

# 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 has access to safe and thriving school communities, regardless of where they live.

As national and local forces are building power to push a punitive and hate-filled police agenda, we call on NYC's elected officials to adopt a FY2026 budget that fully invests in the public school resources and restorative practices that will protect our most vulnerable communities, and ensure the dignity and safety of Black, Brown, immigrant, trans, gender non-conforming, queer and low-income students and students with disabilities.

## 1. EXPAND SCHOOL-BASED RESTORATIVE JUSTICE & SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS



NYC Public Schools (NYCPS) must be safe, welcoming spaces where young people can grow, learn, resolve conflicts, and navigate challenges. Yet the City has failed to adequately fund the restorative staff and resources that create safer schools and keep students engaged. Instead, lawmakers have prioritized hiring and training school police—practices that harm students.

### + \$80M directly to 500 high schools to hire school-based Restorative Justice Coordinators.

Increase funding by \$55M a 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, instead of more police.

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.

### + \$16M directly to schools to:

- Transform all middle and high school Dean positions towards restorative practices through tier 1, 2, and 3 restorative justice trainings (\$4M) and ensure all Deans can properly support the implementation of restorative practices alongside RJ Coordinators and Youth-Adult Restorative Practices & Equity Team
- Access ongoing restorative justice training for all school staff, and make it available to the broader school community (e.g. students and families). Prioritize funding for youth to be active participants in restorative justice practices (\$5M). No money shall be used for training school cops.
- Create and compensate Youth-Adult Restorative Practices & Equity Teams that include educators, teachers, and family members to develop a restorative justice curriculum at the school level (\$2M).

- **Fund restorative justice electives, clubs, and/or advisories**, including opportunities for students to obtain course credit (\$2M).
- **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 (\$3M).

**Restorative justice hiring and implementation must be school-based and led by the school community.** Funding must be allocated directly to school communities ensuring the money is spent according to individual school's needs. These must be well-paid union jobs in NYCPS and schools must prioritize hiring and fair pay for Black and Brown community members and recent NYC public high school graduates. Restorative Justice trainings should integrate an anti-racist, anti-ableist, queer-inclusive, and trauma-responsive approach and should be leveraged to protect the safety and well-being of immigrant students and parents.



## 2. PROTECT AND BASELINE CRITICAL PROGRAMS CURRENTLY FUNDED WITH EXPIRING CITY DOLLARS

Students thrive when they can access restorative justice, 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. **We demand city officials invest at least \$400M to protect and baseline the range of programs funded by expiring city dollars that help cultivate DSC-NY's comprehensive vision for dignity in schools.**

### + \$12M in baseline funding for Restorative Justice.

Shift funding directly to schools to hire RJ coordinators, support school-based restorative justice teams, and pay youth stipends to participate in circle keeping. The current baseline restorative justice funding (\$5.6M) should be used to sustain central borough directors and coordinators. .

### + \$5M in baseline funding for the Mental Health Continuum.

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. This funding is urgently needed so the students at 50 pilot schools in South Bronx and Central Brooklyn do not lose access to critical mental health services during a mental health crisis.

### + \$4M in baseline funding for immigrant family communications and outreach.

Provide language access for students and families, especially those speaking indigenous or low-incidence languages, and ensure all materials created by NYCPS are accessible to all students. This funding allows families to understand their language rights and supports better access to resources.



### 3. REDIRECT MONEY AWAY FROM POLICING AND SURVEILLANCE



All public school students 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. Additional emphasis must be placed to move money away from policing to end the chilling effect on immigrant student attendance and access to resources. We demand that the City redirect over \$400M spent on the NYPD’s school policing division.

#### ✘ Freeze hiring of school cops and forbid the city to fill for attrition.

- Do not hire any new school police and permanently eliminate any school police academy classes and vacant school cop positions.
- Redirect the \$90 million saved through a hiring freeze to baseline funding for the school support staff outlined above, including school-based RJ coordinators, social workers, counselors, and other evidence-based positions and practices that keep schools safe.
- Halt any efforts to expand or rebrand the school policing division, i.e. 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.

#### ✘ 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 all surveillance technology contracts that spy on school community members. This should be a first step toward the full elimination of metal detectors and student surveillance and scanning technologies by 2027.

### 4. PROTECT THE SAFETY OF IMMIGRANT STUDENTS AND PARENTS



The political crisis emanating out of Washington requires a robust and coordinated response. Therefore, NYC must do more to protect immigrant students and families from President Trump’s mass detention and deportation plan. City legislators and NYCPS officials must combat the chilling effects the looming ICE enforcement plan can have on immigrant student attendance and access to resources. All students and their families should be warmly and intentionally welcomed to NYC public schools regardless of immigration status or national origin. **DSC-NY calls for these additional commitments from NYCPS and all of NYC government.**

#### + Strengthen Immigration Guidance, School Response, and Federal Preparedness Policies.

- Forbid School Safety Agents from collaborating with non-local law enforcement.
- Ensure an accessible and linguistically responsive one-stop space for updated information on immigration rights and ICE response plans, designed in collaboration with community partners who are experts in immigration defense work. This must include guidance on the Sensitive Locations Policy rescission and other federal changes.



- Provide updated resources and training to all school staff to ensure they understand and implement immigration-related policies effectively.
- Develop tailored resources for vulnerable students and families, including undocumented and unaccompanied minors, such as district-specific one-pagers and pocket-sized resources with local immigrant-serving organizations and multilingual mental health resources.
- Partner with immigration law experts to create accessible materials on navigating the immigration system.

#### **+ Offer Comprehensive Training for School Staff, Students, and Families.**

- Collaborate with immigrant-serving community organizations to provide know-your-rights training for all students and families.
- Designate a trained point person at each school responsible for supporting immigrant students and families.
- Ensure comprehensive training for all school staff—principals, superintendents, educators, and front office personnel—covering immigration rights, student and family support, and referral protocols for external legal assistance.

#### **+ Strengthen Community and Government Partnerships.**

- Expand collaboration with city agencies, such as the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, and community-based organizations to offer on-site legal clinics, culturally appropriate services, and workshops.
- Establish and maintain partnerships with trusted community hubs, such as houses of worship, to provide additional support networks for immigrant families.

#### **+ Enhance Data Privacy and Security Protections.**

- Implement strict security safeguards to prevent sensitive data collection during school enrollment.
- Ensure that any student or family data previously shared with third-party contractors is permanently deleted.
- Reinforce existing legal protections preventing schools from disclosing education records to federal law enforcement or third parties without an individualized subpoena.
- Prohibit bulk data sharing of education records with law enforcement or commercial entities; ensure Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS), attendance, and tech data from Smart Pass, Jump Rope, Talkspace, and other tracking systems are not shared.
- Leverage the authority of the state’s Facial Recognition Technology policy to ban biometric surveillance technologies and ensure sensitive student and family data remains protected.
- Support the passage of Intro 798 to eliminate the NYPD’s gang database. In the meantime, prohibit school officials, including School Safety Agents, from using, contributing to, or sharing student information with the NYPD regarding alleged gang affiliation.

Other important immigrant security and safety recommendations have already been shared by the [Newcomer Education Network \(NEN\)](#).

## **TAKE ACTION:**

**Testify at a City Council hearing, meet with your Council Member, and join a DSC-NY direct action or get support to plan one of your own! Get in touch to learn more.**

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

