton
Nico
Nømad
Ness Obad
Nickyy



Coalition Pilot Schools >



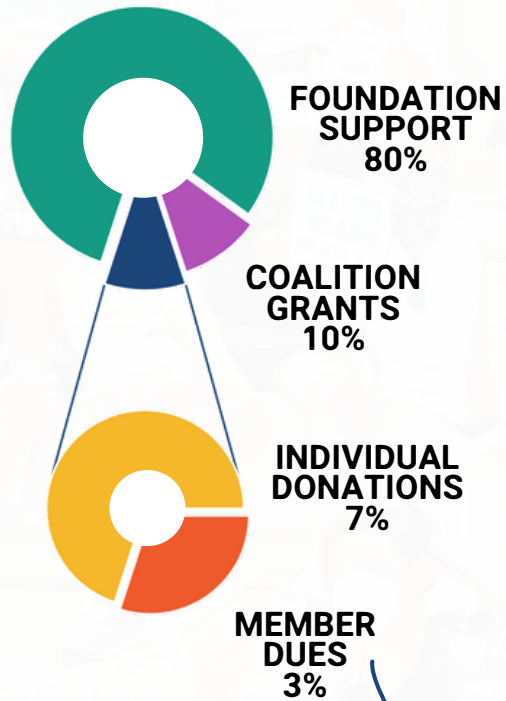
For the 2022-2023 school year, three Teachers Unite members participated in the Dignity in Schools Campaign New York (DSC-NY) Pilot School Project, where local schools collaborating with campaign members can apply to receive grants to support their work implementing restorative justice, healing centered practices, positive approaches to discipline and police-free schools.

Two TU members at one CTE high school launched a peer meditation project as their Pilot School project. A former student, who had just the year before led a protest against unannounced scanning, joined the school's transformative justice team as a Youth Lead of the Peer Mediation Program, supported the development and implementation of Tier 1 restorative practices, and created a leadership group for 9th and 10th grade students.

One TU member at another public high school used support funds to strengthen the school's existing restorative justice infrastructure. Funds were used to support student members of the restorative justice initiative undertake community building projects, build out multiple new youth subcommittees, and host engagement and education opportunities – including leading sold-out workshops.



FUNDING SNAPSHOT



- Valentine Perry Snyder Fund
- Elhapa Foundation
- Cowles Charitable Trust



BECOME A MEMBER TODAY

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

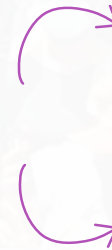
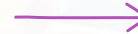
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Nicole Riley, Board Co-Chair
- Jamila Baucom-Rosal, Board Secretary
- Kristy Luk, Board Treasurer
- Ujju Aggarwal, Board Member
- Nicole Hamilton, Board Member
- Gabriella Mucilli, Board Member
- Ashley Sawyer, Board Member



STAFF

- Bella Week, Director of Organizing
- Charlotte Pope, Director of Development & Operations



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