

The Committee on Education, Jointly with the 1  
Committee on Public Safety  
CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

OF THE

THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION,  
JOINTLY WITH THE COMMITTEE ON  
PUBLIC SAFETY

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Wednesday, April 29, 2026

START: 1:15 P.M.

RECESS: 6:20 P.M.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Hon. Eric Dinowitz, Chair of  
The Committee on Education

Hon. Oswald J. Feliz, Chair of  
The Committee on Public Safety

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION:

Gale A. Brewer

Carmen N. De La Rosa

Amanda C. Farías

Jennifer Gutiérrez

Rita C. Joseph

Shekar Krishnan

Linda Lee

Farah N. Louis

Mercedes Narcisse

Lynn C. Schulman

Phil Wong

Susan Zhuang

The Committee on Education, Jointly with the  
Committee on Public Safety

COUNCIL MEMBERS (CONTINUED):

THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY:

Joann Ariola  
Chris Banks  
Elsie Encarnación  
Jennifer Gutiérrez  
Ty Hankerson  
Kamillah Hanks  
Sandy Nurse  
Justin E. Sanchez  
Phil Wong

The Committee on Education, Jointly with the  
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A P P E A R A N C E S

Mary King,  
Deputy Chief, Commanding Officer of the School  
Safety Division, NYPD

Mark Rampersant,  
Chief of School Safety and Prevention Partnerships,  
DOE

Thomas Alps,  
Deputy Chief, Executive Officer of the Patrol  
Services Bureau, NYPD

Kevin Dantzler,  
Senior Director in the Office of Safety and  
Prevention Partnerships in New York City Public  
Schools

Hwan Kim,  
Deputy Inspector, Executive Officer of the School  
Safety Division, NYPD

David Pucino,  
Director, Legislative Affairs, NYPD

Seth Severino,  
Administrative Contract Specialist, Budget  
Management Division, NYPD

Dr. Shonelle Hall,  
Executive Director, School Climate and Culture, DOE

Emilie Mittiga,  
New York City Department of Education (DOE)

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Donald Nesbit,  
Executive Vice President of Local 372 - NYC Board  
of Education Employees, District Council 37-AFSCME

Stamo Karalazarides,  
First Vice President at The Council of School  
Supervisors and Administrators

Crystal Espinal,  
Student-Representing Circle Keepers; Member of the  
Dignity in Schools Campaign, New York

Molly Haegele,  
Student-Representing Circle Keepers; Member of the  
Dignity in Schools Campaign, New York

Brianna Lucero,  
Student-Representing Circle Keepers; Member of the  
Dignity in Schools Campaign, New York

Paulina Milewska,  
Student-Representing Circle Keepers; Member of the  
Dignity in Schools Campaign, New York

Yaretzi Valera,  
Student-Youth Leader at Make the Road New York

Schmaya Charles,  
Student-Representing Circle Keepers; Member of the  
Dignity in Schools Campaign, New York

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Yelani Joseph,  
Organizer with NYCLU Teen Activist Project; Circle  
Keepers; Member of the Dignity in Schools Campaign,  
New York

Moubarak Oumaou,  
Circle Keepers; Member of the Dignity in Schools  
Campaign, New York

Michael Adikah,  
NYCLU Teen Activist Project; Circle Keepers; Member  
of the Dignity in Schools Campaign, New York

Witchy Carrier,  
Youth Leader with the Circle Keepers; Member of the  
Dignity in Schools Campaign, New York

Sika Agbokou,  
NYCLU Teen Activist Project; Circle Keepers; Member  
of the Dignity in Schools Campaign, New York

Cameron Glasgow Love,  
Circle Keepers; Member of the Dignity in Schools  
Campaign, New York

Kiley Bernard,  
Circle Keepers; Member of the Dignity in Schools  
Campaign, New York

Joelle,  
Speaking on behalf of Ammy Heredia,  
Youth Leader at Make the Road New York and Urban  
Youth Collaborative

Naphtali Moore,  
Staff Attorney with Advocates for Children (AFC);  
Members of Dignity in Schools of New York

The Committee on Education, Jointly with the  
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Imani Wilson,  
Doctoral Student Candidate at NYU Studying School  
Safety; Community-Based Educator with the Dignity  
in Schools Campaign

Isa Abraham,  
Program Coordinator at Malikah; Member of the  
Dignity and Schools Campaign

Charlotte Pope,  
New York Civil Liberties Union

Raul Soto,  
Co-Executive Director of the YA-YA Network

Andrea Ortiz,  
Dignity in Schools Campaign

Tajh Sutton,  
Circle Keepers; Dignity in Schools Campaign, New  
York

Vladimir Tlali,  
Senior Policy Strategist at the New York  
Immigration Coalition

Kevin Coemer,  
Candidate for Assembly in Astoria District 3

Marlene Rossi,  
Parent Leader and Education Advocate Representing  
Families in East Elmhurst

Chauncy Young,  
Director of New Settlement Parent Action Committee

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2 SERGEANT LEWIS: Mic check, mic check,  
3 this is a mic check for the Committee on Education  
4 and Criminal Justice (sic)-- for Public Safety and  
5 Education. Today's date is April 29, 2026, recorded  
6 by Walter Lewis in the Chambers.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon, good  
8 afternoon, welcome to the New York City Council  
9 hearing for the Committee on Education, jointly with  
10 Criminal Justice (sic) (**\*Transcriber Note: Public  
11 Safety**). At this time, please silence all electronic  
12 devices, and do not approach the dais.

13 If you are testifying today, make sure  
14 you have filled out a slip at the back of the room.

15 Any other questions or concerns, please  
16 contact the Sergeant at Arms.

17 Thank you for your cooperation. Chairs,  
18 you may begin.

19 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: [GAVEL] Good  
20 afternoon, everyone. I am Council Member Eric  
21 Dinowitz, Chair of the Committee on Education. I am,  
of course, a proud New York City Public School alum  
and proud New York City Public School teacher.

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2                       I am joined today by Council Member  
3 Oswald Feliz, Chair of the Committee on Public  
4 Safety. I am really glad to be doing this joint  
5 hearing with him today.

6                       Welcome to our joint hearing on:  
7           *Examining School Safety and Crossing Guard Operations*  
8           *at DOE Schools.*

9                       When thinking about issues in education,  
10                      and thinking about today's hearing, of course, as a  
11                      former student and public school teacher, I bring  
12                      with me the experiences of my students whom I taught  
13                      over the years. But, more important than just my  
14                      experiences in the classroom are the experiences of  
15                      students throughout the entire city, the experiences  
16                      of teachers and principals throughout the entire  
17                      city, and the experiences of school safety agents  
18                      throughout the entire city.

19                      In preparing for this year, I spent a lot  
20                      of time talking to the students across the five  
21                      boroughs, and what I heard was consistent and urgent.

                      Last month, after the tragic murder of a  
                      young man in my district, Council Member Sanchez and  
                      I hosted a public safety town hall with teenagers and  
                      youth in the Bronx. And they were direct with me.

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2 They want school safety to be more thorough. They  
3 want to feel better protected in our schools.

4 Yesterday, I met with a group of immigrant students  
5 from international high schools from across the city  
6 who told me the same thing. And on top of that, on  
7 top of their safety concerns, they described  
8 communication difficulties with school safety agents  
9 who don't speak the language that predominates in  
10 their schools. SSAs have received de-escalation  
11 training, but these students are asking a different  
12 question: What does cultural competency look like in  
13 a school safety context, and is our city providing  
14 it?

15 I also met with principals from every  
16 borough. And what they described was a system under  
17 serious strain. School Safety Agent headcount had  
18 dropped from approximately 500 (sic) before the  
19 pandemic to 3,280 today, a loss of over 1,700 agents  
20 over six years, with an annual attrition rate running  
21 around 500, and incoming Academy classes too small to  
keep pace. The most recent graduating class had 79  
new agents. Starting salaries remain in the mid-\$30,  
thousands, less than what traffic enforcement agents  
and correction officers earn, with no meaningful

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2           salary ladder and limited career projection. That is  
3           not a recruitment pipeline; it's a revolving door.

4                         SSAs work hard and are valuable members  
5           of our school communities. The City must do a better  
6           job of incentivizing School Safety Agents to stay in  
7           their jobs so they can foster the meaningful  
8           relationships that safety is built on, earn dignified  
                                wages, and work with dignity.

9                         School Safety Agents are also often  
10          forced to work overtime that they may not want to  
11          work due to staffing shortages. When an SSA calls out  
12          sick or takes comp time, sometimes a day or two per  
13          week, principals get to school in the morning and  
14          find themselves without coverage until midday or  
15          later, if at all. In response, our schools are  
16          improvising paying aides to manage security desks or  
17          roam the halls-- or man the halls rather-- pulling  
18          assistant principals away from their responsibilities  
19          to sit at scanning stations and, in some cases,  
20          managing the front desk themselves. These are  
21          education professionals doing security work because  
                                there's no one else. That is not a real school safety  
                                system. It is an unsustainable patchwork that puts  
                                our schools at risk.

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2               The principals also raised an issue with  
3 scanning. Schools are supposed to have three agents  
4 per machine to conduct scanning properly, yet they  
5 routinely do not. Security cameras frequently  
6 malfunction. Annual repair budgets are exhausted by  
7 March, and students, unsurprisingly, are quick to  
8 figure out exactly where the gaps in camera coverage  
   are.

9               The long-term trend in school safety has  
10 been encouraging. Major felony crimes in schools have  
11 declined over the past two decades, and criminal  
12 summonses have dropped dramatically. Those are gains,  
13 and they matter. But when students tell us they don't  
14 feel the safety that the numbers reflect. And  
15 principals tell us the system is held together with  
   improvisation and goodwill. We have to take that  
   seriously.

16              Data and lived experience are both  
17 telling us something, and today's hearing is an  
18 effort to understand both. And just by way of  
19 example, just today, on the JFK campus where I used  
20 to teach, a 485,000 square foot building with seven  
21 schools and eight floors, a number of kids jumped one  
   of the other students in the building— gang related,

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2 and there were no School Safety Agents there. The  
3 lack of presence helped allow for this to happen, and  
4 the immediate need for the students' safety was not  
5 met by School Safety because there are not enough in  
6 that building. There are nine stations in that  
7 building for eight schools, with seven schools  
8 scanning 485,000 square feet. And students had to  
9 break up the fight. In other cases, it's teachers,  
10 paraprofessionals, school aides, and principals  
11 putting their bodies at risk for the jobs of School  
12 Safety Agents, of which we do not have enough.

13 At today's hearing, the Committees seek  
14 to understand whether current school safety policies,  
15 programming, and accountability structures are  
16 keeping pace with the reality our students face. This  
17 includes whether governing frameworks that have gone  
18 unamended for years still reflect how safety actually  
19 operates in our schools; whether restorative justice  
20 and alternative programming are being implemented  
21 with fidelity and producing measurable results; and  
whether the City is delivering on its obligation to  
protect all of our children, not just inside school  
buildings, but on the streets and intersections they  
must cross to get there.

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2                       I'd now like to pass the mic to Chair  
3       Feliz to deliver his opening remarks.

4                       CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you, thank you  
5       so much, and good afternoon, everyone. I am Council  
6       Member Oswald Feliz, Chair of the Committee on Public  
7       Safety. I want to thank you, Chair Dinowitz, for  
8       co-chairing this hearing today. And I want to welcome  
9       everyone to today's hearing on: *Examining School  
          Safety and Crossing Guard Operations at DOE Schools.*

10                      I am joined by members of the Public  
11       Safety Committee, including Council Member Ariola,  
12       Council Member Louis, Council Member Schulman,  
13       Council Member Encarnación, Council Member Wong,  
14       Council Member De La Rosa, Council Member Hankerson,  
15       Council Member Nurse, Council Member Banks, and  
16       Council Member Joseph, who just joined us.

