

# OUR SCHOOLS OUR FUTURES



## A BUDGET FOR SAFE & JUST NYC SCHOOLS

Dignity in Schools Campaign-NY (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 FY2025 budget that rejects the new DOE-wide hiring freeze, and 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. EXPAND SCHOOL-BASED RESTORATIVE JUSTICE & SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS



NYC public schools should be safe, welcoming places for young people to grow and learn, including how to resolve conflict and navigate challenges. For decades, politicians have chosen to deny schools funding for the restorative staff and resources that make schools safer and keep students engaged in learning. The NYPD and school police union have successfully pressured lawmakers to instead direct school funds into hiring and training school police who harm students, and the city has tied up restorative justice funding in centralized DOE programs that have been ineffective at delivering impact to schools. Commitment to and funding for a school-led restorative justice model will make schools safer for all students. We demand accessible school-based jobs that support students, contribute to the safety of our school communities, and hire Black and Brown community members and pay them well.

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

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

### + \$75M 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.

### + \$10M 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) (\$2.2M). Include opportunities for educators and students to develop restorative justice curriculum at the school level (\$800K). 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 (\$5M).
- 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 (\$2M).

**Restorative justice hiring and implementation must be school-based and led by long-time restorative justice practitioners, students, educators, parents, and community groups.** Funding must be allocated directly to school communities leading the way to ensure money is spent according to individual schools' needs. Priority for hiring school-based 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. These must not be NYPD or policing positions, and funds should not go to private contracts that have no relationship to the school communities. Restorative Justice trainings should integrate an anti-racist, anti-ableist, queer-inclusive, and trauma-responsive approach.



## 2. PROTECT CRITICAL PROGRAMS CURRENTLY FUNDED WITH \$1B OF FEDERAL COVID RELIEF DOLLARS

Students thrive when they can access restorative justice, counselors, social workers, mental health workers, and the resources and programs they need. However, Mayor Adams has been forcefully attacking public schools, calling for devastating cuts to school budgets and undermining the planned expansion of restorative justice. When the Mayor takes away the resources, programs, and staff that make schools safe and support students to learn, he puts young people and their futures at risk.

**We demand city officials invest \$1B to protect the range of programs currently funded by COVID Federal Relief Funding that help cultivate DSC-NY's comprehensive vision for dignity in schools.**

### + \$21M to protect and baseline funding for School-Based Restorative Justice.

\$17M of the \$21M should be shifted directly to schools to support school-based restorative justice training and hiring full-time, unionized school-based positions and \$4M for central borough directors and coordinators.

### + \$5M 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.

### + \$77M for counselors, social workers, and mental health professionals.

This would sustain 450 new school social workers, allowing nearly 194,000 students to have access to a social worker, 60 school psychologists, and 15 family workers to address the needs of students with disabilities.

### 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 create barriers to learning and violate the safety and well-being of students—particularly Black, Brown, and other marginalized young people, who are targeted most harshly by school police.

We demand that the over \$ 400M the City currently chooses to spend on the NYPD’s school policing division be redirected to the resources, staff, and restorative practices that make schools safe and that support young people to thrive.

#### ✘ Cease all NYPD recruitment, hiring, and training of school cops.

- Do not hire any new school police and permanently eliminate any school police academy classes.
- Halt any efforts to expand or rebrand the school policing division, ie. school-based recruitment of young people into NYPD careers, the creation of new school policing job titles for 18-20 year olds, the 50-cop “youth response team,” and the 60 cop-run school policing command center.
- This should be a first step toward the full elimination of all school police positions.

#### ✘ 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 plan to give \$78 million to a surveillance contractor to install video surveillance technologies that spy on school community members. This should be a first step toward the full elimination of metal detectors and student surveillance technologies by 2026.

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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