17                      The safety of our students, both inside  
18       school buildings and on their way to and from school,  
19       is one of the most important duties of city  
20       government. School Safety Agents and School Crossing  
21       Guards play a critical role in maintaining safe,  
          orderly environments, where students can focus on  
          learning, and families can feel confident that their  
          children are safe. At the same time, schools must

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2           remain as places that support student development,  
3           minimize law enforcement involvement, unless, and of  
4           course, it's needed, and promote a positive school  
              climate.

5                         In recent years, we have seen significant  
6           changes in the school safety landscape. The School  
7           Safety Division workforce has declined, raising  
8           concerns about staffing levels, recruitment, and  
9           retention. At the same time, schools continue to  
10          navigate a range of safety problems and challenges,  
11          including bullying, weapon possession, and incidents  
              occurring in and around school grounds.

12                        While some categories of school crime  
13          have declined, questions remain about whether current  
14          staffing, current deployment, and coordination  
15          between the New York City Police Department and the  
16          Department of Education are sufficient to meet the  
17          needs of students, parents, educators, and school  
              communities.

18                        On School Safety Agents, my colleague and  
19          Co-Chair Dinowitz briefly mentioned it. I will, of  
20          course, ask about it later as well, but on School  
21          Safety Agents, we have heard serious concerns from  
              students, parents, and educators, including I've seen

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2     videos of basically long lines around our schools,  
3     long lines of students who need to wait 30-45 minutes  
4     to enter their school, because there are not enough  
5     School Safety Agents to engage the scanning  
6     equipment, making students late 30-45 minutes late  
7     class, due to a bad system. That is utterly  
8     unacceptable.

9                     This hearing will examine the current  
10    state of school safety operations, including staffing  
11    levels for School Safety Agents and school crossing  
12    guards, how these personnel are deployed, the  
13    effectiveness of the equipment that they use, and how  
14    effectively agencies are coordinating to address  
15    safety concerns.

16                    We also want to better understand how  
17    safety policies are being implemented in practice,  
18    including the balance between enforcement and  
19    prevention, and whether existing strategies are  
20    improving the outcomes for our students.

21                    We are also considering three pieces of  
                        legislation that will enhance transparency for these  
                        critical operations to ensure that families, schools,  
                        and communities have a clearer understanding of where

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2 crossing guards are assigned and where the gaps may  
3 exist:

4                       Introduction Number 457, sponsored by  
5 Council Member Stevens, would require the NYPD to  
6 publicly report on the deployment of school crossing  
7 guards across the city.

8                       Second, Introduction Number 788,  
9 sponsored by Chair Dinowitz, would require the annual  
10 reporting on employment turnover among School Safety  
11 Agents and other school safety personnel to help  
12 address ongoing workforce challenges.

13                      And, finally, the Committee is also  
14 hearing Resolution Number 392, sponsored by Council  
15 Member Fariás, calling on the New York State  
16 Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign the  
17 Didarul Islam Police Recruitment Act.

18                      This legislation seeks to support  
19 recruitment efforts and strengthen the pipeline of  
20 individuals entering law enforcement.

21                      Today, I look forward to hearing from the  
NYPD and the Department of Education about what is  
working, where gaps exist, and what additional  
resources or policy changes may be needed to ensure

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2           that all students are safe, both in school and on  
3           their commute.

4                       We also welcome input from educators,  
5           parents, students, advocates, and union  
6           representatives to better understand how these  
7           systems are functioning on the ground.

8                       Ensuring safe learning environments  
9           requires strong coordination, transparency, and  
10          accountability. By coordinating and working  
11          collaboratively across agencies with our communities,  
12          we can strengthen school safety systems while  
13          supporting the well-being and the success of our  
14          students.

15                      I thank everyone who is here today for  
16          participating, and I look forward to a thoughtful and  
17          productive conversation. And I am going to pass it  
18          back over to Chair Dinowitz.

19                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you, Chair  
20          Feliz. I would like to turn it over to Council Member  
21          Fariás to deliver remarks about Resolution Number  
22          392.

23                      COUNCIL MEMBER FARIÁS: Good afternoon,  
24          and thank you, Committee on Education Chair Eric  
25          Dinowitz, and Committee on Public Safety Chair Oswald

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2 Feliz, for convening this joint hearing today. The  
3 legislation introduced, Resolution 392, sits at the  
4 intersection of both your committee's  
5 responsibilities, and I appreciate the collaboration  
6 to move this forward.

7 Last November, I sat at the 47th Precinct  
8 alongside Council Member Riley, the Police Benevolent  
9 Association, State partners, and the loved ones of my  
10 constituents, Officer Didarul Islam, to call for the  
11 advancement of the Didarul Islam Police Recruitment  
12 Act in honor of his tragic passing.

13 Officer Islam's story reflects a pathway  
14 that is familiar to many police officers across New  
15 York City. He began as a School Safety Agent, a role  
16 that is renowned to be foundational to the safety of  
17 our schools, as well as a successful career with the  
18 NYPD. Like many, he transitioned from there to the  
19 NYPD, continuing his commitment to public safety,  
20 which started long before he ever wore a police  
21 officer's uniform.

22 The Didarul Islam Police Recruitment Act  
23 ensures that prior service in roles like School  
24 Safety Agents, Traffic Enforcement Agents, and other  
25 public safety titles is properly accredited for



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2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you, Council  
3 Member Farías.

4 I look forward to hearing from the  
5 Administration today, and I thank the witnesses for  
6 appearing today.

7 Thank you to my own staff, Jenna Klaus  
8 and Theo Solter, and the Education Committee staff,  
9 including: Alejandro Carvajal, Legislative Counsel;  
10 Chloë Rivera, Senior Legislative Policy Analyst;  
11 Katie Salina, Legislative Policy Analyst; Andrew  
12 Lane-Lawless, Principal Financial Analyst; and Grace  
13 Amato, Financial Analyst, for their work on today's  
14 hearing. I know some of them were mentioned, but I  
15 just want to once again acknowledge the colleagues  
16 who are present: Council Members Nurse, Hankerson, De  
17 La Rosa, Encarnación, Schulman, Louis, Wong,  
18 Gutiérrez, Joseph, Banks, Farías, Ariola, and on  
19 Zoom, we have Council Member Cabán.

20 Finally, I would like to remind everyone  
21 who wishes to testify in person today that you must  
fill out a witness slip, which you can find on the  
desk of the Sergeant at Arms near the entrance of  
this room. Please fill out the slip even if you have



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2           committees and to respond honestly to Council Member  
3           questions?

4                            PANEL AFFIRMS

5                            CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: That was great,  
6           perfect 10 out of 10.

7                            Thank you. You may begin your testimony.

8                            DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Good afternoon, I am  
9           Deputy Chief Mary King, NYPD School Safety Division,  
10          Commanding Officer.

11                            Good afternoon, Chair Feliz, Chair  
12          Dinowitz, and Members of the Committee on Public  
13          Safety and the Committee on Education. As I stated  
14          previously, I am Deputy Chief Mary King, the  
15          Commanding Officer of the School Safety Division. I  
16          am joined here today by Deputy Inspector Hwan Kim,  
17          the Executive Officer of the School Safety Division;  
18          Deputy Chief Thomas Alps, the Executive Officer of  
19          the Patrol Services Bureau, who supervises School  
20          Crossing Guards across the city; and Admin Contract  
21          Specialist Seth Severino of the Budget Management  
22          Division. On behalf of Police Commissioner Jessica  
23          Tisch, we thank you for the opportunity to testify  
24          today regarding school safety.

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2 At the School Safety Division, our  
3 mission is to provide a safe environment conducive to  
4 learning, where students and faculty can be free of  
5 hostility and disruptions that could negatively  
6 impact the educational process. It is our  
7 responsibility to parents to ensure that the children  
they entrust to us are kept safe.

8 We are succeeding at that mission. While  
9 no crime level in our schools is acceptable, we are  
10 working every day to reduce crime and promote safety,  
and crime levels are dropping. School-related  
11 enforcement is down by 6%. And school-related crime  
12 is down 5.5% for the school year.

13 The key to this success is our School  
14 Safety Agents, who do the essential day-to-day work  
of keeping our schools safe. Every public school has  
15 at least one School Safety Agent who carries out  
16 critical tasks to ensure a safe learning environment.  
17 They are responsible for patrolling critical areas  
within and surrounding the schools, monitoring  
18 security camera systems to make sure entrances and  
19 exits are secure, identifying and removing any  
20 unauthorized persons, and preventing weapons and  
21 other contraband items from being brought into the

2 school. They also assist in the smooth flow of  
3 students, staff, and visitors into and out of the  
4 schools, maintaining all records of entrances and  
5 exits, and providing routine information and  
6 directions to visitors.

7 In emergency situations, they provide a  
8 critical first response, notifying supervisors of all  
9 emergency incidents, calling for medical, police, or  
10 fire assistance when needed, and providing first aid  
11 to those who are sick or injured. When there are  
12 altercations between students or others in the  
13 building, they de-escalate and attempt to resolve the  
14 conflict, working to separate those who are involved  
15 and prevent harm or violence.

16 Last year, the School Safety Division was  
17 moved to the Office of the First Deputy Commissioner  
18 to ensure it was receiving the full departmental  
19 attention it deserves. Following that move, we have  
20 focused on several key improvements and changes to  
21 how the School Safety Division operates.

The first change has been to drastically  
scale the regularity of communications with our  
partners in the public schools. We have weekly  
meetings between the School Safety Division

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2 Executives, Public School Borough Safety Directors,  
3 and precinct meetings with school principals. In  
4 addition to these regular meetings, we confer  
5 regularly on incidents pertaining to student safety  
6 with both principals and borough safety directors.  
7 All of this ensures that public schools and the NYPD  
are in lockstep on security and safety.

8 We have also worked to further strengthen  
9 our relationship with public schools by increasing  
10 our participation in their meetings and programming.  
11 The School Safety Division participates in youth town  
12 halls and forums, principal meetings, the Youth  
13 Violence Community meetings, school visits, and  
14 meetings with city council members, public education  
advocates, labor union leadership, and restorative  
practice training.

15 None of this would be possible without  
16 our School Safety Agents, who are the linchpin of  
17 school security. Our authorized head count of school  
18 safety agents is 3,915, and there are 360 School  
Safety Agent vacancies.

19 There are a number of ways we acknowledge  
20 and celebrate the critical work our School Safety  
21 Agents do as the frontline protecting our schools. We



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2           counseling, and emotional support. Our School Safety  
3           Agents are tasked with a daily challenge of taking  
4           care of others, so we need to do all we can to take  
              care of them.

5  
6                         This effort is designed to provide School  
7           Safety Agents with a supportive environment in which  
8           their needs are met. Their efforts are respected and  
9           appreciated, and they have the opportunity to develop  
              personally and professionally in a rewarding and  
              accomplished career.

10                        These efforts are themselves an avenue to  
11           attract new individuals to the school safety role,  
12           but we are also taking additional steps in  
13           collaboration with Public Schools and the Local 237  
14           Labor Union to attract new employees. We meet on a  
15           monthly basis to discuss hiring strategies and  
16           initiatives. We have a school safety community  
17           outreach as well that, among other things, informs  
18           community members of career opportunities. So far  
19           this year, they have attended 16 career fairs and job  
20           fairs around the city. In our efforts to recruit, we  
              leverage social media platforms as well to promote  
              open roles.

21

2 In addition to this effort, we have  
3 established a new role, the Assistant School Safety  
4 Agent. After a careful evaluation, we determined that  
5 there were some functions of School Safety Agents  
6 that could be successfully performed by a more junior  
7 person. This includes, in particular, managing the  
8 front desk, directing visitors, inspecting the  
9 building, and maintaining visitor logs and other  
10 administrative tasks. At the same time, we've  
11 realized that that could be an opportunity to build a  
12 pipeline of younger people into the full School  
13 Safety Agent role. We recruit Assistant School Safety  
14 Agents out of the schools, typically at 18 to 20  
15 years of age, and place them in elementary schools  
16 alongside full School Safety Agents, where they  
17 perform those designated functions while learning the  
18 role that School Safety Agents perform. We have  
19 received great interest in the newly created role and  
20 have moved forward with over 100 new hires.

21 Through these initiatives, we're growing  
our team of School Safety Agents and supporting them  
in the critical and rewarding role of safeguarding  
our most important asset as a city—which is our  
children.

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2 I would like to take a moment to comment  
3 on the bills under consideration today:

4 Intro 788 would require the Department to  
5 report on employment turnover of School Safety  
6 Agents. The Department appreciates Council's  
7 attention to School Safety Agents and the critical  
8 role they play in keeping our schools safe. The  
9 Department is prepared to provide information about  
10 hiring and turnover, provided that a sunset class is  
11 added to ensure that the Department's reporting  
12 requirements reflect the Council's ongoing needs. We  
13 look forward to working with the Council to tailor  
14 the report contemplated by the bill to reflect  
15 available and appropriate information and advance our  
16 shared goals.

17 Introduction 457 would require the  
18 Department to create and publish a map of locations  
19 where crossing guards are posted. We have no  
20 objection to publishing this map, which would reflect  
21 data to the Department that is already being provided  
pursuant to budget and conditions, provided that a  
sunset clause is added to ensure that the  
Department's reporting requirements reflect Council's  
ongoing needs.

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2 Thank you for the opportunity to speak to  
3 you today. I look forward to answering any questions  
4 that you might have. And as a former New York City  
5 public school student, I relate to the faces and  
6 stories of the students in our schools, and I'm fully  
committed to ensuring their well-being and safety.

7 Thank you for your time.

8 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Good afternoon, Chair  
9 Dinowitz, Chair Feliz, and Members of the New York  
10 City Council Committees on Education and Public  
Safety who are present today.

11 My name is Mark Rampersant, and I have  
12 dedicated my career to ensuring that students are  
13 safe in our schools. I am proud to serve as Chief of  
14 Safety and Prevention Partnerships for New York City  
15 Public Schools (NYCPS). Thank you for the opportunity  
16 to discuss our comprehensive school safety efforts  
17 and our ongoing partnership with the New York City  
Police Department and its School Safety Division.

18 Safety is one of Chancellor Samuels top  
19 priorities. We know safety is a prerequisite to  
20 student achievement, and our approach to safety is  
21 grounded in the belief that true and complete safety  
extends beyond physical safety. It also includes

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2           emotional safety, built through trusting and  
3           supportive relationships that nurture affirmation,  
4           dignity, and respect.

5                     Our commitment is clear: we strive to  
6           ensure that every school is a safe, secure,  
7           affirming, and supportive learning environment for  
8           all students, staff, and families. We cannot do this  
9           alone, and therefore we pursue these goals through  
10          deep partnerships with school communities, other city  
11          agencies, and community and faith-based  
12          organizations.

13                     I would like to thank the City Council  
14          for your longstanding commitment to supporting New  
15          York City Public Schools as we continue to address  
16          the issue of school safety and climate.

17                     Our work integrates social-emotional  
18          learning, restorative practices, student leadership  
19          initiatives, and prevention programming. For example,  
20          our restorative practices framework encourages  
21          community building, fosters healthy relationships,  
              and promotes student belonging with a focus on  
              positive behavior, conflict resolution, and problem  
              solving. Project PIVOT supports supplemental  
              programming provided by community organizations in

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2 the areas of safety and violence prevention and  
3 intervention, mentoring, enrichment activities, and  
4 leadership development. Our student voice programming  
5 provides students with an opportunity to share ideas  
6 and feedback and have their voices included in policy  
7 and decision making. Although there is still more to  
8 do, we are seeing meaningful progress. Year to date,  
9 egregious incidents in schools are down by 7%,  
10 suspensions overall are down by almost 13%, principal  
11 suspensions are down by 13% (sic) (\* **Transcriber**  
**note: 11%**), and superintendent suspensions are down  
by almost 20%.

12 We are always exploring new and  
13 innovative ways to strengthen our safety and security  
14 procedures. Our Grades, Attendance, Messaging  
15 Application (GAMA) allows schools to communicate  
16 updates on incidents and activities with staff,  
17 students, and families in multiple languages, such as  
18 any school closings or, in the case of an emergency,  
19 any lockdowns, shelter-ins, or evacuations. Our Safer  
20 Access (Door Locking) Initiative allows for the front  
21 door of a school to be locked during the day, except  
for morning entry and dismissal, and is accessible to  
first responders in case of emergency. Our first two

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2 phases were completed, and these buildings are now  
3 equipped with this system.

4           All of the aforementioned initiatives are  
5 designed to function as one coordinated system.  
6 Together, they aim to prevent incidents, minimize  
7 academic disruption, and support social-emotional  
8 development. As mentioned earlier, ensuring complete  
9 safety is a shared responsibility, one that involves  
10 external partners such as the NYPD School Safety  
11 Division.

12           New York City Public Schools and the  
13 NYPD's School Safety Division share a strong,  
14 longstanding partnership focused on maintaining safe  
15 and secure school environments across the city.  
16 Together, our agencies develop school safety and  
17 emergency readiness plans to support our school  
18 communities, including ten monthly School Safety  
19 Committee meetings, one of which has to be a Town  
20 Hall. Our Office works in close coordination with the  
21 NYPD School Safety Division and remains in continual  
communication regarding supports and interventions  
for schools. These include ensuring SSA coverage,  
responding to incidents, providing safe passage, and

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2 offering youth programs in our schools, such as the  
3 NYPD Explorers Program.

4 School Safety Agents assigned to New  
5 York City Public Schools are employees of the NYPD,  
6 with recruitment, hiring, training, and supervision  
7 overseen by the Department. As vital partners of the  
8 school community, School Safety Agents collaborate  
9 daily with school administrators, students, families,  
10 and community stakeholders. They are often the first  
11 individuals whom students, staff, and families  
12 encounter when entering a school building, and their  
13 presence plays a critical role in promoting safety  
14 and reassurance. New York City Public Schools  
15 contributes two weeks of training to the NYPD's 20-  
16 week School Safety Agent training program. This  
17 training focuses on NYCPS policies and procedures,  
18 emergency readiness, school climate, de-escalation  
19 and problem-solving techniques, restorative  
20 practices, crisis support, child abuse reporting, and  
21 awareness of specialized districts and programs.  
These include District 75, which serves students with  
disabilities, and District 79, our Alternative  
Schools district. These trainings provide School  
Safety Agents with the tools to support our students

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2           and address behavior in a positive and supportive  
3           manner. In addition to trainings for SSA recruits, NY  
4           CPS also provides training to Police recruits, on  
5           supporting students with disabilities, with a  
6           specific focus on students on the autism spectrum and  
7           students who are learning to travel independently  
            through New York City Public Schools programming.

8                                 Beyond safety infrastructure and  
9           training, we partner closely with the NYPD on a range  
10          of prevention and youth development initiatives that  
11          foster positive engagement. These include the  
12          Anti-Subway Surfing Campaign, the Youth Police  
13          Academy, and the Flag Football program for students  
14          ages 9 to 11. We also work with local precincts to  
15          support schools through measures such as assigning  
16          School Crossing Guards, increasing visibility for  
            safe passage, and providing post-incident support  
            when needed.

17                                In closing, I want to reiterate that  
18          ensuring safety in our schools remains a top priority  
19          of this administration. As I have emphasized, safety  
20          in our schools is a collective responsibility, and it  
21          requires collaboration across agencies, communities,  
            and government partners. With the continued support

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2           of the City Council and our internal and external  
3           partners, New York City Public Schools remains  
4           committed to ensuring safe, supportive learning  
5           environments for students across the city.

6                         Thank you for the opportunity to testify  
7           today, and I am happy to answer any questions you may  
8           have.

9                         CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you both for  
10           your testimony.

11                         First, Deputy Chief King--

12                         I'd also like to note we've been joined  
13           by Council Member Zhuang.

14                         Deputy Chief King, is there a particular  
15           ratio of students to School Safety Agents that guides  
16           how many School Safety Agents are supposed to be in  
17           any particular school building?

18                         DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Our deployment of  
19           school safety agents to our schools citywide is based  
20           on student population. Obviously, coordination with  
21           our partners at DOE crime translated by that might be  
              going on, you know, depending on the patrol borough  
              and also the scanning status.

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2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So, there are  
3 situations in our schools where you can have a school  
4 of 1,000 students and one school safety agent?

5 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: No, that is not the  
6 case. Elementary schools, nowadays, there's a  
7 possibility that you might have a minimum of one  
8 agent, but know that that number does not apply to  
junior high schools or high schools.

9 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay. So your  
10 test--just to let you know, either that-- you're  
11 getting wrong data or something. Your information,  
12 which you just testified, does not align with what  
13 actually happens in our schools. I was out of school  
14 just earlier this week or last week, two School  
15 Safety Agents, over 1,300 kids, and one of them  
16 frequently gets pulled away to staff other schools  
17 because of absences.

18 So, I hope you're aware that there are  
19 many schools, not just the one I happened to visit,  
20 but many schools as shared with me by principals  
throughout the city, where they will have one School  
Safety Agent for over 1,000 kids. And this, as I said  
in my opening statement, leads to problems where they

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2           have school staff manning the front desk, Assistant  
3           Principals doing that work.

4                        So again, I just ask again, is it really  
5           the case that there's never a school that has 1,000  
6           kids and one School Safety Agent?

7                        DEPUTY CHIEF KING: No, if-- outside of  
8           elementary school.

9                        CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay...

10                       (CROSS-TALK)

11                       DEPUTY CHIEF KING: But like I said, if  
12           you have a specific-- in that specific school or  
13           there have been instances, or somebody has contacted  
14           you, we're more than glad to have an offline  
15           conversation, and I will be happy to look into it.

16                       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I'm going to come  
17           back to that question because there's a Local Law  
18           from, I believe, 2016, that requires NYPD to report  
19           on the deployment of School Safety Agents. And I  
20           think with that data, we can all have a little more  
21           clarity on what is and isn't happening in our school  
              buildings.

                      Beyond the disagreement on what's  
                      happening in our schools, you mentioned in your  
                      testimony that School Safety Units are responsible

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2           for patrolling critical areas within and surrounding  
3           the schools, monitoring security camera systems, to  
4           make sure entrances and exits are secure, identifying  
5           and removing unauthorized persons, and preventing  
6           weapons and other contraband items.

7                         Those to me sound like four different  
8           tasks that would have to be done that could not be  
9           done simultaneously.

10                        In your experience, can a single School  
11           Safety Agent do those four tasks simultaneously? For  
12           example, patrol around the school and monitor the  
13           entrances and exits on a TV screen?

14                        DEPUTY CHIEF KING: That is part of what  
15           the performance is. However, aside from that, they  
16           are different; they could be assigned to a fixed-post  
17           assignment. You know they do patrol the schools.

18                        CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I'm just trying to  
19           understand how a school with one or two School Safety  
20           Agents, how those School Safety Agents, per your  
21           testimony, are able to do-- and they do much more  
              than these four tasks you mentioned, of course-- but  
              how one or two School Safety Agents are able to  
              feasibly patrol critical areas within and surrounding  
              the schools, and monitor security cameras, and

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2           identify and remove unauthorized persons, and prevent  
3           weapons and other contraband from entering the  
4           school.

5                         DEPUTY CHIEF KING: In order to assist  
6           with that, obviously, we introduced a new title of  
7           Assistant School Safety Agent early last year, which  
8           we had a hire of a 114 Assistant School Safety Agents  
9           that will assist those schools where you might have  
10          one School Safety Agent assigned to man the front  
11          desk and take care of all the administrative duties  
12          that has School Safety would normally perform to free  
13          them up, so they could do their interior patrols, and  
14          do other major tasks.

15                        CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: The hiring of the  
16           Assistant School Safety Agents has not resulted in  
17           the staffing that is necessary, and they're certainly  
18           not in our high schools or middle schools.

19                        DEPUTY CHIEF KING: No, they're not. You  
20           are correct... (CROSS-TALK)

21                        CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Right?

                      So, in our high schools and middle  
                      schools, when you have one School Safety Agent or two  
                      School Safety Agents, is-- I'm just asking, is it  
                      feasible for them to complete all of-- just these

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2           four tasks, not anything else that was testified, for  
3           just these four tasks that you testified to?

4                     DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Something that we have  
5           instituted, and I kind of want to make myself clear,  
6           maybe I should have said that at the beginning, we  
7           have instituted something called-- we started this  
8           school year's administrative rollout. School Safety  
9           Agents are basically assigned to require  
10          administrative positions within patrol boroughs and  
11          support units around-- go out on a daily basis to  
12          backfill for vacancies as you mentioned. Yes, people  
13          call out sick. You know, there are a lot of School  
14          Safety Agents who have kids and so on. They may have  
15          childcare issues. But that's the backfill. Those are  
16          the School Safety Agents we are utilizing to backfill  
17          absences and to assist with morning entry, dismissal,  
18          and everything else that is going on in the schools.

19                     And in addition to that, we also have a  
20          mobile task force assigned to every borough that will  
21          assess those schools where you might have one School  
              Safety Agent with everything that they have to do.

                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: On average, how  
many schools--is more-- how many agents call out in a  
day?

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2 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: That information, I  
3 don't have it with me right now, but I could  
4 definitely get back to you on it.

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Because what you're  
6 describing sounds nice, but it just doesn't align  
7 with the experiences of the School Safety Agents at  
8 schools, or the principals or the teachers who say  
9 they are assigned nine agents at a school, but they  
typically have seven or six on any given day.

10 Do you have data to shed light on how  
11 many absences? What are the vacancies on any given  
day?

12 Because the mobile units do not make up  
13 for that, that's just not the experience of the  
14 principals and the teachers and the School Safety  
Agents who are doing the work on the ground.

15 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: I would like to get  
16 back to you on that once I pull that information.

17 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Will you have it  
today?

18 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Not today.

19 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: There's no one at  
20 the NYPD who can search up their data right now while  
21 council members are asking questions?

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2                       I mean, look, I don't doubt your desire  
3 to keep our kids safe. No one does. But I do doubt  
4 some of the testimony you've given in these 10  
5 minutes about how there are no vacancies in our  
6 schools there. That School Safety Agents don't have  
7 one School Safety Agent for over 1,000 kids. That is  
8 just what is happening—that multiple School Safety  
9 Agents, due to forced overtime, are taking their comp  
10 time and taking off a day or two a week. Good for  
11 them, they have that time off.

12                      But to pretend that these vacancies don't  
13 exist and that mobile units are making up for it just  
14 isn't in line with the experiences of our school  
15 system.

16                      DEPUTY CHIEF KING: We are acknowledging  
17 that the vacancies are there; obviously, they do  
18 exist. The numbers don't lie. However, the amount of  
19 vacancies has not deviated from School Safety  
20 Agents-- I mean, School Safety Division from our  
21 mission of keeping our schools safe.

                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I'm not questioning  
your mission, as I just said. I'm questioning whether  
you have enough School Safety Agents on any given  
day, not to mention the number of vacancies you have.

2 But besides that, on any given day, you have schools  
3 with over 1,000 kids in them with a single School  
4 Safety Agent.

5 And I'm not sure if your data is wrong or  
6 if you're not being told what's happening in our  
7 schools. But that's what's happening in our schools,  
8 and it is leaving our kids at risk. And I don't even  
9 want to single--I don't think you do either, I don't  
10 think you want a single incident for any of our  
11 kids—and this is making our students less safe.

12 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Chair, please, I  
13 welcome you to refer those specific cases to me. I'm  
14 heavily involved in everything that happens in school  
15 safety, and that is from not just communication with  
16 DOE, but also with principals.

17 I have made it my business to visit  
18 schools, to talk to principals. And yes, I mean, I  
19 completely understand where you, you know,  
20 obviously, where you're coming from, all the  
21 information that you're getting, but I would like to  
speak on the untold stories and the stuff that  
doesn't come on the news that I deal with on a daily  
basis. And those are the emails from principals  
thanking me for the great work that School Safety is

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2           doing. The visits that I've done, where principals  
3           are praising a School Safety Agent, the  
4           Superintendents who are actually visiting schools in  
5           Brooklyn, praising agents for the work that they are  
6           doing. These are the untold stories- the School  
7           Safety Agent who, actually, a couple of weeks ago in  
8           Brooklyn, saved a kid from choking. They are in our  
              schools, and we're doing our job.

9                         CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Have not met a  
10           single principal who doesn't love their School Safety  
11           Agents. According to School Survey data, 83% of our  
12           students value our School Safety Agents. This isn't a  
13           question of whether we value them. The question is  
14           whether resources-- if there are enough resources so  
15           we can have more of them, if they're being deployed  
16           properly, if they're able to keep our kids safe.  
17           Because we know they do. We value them just the same.

18                         DEPUTY CHIEF KING: But...

19                         CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So that's not a  
20           question of whether or not we value them. Are they  
21           being deployed? Are there enough of them? And I want  
              to go back to my original question. Does the NYPD  
              have any minimum ratio? Not one per school, but if a  
              school has a certain square footage or a school has a

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2           certain footprint or a school has a certain number of  
3           students where they hit a number and they say, all  
4           right, you need two, now you need three, now you need  
              four School Safety at...

5                         DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Absolutely.

6                         CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: minimum...

7           (CROSS-TALK)

8                         DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Absolutely, that's  
9           why, what you... (CROSS-TALK)

10                        CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: What is that ratio?  
                          (CROSS-TALK)

11                        DEPUTY CHIEF KING: When I-- I did answer  
12           your question, and I stated that the deployment of  
13           School Safety Agents to schools was based on student  
              population. That comes into play, scan...

14           (CROSS-TALK)

15                        CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

16                        DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Scanning status. So  
17           yeah, absolutely. You know, that's the type...

                          (CROSS-TALK)

18                        CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Let's break it  
19           down. In a population, what is the ratio of, let's  
20           say, there's no scanning, student to School Safety  
21           Agent ratio? What is it?

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2                   DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Well, depending on the  
3 student population, as I mentioned, you might have  
4 schools... (CROSS-TALK)

5                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay...

6                   DEPUTY CHIEF KING: that has a 1,000...  
(CROSS-TALK)

7                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: For example, if  
8 there are 500 kids, how many School Safety Agents in  
9 general, without scanning, would they get with 500  
10 students in a school?

11                   DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Well, in a school,  
12 let's just say if it's not-- if it's not a high  
13 school, a supervisor and maybe three or four School  
14 Safety Agents.

15                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Three or four  
16 School Safety Agents for 500? What about a high  
17 school of 3,000 kids? What would-- without scanning,  
18 what would that be? How many school Safety Agents...  
(CROSS-TALK)

19                   DEPUTY CHIEF KING: You would probably get  
20 between 1:8 and one in 1:10.

21                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Between 1:10 for a  
3,000-student school?

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2                       Okay. And what if they're scanning at  
3 that school? How many School Safety Agents...

4           (CROSS-TALK)

5                       DEPUTY CHIEF KING: It all depends on the  
6 setups that we have at the school. Some schools might  
7 take one setup or two setups.

8                       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And for each setup,  
9 how many School Safety Agents are there?

10                      DEPUTY CHIEF KING: You have three.

11                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Three, right?

12                      DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yes.

13                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay, so if  
14 you're-- I'm just doing a little math...

15                      DEPUTY CHIEF KING: No, no, no...

16                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I can't help it. I  
17 taught it. So if there are three scanners. Let's say  
18 there are three scanners and 3,000 kids— three times  
19 three is nine, plus one, you said, for 3,000 kids,  
20 there's a minimum of one. So, at a minimum, for 3,000  
21 kids, there should be 10 assigned there. Is that the  
math?

                      DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yes.

                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay.

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2 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: And obviously, that is  
3 coupled up. I said, yeah, you have those. But as I  
4 mentioned, we have the mobile task force, we have the  
5 Admin who goes out every day to support those schools  
6 with a large number of students with morning entry,  
7 dismissal, and everything that they have-- I mean  
everything else that they might need.

8 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay. And then I  
9 just want to-- I'm going to turn it over to my  
10 co-chair in a second, and then to Council Member  
11 questions.

12 But I do want to ask about the training  
13 and project PIVOT. Because they are both important.  
14 You mentioned in, Mr. Rampersant, you mentioned in  
15 your testimony about--NYC Public Schools contribute  
16 two weeks of training to the NYPD's 20-week School  
17 Safety Agent training program. This is a training  
18 that they get-- I want to make sure that the  
19 restorative justice is what is required in your  
20 training, or is that-- or is that just one of the  
21 things they may get trained on?

22 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: The Restorative--the  
23 Restorative Practices-- Restorative Practices is  
24 something that was newly added to the training of the

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2     School Safety Agents. I would say for the last maybe  
3     five or six school safety classes, we've been  
4     training School Safety Agents in Restorative  
5     Practices.

6                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And is there any  
7     continuing education requirement for School Safety  
8     Agents in de-escalation tactics or in Restorative  
9     Justice, or problem solving techniques?

10                   CHIEF RAMPERSANT: One of the things that  
11     we ask our schools to do is try to incorporate the  
12     School Safety Agents and the trainings that are done  
13     at the schools, uh, schools that are doing the  
14     restorative work with true fidelity. They're training  
15     school staff, and we try to-- well, we ask that they  
16     don't absent school safety from those spaces. One of  
17     the things that we've... (CROSS-TALK)

18                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Is it-- you asked  
19     them or are they required?

20                   CHIEF RAMPERSANT: They're not required.  
21     They are inviting the School Safety Agents to those  
22     trainings, right? We have what... (CROSS-TALK)

23                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Can you just talk a  
24     little bit about the decision? I don't mean to  
25     interrupt, but I really want to get to this, you

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2     know, School Safety is dealing with very high stress  
3     situations in some cases... (CROSS-TALK)

4           CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Absolutely.

5           CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And so can you tell  
6     me more about the decision not to require continuing  
7     de-escalation training for School Safety Agents when  
8     it's wrapped into the Professional Development days,  
9     let's say that where there are no students in the  
10    school?

11           CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Absolutely, and I  
12    appreciate that question.

13           One of the things that I want to make  
14    perfectly clear is we can't mandate School Safety  
15    Agents to do anything, right? We don't directly  
16    supervise the School Safety Agents. So that's why I  
17    use the term "invite" School Safety Agents to  
18    participate in training offered by school staff.

19           CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Who can mandate  
20    them?

21           CHIEF RAMPERSANT: The Police Department?

            CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay. How are you  
            doing?

            So we have a situation here where I'm  
            just asking the School Safety Agents to get a ton of



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2 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: We...

3 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay, you do...

4 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: We do that already.

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And how often do  
6 you do that?

7 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Usually, we try to  
8 utilize the times when school is off to bring  
everybody in.

9 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And is that in  
10 conjunction with the NYPD or is that straight from  
11 the sorry-- is that in conjunction with the DOE or is  
that straight from the NYPD?

12 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: No, that's something  
13 that we do our, you know, that we do ourselves. So we  
14 take the initiative to do that at our own training  
unit... (CROSS-TALK)

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And then...  
16 (CROSS-TALK)

17 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Chair, if I may?

18 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yes, please.

19 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: So one of the things  
20 that we did to help double down on the training for  
21 the School Safety Division is we've trained their  
trainers, right? So all of their school safety

2 trainers participate in an 11-day training on  
3 Restorative Practices. And so the Fundamentals of  
4 Restorative Practices, School Safety is doing sort of  
5 their annual training for all of their School Safety  
6 Agents.

7 So this is the first year that it has  
8 been done in conjunction with New York City Public  
9 Schools. But we definitely did have their folks  
10 trained to continue to turnkey the training.

11 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And so now, in the  
12 years going forward, there's an annual training for  
13 School Safety Agents on Restorative Justice and  
14 De-Escalation Practices? Is that what I'm hearing?

15 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: That is correct.

16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay. That's good.  
17 The last--with the plan and then to project PIVOT.  
18 There's training beyond-- there's training beyond  
19 Restorative Justice and De-Escalation. There are  
20 large concerns about non-local law enforcement,  
21 namely ICE, being around schools, coming into  
schools. When was the last time that guidance was  
updated for the schools? And to what extent are  
School Safety Agents required to be trained on the  
guidance for non-local law enforcement?

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2 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: We instruct our School  
3 Safety Agents not to engage. The protocol is that if  
4 anyone from ICE agents...

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: You can ICE,  
6 yeah...

7 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: An ICE agent comes  
8 into the school, we immediately report, obviously we  
9 inform and notify the principal, and that's the  
10 extent of our involvement.

11 DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: Good afternoon, Chair.  
12 Deputy Chief Thomas Alps, the Executive Officer of  
13 Patrol Services Bureau.

14 Our policy was updated in January of  
15 2025, and it strictly states that we don't assist or  
16 engage in Civil Immigration Enforcement. And then the  
17 policy states, should an officer encounter a federal  
18 agent engaging in Civil Immigration Enforcement,  
19 there's notification up the chain of command to a  
20 Deputy Chief who would then consult with our Legal  
21 Bureau and give guidance on how to proceed forward.

CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. And have  
New York City Public Schools updated their guidance  
as well? Or, when was the last time New York City  
Public Schools updated their guidance?

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2 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: So the New York City  
3 Public Schools guidance is ongoing. It's updated, you  
4 know, regularly. As a matter of fact, there are some  
5 changes coming to policy now. I can get you a more  
6 definitive answer as it relates to what has changed  
with the existing policy.

7 I do have one of my colleagues here to  
8 speak about the existing policy and what we have done  
9 and continue to do to ensure that our young people  
are safe in our buildings.

10 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I'm going to swear  
11 you in. Are you ready?

12 SENIOR DIRECTOR DANTZLER: (INAUDIBLE)

13 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: You can do whatever  
14 you're comfortable with as long as you raise that  
right hand; it's up to you.

15 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
16 whole truth, and nothing but the truth before these  
17 Committees and to respond honestly to Council Member  
questions?

18 SENIOR DIRECTOR DANTZLER: I do.

19 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

20 SENIOR DIRECTOR DANTZLER: Good afternoon,  
21 Members. My name is Kevin Dantzler. I am the Senior

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2 Director in the Office of Safety and Prevention  
3 Partnerships in New York City Public Schools.

4 With respect to non-local law  
5 enforcement, as a general proposition, I want to  
6 state from the outset that New York City Public  
7 Schools does not consent to non-local law enforcement  
gaining access to school buildings or facilities.

8 However, should there be a visit by non-  
9 local law enforcement, all school staff have been  
10 trained and advised that a School Safety Agent is to  
11 contact the principal and/or designee, a leader in  
12 the school, and have that non-local law enforcement  
agent wait outside.

13 As you heard in our beginning marks,  
14 there's a door locking system where folks don't gain  
15 access unless they're being admitted by the door-- a  
16 (INAUDIBLE) access system. So the agent is to wait  
17 outside the premises. This principal and/or designee  
18 is to greet that officer, obtain the reason for their  
19 visit, get their name, their credentials, and, in the  
20 event there's some official documentation by way of  
21 court order, subpoena, warrant, and get that  
information and take that information and contact  
Senior Field Counsel.

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2                       Every single school in New York City  
3 public schools is supported by Senior Field Counsel.  
4 That documentation is to be transmitted to Senior  
5 Field Counsel for their review to ensure that it is  
6 valid.

7                       In the event that documentation is not  
8 valid, the principal and/or designee is advised that  
9 they should not allow non-local law enforcement to  
10 enter the building. They are to refuse entry.

11                      However, in the event that documentation  
12 has been verified as being valid, of course, all of  
13 our personnel are advised to comply with lawful  
14 subpoenas and/or court orders.

15                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. I just  
16 want to make you aware that there was an incident  
17 before dismissal, a principal had verified ICE  
18 presence near the school building. When the principal  
19 escalated, there was no clear guidance for that kind  
20 of situation. They were unclear if they could call a  
21 shelter-in-place-- shelter-in, especially since it  
was a co-located campus. I'm going to leave it there.

                      I do want to come back to this, and I  
have a number of other questions, and so do my  
colleagues, about ICE specifically, and about your

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2 Restorative Justice Practices. But I want to turn it  
3 over to my co-chair, Chair Feliz, for his line of  
4 questioning.

5           And thank you for your answers to the  
6 question, although the Deputy Chief has one more  
7 answer.

8           DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Thank you for the  
9 opportunity. I just kind of want to clarify, and I  
10 forgot to mention that, obviously, at the beginning  
11 of the school year, when I was assigned as a School  
12 Safety Division Commanding Officer, I did an  
13 assessment of the personnel. And over 100 School  
14 Safety Agents who had been assigned to administrative  
15 duties were put back in schools.

16           That was definitely one of the things  
17 that I instituted and helped us to reinforce the  
18 deployment at schools. So I'm sorry that I didn't say  
19 that... (CROSS-TALK)

20           CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you for doing  
21 that. Thank you.

            DEPUTY CHIEF KING: I wanted to clarify  
that because that makes a big difference.

            CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. Thank  
you.

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2 Chair Feliz?

3 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you, Chair  
4 Dinowitz.

5 I'll focus first on School Safety Agents,  
6 and then I'll ask about school crossing guards. We  
7 want to know what's going well, and we, of course,  
8 want to know areas that need additional attention.  
9 Many questions about recruitment and retention of  
10 School Safety Agents, also budget-related needs,  
11 safety-related incidents in schools and outside the  
12 school, the scanning equipment being used, including  
13 how effective it is, and much more.

14 As mentioned earlier today, in my opening  
15 statement, the staffing shortage is having real  
16 negative, detrimental consequences for our students  
17 and our school communities, including students being  
18 made late to class due to the batch systems that we  
19 have in place.

20 And also speaking about the staffing  
21 shortage, we've had many, many, many conversations  
with School Safety Agents. We've heard directly from  
them, and they stated that there's very low morale in  
the Division for many reasons, including being  
underpaid, understaffed, feeling undervalued, and

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2           also having to unnecessarily travel long distances  
3           with very little to no notice.

4                         And of course, I'm not a School Safety  
5           Agent. I don't have any personal knowledge of that.  
6           But given the high turnover that continues to exist,  
7           I think the high turnover rate speaks volumes on the  
              points that they're making on that.

8                         So I'll start with some basic questions.  
9           What is the budgeted headcount for School Safety  
10           Agents? How many vacancies do we have? How many open  
              positions are there?

11                        DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Our authorized head  
12           count is 4,065, with the actual head count of 3,915.  
13           As I mentioned earlier during my testimony, our  
              current vacancy is 360.

14                        CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay, 360.

15                        And speaking about the long lines that I  
16           mentioned earlier, due to the lack of safety agents,  
17           is this something that you have heard about? If yes,  
18           how often does that happen? Long lines around the  
19           schools because there's not enough School Safety  
              Agents to scan the...

20                        DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Well, this is  
21           obviously the first time I've heard about this. Feel

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2           free to let me know if there are any specific schools  
3           or any other incidents that you might have heard  
4           about, you know, please bring them to my attention.  
5           I'll be more than happy to look into it.

6                         But I'll start by explaining what the  
7           scanning protocol looks like for us on a daily basis.

8                         Basically, our scanning process starts  
9           obviously, before the start of-- before the kids get  
10          to school. We do have, as I mentioned, special  
11          services which are basically support units that deal  
12          with scanning, supporting many of our scanning  
13          schools throughout the city, and we've relied on our  
14          mobile task force, which we have one per borough, to  
15          assist with morning entry, and expedite the scanning  
16          at schools.

17                        CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay, so you've never  
18          heard about students being made late to class due to  
19          the fact that there are not enough School Safety  
20          Agents to scan the items?

21                        DEPUTY CHIEF KING: No.

                          CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay, that's actually  
                          very interesting because my principals are very  
                          vocal, especially about this issue, when they've been  
                          reaching out repeatedly to the School Safety Office.

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2           So you're not knowing that information, that's  
3           interesting to say the least. Uh...

4                     DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Well, I speak through  
5           e-mail with many of the principals if there's any  
6           issue.

7                     But one of the things that we're doing is  
8           that, you know, I'm like, as I mentioned before, very  
9           heavily involved with everything that goes on with  
10          school safety. So we address issues as they come in  
11          real time. And that's not only what I'm doing, but  
12          it's what I'm expecting from everybody else under my  
13          leadership.

14                    CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: What about the  
15          Department of Education? Is the Department of  
16          Education aware of any lateness caused by the  
17          staffing shortage or due to not enough School Safety  
18          Agents?

19                    CHIEF RAMPERSANT: So thank you for the  
20          question.

21                    Obviously, it's an ongoing issue as it  
              relates to the shortfall. It is definitely being felt  
              throughout the school system, as you just indicated  
              in conversation with principals. It is something that  
              our folks on the floor are dealing with directly with

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2 principals, and they deal directly with commanding  
3 officers.

4           And as the Chief continues to share her  
5 personal experiences with these notifications, one of  
6 the key responsibilities for people on the floor is  
7 to make sure that that information doesn't make it  
8 to, you know, hierarchy. So these are, in many cases,  
9 things that are dealt with at the lowest level.

10           CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Talk to us about some  
11 of the stories that you've heard from educators and  
12 parents, and students on this issue. How late? What's  
13 the worst incident that you've heard where students  
14 are made late to class?

15           CHIEF RAMPERSANT: I think the worst  
16 incident that I've heard is a scanning machine  
17 breaking down, and that's the school that requires  
18 more than one scanning mechanism, which means that we  
19 have to now rely on a single machine. This particular  
20 incident was quickly remedied, but just think about  
21 going through an airport, and if they delay one  
22 person, that backs up another person.

23           So the most I've heard is a machine that  
24 broke down, and that was quickly remedied, but the

25

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2           time frame by which it takes sometimes causes the  
3           backup.

4                       CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: And you could get back  
5           to us if you don't have the information in front of  
6           you, but approximately how many students did that  
7           school have? And also, how late were the students  
8           made to class? Are we talking about 10 minutes? Half  
              an hour?

9                       CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Yeah, I can definitely  
10           get back to you with this particular school.

11                      CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: But do you have a  
12           ballpark of how late the students were made to class?

13                      CHIEF RAMPERSANT: No, right? Because this  
14           is not a single session in school, right? So there  
15           are students who have a first period, and there are  
16           students who have a second period, right? Depending  
17           on where you are on the line is going to determine  
18           whether or not you're late for your class or early  
19           for your class, right?

20                      Students with the second period, who come  
21           to school early, may just be on time for their second  
              period class, while students in the first period may  
              be later. So I have to get back to you.

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2                   CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Yeah. So, if you don't  
3 have the information on this incident, that's fine.  
4 But, do you have any knowledge of any schools or any  
5 information on how late the students were made for  
6 any incidents related to lateness due to the lack of  
7 School Safety Agents?

8                   CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Due to the lack of  
9 School Safety Agents?

10                  CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Or insufficient, they  
11 call out, or the equipment breaks down?

12                  CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Yeah, yes, I appreciate  
13 the question.

14                   I don't know the timeframes by which  
15 young people are late, because I'm not focused on how  
16 late they are. I'm focused on whether or not students  
17 are late and what we can do to remedy the problem,  
18 right? So my focus is always on getting the people on  
19 the floor to mitigate some of what we're experiencing  
20 at a particular school.

21                  CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you for the  
22 information.

23                   I also want to recognize Council Members  
24 Lee and Krishnan, who have joined us.

25

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2                       How is retention in this division, in the  
3 division related to SSAs and ASSAs?

4                       DEPUTY CHIEF KING: We are very proactive  
5 when it comes to our retention efforts, and I would  
6 take the best way to describe it, uh, I'll start by  
7 saying that our priority or main focus is to keep  
8 morale up. Obviously, you want to make sure that the  
9 School Safety Agents assigned to our division feel  
10 valued. I'm making it my business, or we make our  
11 business at all levels, to ensure that the work that  
12 they are doing is being acknowledged.

13                      How do we do that? Obviously, through  
14 issuing Commander's Days. We also do school visits,  
15 where I personally, myself and my staff, thank them  
16 for just being there, for being themselves in the  
17 role that they play in the safety of our schools. We  
18 have training opportunities, we have scholarship  
19 opportunities, as I mentioned in my testimony. We  
20 encourage them to advance; we encourage career  
21 advancement among the different ranks of School  
Safety. We also do discretionary promotions from  
Level I to Level III, which is a supervisory  
promotion for them. Another component of our  
retention efforts is peer support. We have a

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2       dedicated group of peer support staff who work in  
3       conjunction with the NYPD and the Employment  
4       Assistance Unit to provide counseling and guidance,  
5       and emotional support to our School Safety Agents.  
6       Obviously, they are there for everybody else, so I  
7       have to make sure that we are there for them. The  
8       Peer Support Units also follow up on members who are  
9       long-term sick, those members who are injured in the  
10      line of duty, and so on. And that's the-- obviously,  
11      pay equity, we want to ensure that available and  
12      voluntary overtime, their salary and earnings are up  
13      to-- so they can be up to par in comparison with  
14      other civil service titles.

13                   CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Can you just repeat  
14      the budgeted head count, the actual head count on the  
15      vacancies? Is it 4,065 budgeted headcount? Actual  
16      headcount approximately 3,900?

16                   DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yeah, well, I'm sorry,  
17      let me just rephrase that. In all ranks, it is 4,065;  
18      for School Safety Agents, it's 3,915.

18                   CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: That's the budget  
19      headcount?

20                   DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yes, for School Safety  
21      Agents.

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2                   CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: And there are  
3 approximately 360 vacancies?

4                   DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yeah, 300 and  
5 (UNINTELLIGIBLE) 55.

6                   CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: How long have those  
7 positions been vacant for? And also, what's the  
8 average tenure? How long do these School Safety  
9 Agents last in the division?

10                   CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Chief, if I may?

11                   DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yes...

12                   CHIEF RAMPERSANT: So, looking at payroll  
13 data, I found out that roughly 75% of the School  
14 Safety Agents are at top pay, meaning five years or  
15 more.

16                   CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay.

17                   How many schools are currently operating  
18 with fewer SSAs than their assigned allocation?

19                   DEPUTY CHIEF KING: I don't have that  
20 information with me, but I could definitely get back  
21 to you on that.

                  CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Approximately how  
many-- what's the average-- on a daily basis, how  
many School Safety Agents do we have that haven't,

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2           for example, called out and et cetera, because we're  
3           hearing that that's an issue as well?

4                     DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Roughly 20%, per  
5           borough... (CROSS-TALK)

6                     CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Roughly 20%?

7                     DEPUTY CHIEF KING: 20%, yes.

8                     CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Call outs?

9                     DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yes.

10                    CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: On a daily basis?

11                    DEPUTY CHIEF KING: It all depends; it  
12           varies, 20 or less.

13                    CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: And when that happens  
14           and there's not enough School Safety Agents at a  
15           specific school that requires it, what happens?

16                    DEPUTY CHIEF KING: As I mentioned, we  
17           have at our administrative roll out, that is on a  
18           daily basis, and a mobile task force.

19                    CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. So I have some  
20           more questions on equipment and also items that are  
21           identified and confiscated using metal detectors. So  
              I'll ask about it. I'll ask about violence-related  
              incidents in our schools.

                      What weapons have you identified and  
                      confiscated using metal detectors? I'm sure we've

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2           heard about knives and think pepper spray, things of  
3           that sort. What are...

4                     DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Dangerous instruments,  
5           you know, as you mentioned, utility knives, razors,  
6           you know, tasers, but the most common weapons will be  
7           pepper spray and utility knives.

8                     CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: What are some of the  
9           most serious weapons that you've identified this past  
10          year and have confiscated?

11                    DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Through scanning?

12                    CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Yeah.

13                    DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Weapons, uh,  
14          firearms.

15                    CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Firearms? Okay.  
16          Approximately how many firearms?

17                    DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Two.

18                    CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Two in the last...

19                    DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Through scanning, yes.

20                    CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: What about, we've  
21          heard a lot about knives. How many knives? Is that  
22          something that we've...

23                    DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yeah, we can't... 680  
24          year to date.

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2                   CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay, 680. School  
3 year, right? From September... (CROSS-TALK)

4                   DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yeah, mm-hmm, from the  
5 beginning of the fiscal year-- of the school year.

6                   CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Any other serious  
7 items that you've confiscated? And can you provide  
8 some data on that?

9                   DEPUTY CHIEF KING: For razors, 165,  
10 tasers 40, knives 680, as I mentioned, and scalpels,  
11 173.

12                   CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: What percentage of  
13 school incidents occur inside the school buildings  
14 versus outside the school building?

15                   DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Well, obviously, we  
16 could only account for what happens on school  
17 grounds. So I definitely could give you that as we're  
18 down by 5.5% year to date in terms of index crime,  
19 262 versus 273.

20                   CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: How many...  
21 (CROSS-TALK)

                  DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Compared to last year,  
obviously.

2 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: How many of those  
3 incidents involved weapons, and what weapons were  
4 most common?

5 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Just give me one  
6 second. Yeah, 20% of our (UNINTELLIGIBLE) schools  
7 are, you know, involve weapons.

8 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Hmm. Okay.

9 A few questions on the equipment that you  
10 use. How do we decide whether-- based on what I've  
11 read, there are three types of scanning, including  
12 the permanent scanning, the random scanning, and also  
13 the much more random scanning with a broader pull.  
14 How do we decide what schools get metal detectors on  
15 a permanent basis versus on a random basis?

16 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: I'll explain that.  
17 Obviously, that is a determination that is done in  
18 collaboration with DOE and the input of the  
19 principals. That's not just based on what the NYPD  
20 wants; it doesn't work like that. So we have a total  
21 of 91 full-time scanning schools, about 89, I'm  
sorry, two random scanning schools. And then we have  
what is called, obviously, unannounced scanning,  
which is basically conducted on a rotation basis at  
those schools that don't have any scanning. Year to

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2     date, we have conducted-- we do unannounced scanning  
3     on a daily basis. Obviously, we have close to 1,900  
4     schools. That being said, we've done year-to-date  
5     over 250 unannounced scans throughout the city. Over  
6     3,000 weapons have been recovered, and 47% of those  
7     have been recovered through scanning.

8           CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: A few questions about  
9     equipment. Not too long ago, metal detectors were  
10    replaced with an open gate system, which basically  
11    uses two pillars as a walk-through system, a metal  
12    detection system—many benefits, including less  
13    intrusive, faster scanning, and et cetera. But we did  
14    hear a lot about a lot of concerns related to that,  
15    including the system not being effective at detecting  
16    weapons.

17           Can you talk to us a little bit about  
18    that? Is the open gate system still being used?

19           DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Absolutely. You know  
20    we have our screening and scanning processes as a  
21    touchless, multi-layer process. Obviously, it is  
22    composed of the scanning x-ray, the open gate, and  
23    hand wands. And we haven't had any reports,  
24    obviously, you know, by just providing you with the

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2           numbers of weapons we have recovered, almost half of  
3           them through scanning. So it is working.

4                       CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: And what schools  
5           receive the traditional metal detectors versus  
6           this... (CROSS-TALK)

7                       DEPUTY CHIEF KING: They all have the  
8           three components.

9                       CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: The three components?

10                      DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yes.

11                      CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: So they have the open  
12           gate, the traditional... (CROSS-TALK)

13                      DEPUTY CHIEF KING: The scanning x-ray and  
14           obviously the hand wand, which is utilized once you  
15           go through the open gate. If we get alerted, there's  
16           a light that goes off, then we conduct the hand wand.

17                      CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay, so the open gate  
18           is the first step, and if more is needed, then the...

19                      DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Exactly.

20                      CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Then the...

21                      DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Then we'll go with the  
              hand wand.

                      CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Would you say you have  
                      the necessary equipment to be able to properly  
                      achieve the goal of detecting weapons? But of course,

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2           in a non-intrusive way, and of course, obviously  
3           quickly, so that we don't make students late to  
4           class?

5                     DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Listen, to be honest,  
6           I think when it comes to the safety of our children,  
7           there will never be enough detectors in New York  
8           City. However, you know, as part of our allotted  
9           budget, we ensure that we purchase equipment because  
10          obviously, stuff breaks down, things could go out of  
11          warranty. So (UNINTELLIGIBLE) have an order of 40  
12          scanning x-rays that we should be getting in a couple  
13          more weeks.

14                    CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: So earlier today, the  
15          Department of Education mentioned that there was one  
16          instance where the-- was it the metal detector that  
17          broke down or the open gate?

18                    CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Gate the x-ray machine.

19                    CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: The x-ray machine.  
20          How old are these x-ray machines on  
21          average? Is it very old equipment—10 to 20 years  
              old?

                    DEPUTY INSPECTOR KIM: Good afternoon,  
                    Chair, Deputy Inspector Hwan Kim.

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2 On average, they are probably five to  
3 seven years old.

4 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Five to seven years?

5 DEPUTY INSPECTOR KIM: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: And how long do they  
usually last? How often do they break down?

7 DEPUTY INSPECTOR KIM: So, I have machines  
8 that have been working for the last 12 years, as  
9 opposed to machines that break down within a year. So  
it varies machine to machine.

10 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: In the past 12 months,  
11 approximately how many of these machines have you  
12 heard break down?

13 DEPUTY INSPECTOR KIM: Daily.

14 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: They break down on a  
daily basis?

15 DEPUTY INSPECTOR KIM: On a daily basis.  
16 We're calling our MDU, which is our mobile unit that  
17 assesses and diagnoses issues, and we have the vendor  
18 come out on a daily basis to work on the warranties  
when they break down.

19 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: And specifically,  
20 which machines are breaking down? Is it the x-ray  
21 machines?

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2 DEPUTY INSPECTOR KIM: Right. It's a  
3 combination of Astrophysics as well as the Smiths.

4 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: And when they break  
5 down, what are the steps you take? I'm sure, as you  
6 say, you call a technician, how long do they usually  
7 take to respond, fix, and get it back operational...

(CROSS-TALK)

8 DEPUTY INSPECTOR KIM: So our first step  
9 is calling our MDU, which is our internal trained  
10 agents who look at these machines and fix them. If  
11 that is something that they cannot fix, we reached  
12 out to the vendor, and they will try to come out  
within that week to fix the machines.

13 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Within that week?

14 DEPUTY INSPECTOR KIM: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: And every school has  
16 one of these? Approximately how many of these  
machines do we have through our entire education...

17 DEPUTY INSPECTOR KIM: (UNINTELLIGIBLE)

18 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Is it at every school  
19 or half of the schools?

20 DEPUTY INSPECTOR KIM: So, 91 schools that  
21 are scanning, and we have a total of 208 x-ray  
machines throughout the city.

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2 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: So the 280, that's the  
3 one that we hear about on a daily basis?

4 DEPUTY INSPECTOR KIM: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: And these are the ones  
6 that are generally causing the delays when we hear  
7 about these--

8 DEPUTY INSPECTOR KIM: That's correct.

9 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: So, just curious, are  
10 there any plans to purchase new equipment? Why is  
11 this-- I think the first time that I hear about  
12 this...

13 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: I mentioned that we  
14 have an order of 40 x-rays that we should be getting  
15 in the next couple of weeks. As we move into the next  
16 fiscal year-- on a yearly basis, in terms of a fiscal  
17 year, we always order additional equipment, in case  
18 something breaks down. So that's part of our  
19 purchases. And it is obviously a priority.

20 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Approximately how much  
21 does this equipment cost?

DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Roughly, between \$24-  
\$25,000.

CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Twenty-five thousand  
per piece?

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2 Okay. All right, so I'll have many more  
3 questions, but I know we have many colleagues who  
4 have joined us, so I'll pause here.

5 So first on the list for questions is...

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Joseph.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. Chairs.

8 Quick question, you mentioned pay, what  
is the top pay for an SSA Agent?

9 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: It's \$58,000.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. And in  
11 your testimony, you said last year the School Safety  
12 moved the Office of SSA to the First Commissioner, to  
receive the full attention it deserves.

13 Is there any data that you had that drove  
14 this decision? What was the data that drove this  
15 decision to move it out of Community Affairs, and  
16 what differences are you seeing on the ground  
currently?

17 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Our mission is still  
18 the same, which is to provide safety.

19 You know, School Safety is still  
20 community-based, and our goal is to always look out  
21 for our children. However, the transition from  
Community Affairs to the First Deputy has provided a

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2           greater focus on operational needs. Because obviously  
3           that was necessary. It has really strengthened our  
4           relationships with our partners at DOE, the labor  
5           union, and all the different stakeholders at any  
6           given-- they are part of what we do, and also it has  
7           enhanced accountability among the different layers of  
              school safety.

8                         COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: How do SSA agents  
9           work with Project PIVOT? I have-- All right. How has  
10          the partnership with School Safety Agents, NYPD, and  
11          Project PIVOT-- because the work is similar, even  
12          though it's with Cure Violence groups. Do you sit  
13          down and meet and talk about the plan? What's the  
              comprehensive plan?

14                        DEPUTY CHIEF KING: That is something that  
15          the borough commanders work out with principals.  
16          Obviously, we are aware that there are 350 schools  
17          that are enrolled in Project PIVOT, so it's something  
18          that we definitely support by having our agents there  
19          (INAUDIBLE) programs are going on.

20                        COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: But you are  
21          talking to each other, right?

                          DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yes, that is correct.

                          COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Okay.

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2 My next thing will be around student  
3 suspension reports. It shows that Black students  
4 represent approximately 19.5% of enrollment, and  
5 receive an average of 39.1% of all the suspensions  
6 during 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025.

7 Students with disabilities represent  
8 approximately 22% of enrollment and receive an  
9 average of 38.5% of all suspensions over the same  
10 period.

11 How does New York City Public Schools  
12 account for this disparity?

13 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: So, thank you, Chair.  
14 Thank you, Chair Joseph, always Chair Joseph to me,  
15 uh, always depend on you to bring the tough  
16 questions.

17 The issue of disparity is one that  
18 continues to sort of plague this system. We take this  
19 very seriously, and we continue to look at different  
20 ways by which we can mitigate this issue of  
21 disparities. Currently, we are seeing that the  
approximate day of suspension for our Black students  
is 19.5. Sorry, they represent... (CROSS-TALK)

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: It's 19.5% of  
3 enrollment, but the average suspension...

4 (CROSS-TALK)

5 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Is enrollment, yes,  
yes, yes, yes... (CROSS-TALK)

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: is 39.1%.

7 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Yes, 39.1%, but we--  
8 through the work that we've done since the change in  
9 the discipline code, we've seen tremendous  
10 reductions, not nowhere where we want to be, but  
11 certainly not where we were. We are seeing the gaps  
12 close. They are closing at a larger rate than we've  
13 seen before, and we continue to make those respective  
investments.

14 We've made some changes, such as looking  
15 at the discipline code in requiring staff to request  
approval for any... (CROSS-TALK)

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Are we updating  
17 those codes? Because I feel like they're outdated.

18 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: I'll answer the first  
question...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Mm-hmm

20 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: (INAUDIBLE) the second  
21 question.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: You've got 56  
3 seconds.

4 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Last year, the average  
5 suspension for our Black students was 12.2 points,  
6 two days, and that is different than the 29 days that  
7 existed prior to the change in the discipline code.  
8 Yes, we are updating the discipline code. We are in  
9 the process of starting to have engagement with our  
10 external partners, such as advocates, parents,  
11 student representatives, and principals. And you'll  
12 hear more about that, right? Because we're looking  
13 for input from our external agency and internal  
14 agency partners on what needs to change as far as the  
15 code goes.

16 But back to your original question  
17 regarding disparities, this is work that we are  
18 continuing to focus on, and we want to get that  
19 number, as I said, we're down to 12 days. We want to  
20 get that number to less with a real focus on the why  
(TIMER) is that for me?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Chairs?

19 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Uh, you can conclude  
20 your question, yeah.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you.

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2 Also, with our students with  
3 disabilities, how much are we using MDRs to put those  
4 suspension (sic)? And I also need a breakdown of  
5 superintendent suspensions and breakdowns for  
6 students, especially students of color, and I'm sure  
the Committee would love to review that as well.

7 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Yeah, I could  
8 definitely get back to you with the breakdown on  
9 superintendent suspension for those respective  
categories, which you mentioned.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Mm-hmm.

11 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: As you know, the MDR  
12 process is a requirement when it comes to suspensions  
13 of students with IEPs. That data I'll bring back for  
14 you as well. We are intentional about employing all  
15 of the respective interventions of which I spoke to  
earlier before a suspension is administered,  
16 especially for our students with an IEP.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: A particular  
18 student-- students in foster care are subjected to a  
19 lot of students superintendent suspension, more than  
serious categories lasting more than six days. How  
20 are you working with the Office of Foster Care to  
21 make sure that we are not suspending our students in

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2           foster care who come to school, by the time they're  
3           placed in a home, it's 30 days of absenteeism, and  
4           then we're adding on to that. Can you tell me how  
5           you're working with the Office?

6                        CHIEF RAMPERSANT: I appreciate that  
7           question as well. Students in foster care make up a  
8           small percentage of New York City Public School  
9           students. Any one suspension is one suspension too  
10          many, especially for students who represent a sort of  
11          our vulnerable population. Some of the things that we  
12          have done in New York City Public Schools is that we  
13          are one of the only school systems in the country  
14          that has a particular office... (CROSS-TALK)

15                       COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Oh, I know.

16                       CHIEF RAMPERSANT: I'm sorry?

17                       COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: I know, I was  
18          there. I helped create it, that's why I'm asking the  
19          question.

20                       CHIEF RAMPERSANT: An office focused on  
21          supporting students in foster care, and we are  
22          partnering with agents of external partners, such as  
23          advocates with children. Also, ACS, as you know.

24                       Some of the things that we're doing to  
25          make sure that we're tapping in to our young people

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2           in foster care is connecting students with trusting  
3           adults, using daily check-ins, reviewing data trends  
4           to ensure that we are focusing laser focus on  
5           expanding our social-emotional supports and  
6           behavioral strategies for young people as well and  
7           improving the communication, maintaining stable  
8           (INAUDIBLE) by utilizing some of those resources that  
              I talked about earlier.

9                        COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: And how do you  
10           track them, make sure they're not losing out on their  
11           work, and make sure that they're caught up  
              academically?

12                       CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Yeah. So definitely  
13           that is the work that is happening with that  
14           particular office, of which you were instrumental in  
15           helping us bring to fruition. And they are looking at  
16           data on a regular basis, and they are laser-focused  
17           on any student who drops between a particular  
              threshold. And... (CROSS-TALK)

18                       COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Please share the  
19           data with the Committee as a whole.

20                       CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you. Thank you  
              so much, uh...

21                       CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you, Council  
3 Member Joseph. And we'll have a second round of  
4 questions, by the way, if anyone has additional  
5 questions.

6 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Council Member  
7 Hankerson?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKERSON: Thank you,  
9 Chairs.

10 I want to continue down a similar line of  
11 questioning as my colleague. When an incident happens  
12 in a school, who has the final authority to decide  
13 whether it's handled by school discipline or  
14 escalated to an arrest? Is that decision made by  
15 school staff, School Safety Agents, or outside--or  
16 from the precincts, excuse me? Are there written  
17 criteria? And can you walk us through that process  
18 step by step?

19 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Thank you for your  
20 question.

21 Obviously, whether or not School Safety  
or PD will be taking the lead on any type of  
enforcement will depend on the gravity of the crime.  
But for minor violations and petty offenses, when we  
look at the totality of interventions that School

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2       Safety Agents have been involved in, that number  
3       being 7,000 for the school year to date, 7,389  
4       interventions. Nearly 80% of that number, which  
5       basically accounts for 5,831, have been mitigated by  
6       DOE.

7                           COUNCIL MEMBER HANKERSON: Thank you.

8           Is it standard that a student can receive  
9       both a suspension and a face arrest for the same  
10       incident? What safeguards exist to prevent  
11       duplicative consequences? Are families notified when  
12       both tracks are pursued, and has the Department  
13       evaluated the impact of this approach? Either  
14       department DOE or NYPD.

15                          CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Yes. So thank you very  
16       much, Sir.

17           So, as you know, on the part of New York  
18       City Public Schools, we don't administer arrests for  
19       young people. We are governed by a discipline code,  
20       while the NYPD utilizes the Penal Code.  
21       Unfortunately, the answer to the question of whether  
          or not the student is penalized on both fronts is  
          yes, because what action the Police Department takes  
          doesn't sort of guide the response from New York City  
          Public Schools.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKERSON: What  
3 coordination happens between DOE and NYPD in these  
4 instances?

5 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: In terms of when...

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKERSON: In an instance  
7 of when you have a student who is facing discipline  
8 from both the school administration and the Police  
9 Department, is there coordination or is it that, uh,  
10 let's say DOE goes one route, NYPD goes another  
11 route, and, you know, the two don't communicate? I  
12 would like to know what the coordination is...

13 (CROSS-TALK)

14 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Oh no, we are in  
15 constant communication.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And is that  
17 communication also transparent to the parents of that  
18 student as well?

19 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: So, yes. Just to  
20 reiterate the answer to the question. An incident  
21 transpires in-- there is a difference in the level of  
incidents. So the severity of the incident sort of  
determines whether or not there is a response from  
the NYPD versus just New York City Public Schools  
taking action. In every case where the NYPD is

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2           involved, we are obligated to make notification to  
3           the student's parents. There is, in fact, a  
4           conversation that takes place on the floor that  
5           outlines the response from the Police Department that  
6           is going to be taken in those cases where action is  
7           administered. But the New York City Public Schools'  
              response is not necessarily shared.

8                        COUNCIL MEMBER HANKERSON: Okay.

9                        I just want to change topics really  
10                      quickly. Chief, you mentioned in your testimony that  
11                      scanning status partially determines the number of  
12                      School Safety Agents assigned to a school. Can you  
13                      expound on scanning status? What do you define as  
                      scanning status and...

14                      DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Meaning that whether  
15                      the school is a scanning school or not, that's what I  
                      meant by that.

16                      COUNCIL MEMBER HANKERSON: So there are  
17                      more agents assigned if there are metal detectors in  
18                      a school?

19                      DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Well, obviously,  
20                      because you have to man the equipment.

21                      COUNCIL MEMBER HANKERSON: So let's just  
                      say, throughout the day, in a school where there are

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2 metal detectors, you have nine to 10 agents. After  
3 the morning, uh, I want to say morning rush, but when  
4 students are actually coming into school, are those  
5 agents assigned to other schools or do they stay  
6 (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

7           DEPUTY CHIEF KING: No, they're not. They  
8 stay at the school obviously, you know, aside from  
9 scanning, that's just like, what one of the duties  
10 say they do, but they are assigned to either a fixed  
11 post in schools conducting interior patrol, you know,  
12 manning the desk, greeting the visitors, doing  
13 administrative duties, obviously responding to  
14 incidents on school grounds and engaging in the  
15 escalation, preventing a lot of the violent crimes  
16 that can potentially happen on school grounds.

17           COUNCIL MEMBER HANKERSON: Thank you.

18           So you mentioned also in your testimony  
19 that your current headcount is 3,915 agents, which is  
20 a huge drop over the last 10 years. How has that  
21 impacted the day-to-day work of a School Safety  
Agent? (TIMER)

          DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Well, as I mentioned  
earlier, yes, we recognize that we have the  
vacancies, but that hasn't deviated from our mission

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2 of providing safety. And obviously we see that on...

3 (CROSS-TALK)

4           COUNCIL MEMBER HANKERSON: I'm sure of  
5 that, but I'm sure it presents challenges, right? If  
6 I have 10 staff and now I have two staff, what are  
7 the challenges that they're facing daily?

8           DEPUTY CHIEF KING: I'm sorry, can you  
9 repeat your question?

10          COUNCIL MEMBER HANKERSON: Sure. Chairs,  
11 if I may?

12          CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: (INAUDIBLE)

13          COUNCIL MEMBER HANKERSON: So you went  
14 from, I believe, in 2016, 4,926, so roughly 5,000  
15 School Safety Agents. You're now at 3,915. That's a  
16 drop in staff. So given that, what challenges does  
17 that present for a School Safety Agent working in  
18 school—day-to-day challenges? Or is there no impact  
19 from the drop?

20          DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Well, obviously, they  
21 do work probably a few more hours. We have extended  
our dismissal coverage, obviously, to ensure the  
safety of our schools and of our students, as they go  
home as well. So, that will probably have the most  
impact.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKERSON: Okay, I know  
3 I'm out of time, so thank you.

4 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Okay.

5 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. I just  
7 want to point out, just to be clear, it's forced  
8 overtime that the school safety units are forced to  
9 take overtime, and then some of them, again, are  
10 getting comp time for this and taking days off. And  
11 just to repeat what you testified to, on any given  
12 day, 20% of agents can be out, resulting in multiple  
13 schools with fewer agents than they're assigned.

14 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Chair, if you please  
15 allow me, we have a system in place, and when I said  
16 that our overtime assignments are voluntary, they are  
17 voluntary for two reasons: First of all, because of  
18 collective bargaining, we can't force School Safety  
19 Agents to work. We could request that they work up to  
20 two tours a month. So two tours a month do not amount  
21 to a large number of hours. So it is voluntary.  
There's a sign-up, but we have something in place;  
there's a sign-up sheet that every borough has, and  
everybody signs up for overtime as they please.

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2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Is the data public  
3 on how many hours of overtime each agent has or the  
4 average each agent has? Because again, what the  
5 agents are telling me, what the principals are  
6 telling me, is not what you are telling me.

7 So I don't know where the  
8 miscommunication is. You may be talking about Level  
9 III, but the Level I agents-- tell me all the time,  
10 forced overtime, is that data public? And if not, can  
11 you share with us today?

12 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: No, it's not public.

13 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Can you share with  
14 the Committee today?

15 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: We could circle back.

16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Can you-- can  
17 you...

18 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: I will be open...

19 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Can you share with  
20 the Committee today?

21 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: I will be open to  
having a follow-up conversation on that.

CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Well, I mean, this  
is the conversation, right? That's why we have the  
hearing. I mean, I'm simply asking how many agents

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2           are taking overtime, and to what extent they are  
3           taking overtime? I'm sure, I'm sure that data that  
4           you have. You guys are very, very good at data and...

5                       MR. SEVERINO: Chair Dinowitz, I oversee  
6           the overtime.

7                       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Great.

8                       MR. SEVERINO: Looking at the overtime  
9           specifically, not operationally, but from a payroll  
10          and spending perspective.

11                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay.

12                      MR. SEVERINO: So in FY25, which is the  
13          last full fiscal year, on average, School Safety  
14          Agents had about 402 hours of overtime on average per  
15          School Safety Agent, which is roughly 33 hours per  
16          month on average.

17                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. I am  
18          going to ask more about that. But I'll turn it over  
19          to Council Member Wong.

20                      COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Thank you, Chairs.

21                      I don't think I'll have a chance to get  
              to my questions, but I heard and read the testimony  
              from Deputy Chief Mary King that yes, the authorized  
              headcount for School Safety Agents is 3,915, and  
              there are 316 School Safety Agent vacancies.

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2 And do you agree that 10 years ago, in  
3 2016, as pointed out by Councilman Hankerson, we had  
4 5,000 School Safety Agents?

5 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: I mean, that's what  
6 the data shows, but obviously...

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Okay, so the data  
8 shows that we had 5,000 School Safety Agents. So  
9 there's a big drop. We lost-- we have 1,000 fewer  
10 School Safety Agents compared to 2016. Doesn't that  
11 show that we are short of School Safety Agents, or do  
12 you have a different interpretation?

13 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: It does, but we are  
14 relentless when it comes to our recruitment efforts.  
15 And I'll expand on that. Currently have a class of--  
16 We had a new hire class of School Safety Agents, that  
17 is currently in the Academy, expected to graduate in  
18 the next couple of weeks, of 93. Our recruitment  
19 efforts are ongoing. We have partnered up with DOE,  
20 and also our labor unions, especially the CSA, which  
21 has basically helped us to do outreach during open  
filing periods. We have our Community Affairs, I'm  
sorry, Community Outreach Unit, which is within the  
School Safety Division, which is also reaching out to  
colleges and high schools. Our NYPD Recruitment

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2           Section also does its own outreach, and obviously, as  
3           I mentioned in my testimony, we utilize social media  
4           to push out.

5                        So all that work that we have put into  
6           recruiting has resulted in a pool of over 1,000  
7           Assistant School Safety Agents that are ready to be  
8           hired when the time comes.

9                        And also, there was just a School Safety  
10          test on March 23rd, of which 881 candidates passed  
11          the test. So that's the number of candidates, and  
12          when the time comes, hopefully, a list will be  
13          established. So yes, we have the vacancies. I'm not  
14          negating any of that. But are we working to make  
15          improvements? I think we are definitely moving in the  
16          right direction. There's a lot of work to do, I'm not  
17          denying that, but we are definitely moving in the  
18          right direction.

19                       COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Okay, there's a  
20          graduating class of 93 School Safety Agents, but we  
21          have 360 openings, right? So you still have around  
              200 more that you have to hire just to fill up these  
              openings. But again, macroscopically, we are 1,000  
              fewer School Safety Agents compared to 10 years ago.

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2 And then this is how I see it, right?

3 Mayor de Blasio wanted to dissolve the whole unit.

4 And then, as a result of that, hundreds, if not  
5 thousands, of School Safety Agents filed for  
6 retirement and just left the job. And after that, I  
7 just don't see the effort to budget or hire back  
8 these vacancies as a result of this mass exodus. Is  
9 this something you agree with? Is that what happened,  
or something else happened?

10 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: I can't really answer  
11 it. I was just assigned here nine months ago. I could  
12 attest to the work that I'm doing since I got  
13 assigned to School Safety. I can't speak of what  
happened prior to that.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Okay, all right.  
15 What about crossing guards? Everyone is talking about  
16 School Safety Agents. It's important, but what about  
17 the crossing guards? Is there a shortage of that, or  
18 what is the authorized headcount for that? And how  
19 many vacancies do you have? Can anyone on the panel  
20 answer that?

21 DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: Good afternoon,  
Council Member. So school crossing guards and the

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2 program itself report up to my office, the Chief of  
3 Patrols Office, and it's under my purview.

4 I'll give you a snapshot of the school  
5 crossing guards as of April 13th, 2026. Authorized  
6 head count is 2,309. Our actual head count is 2,160.  
7 That means we have a vacancy of 149. We have an  
8 additional 45 that are not accounted for in that  
9 number that are out long-term sick. We currently have  
10 100 that we expect to hire on May 11th. So they'll be  
getting trained. (TIMER) So right there, we're at or  
near our authorized headcount.

11 In 2018, our actual head count was  
12 approximately 2,500 school crossing guards. That's  
13 approximately 340 more than we currently have today.  
14 In July 2023, our authorized headcount was reduced  
15 18% from 2,702 to 2,219. That's approximately 483  
fewer crossing guards.

16 Every borough is reporting vacancies  
17 except Patrol Borough Queens South. Patrol Boroughs  
18 with significant vacancies are in Patrol Borough  
19 Manhattan North with 50 vacancies; Patrol Borough  
20 Brooklyn South has 36 vacancies; and Patrol Borough  
Manhattan South has 34 vacancies.

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2 Other boroughs with vacancies or patrols  
3 are the Bronx with 14, Brooklyn North with nine,  
4 Queens North with seven, and Staten Island with  
5 seven.

6 Commands with significant vacancies are  
7 the 2-3 Precinct in Manhattan North with 10; the 2-8  
8 Precinct with 10 vacancies; and the 19th Precinct  
with seven.

9 That's the overall picture when we talk  
10 about school crossing guards.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Okay. Do you feel  
12 there is a shortage of crossing guards? Because I  
13 served on the school board for four years, and in  
14 every meeting, I hear that crossing guards may come  
15 in the morning, and then they are assigned somewhere  
16 else in the afternoon. I'm still hearing it, because  
I still go to school board meetings. Is there a  
shortage of that? Can you talk about it?

17 DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: So what I can say is,  
18 we currently publicly posted, we have 2,639 posts  
19 publicly posted. So that means that we have  
20 authorized these posts in the past, and they're not  
all being filled. But we are at or close to our

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2           authorized headcount. But the Office of Management  
3           and Budget would be able to better speak to that.

4                     MR. SEVERINO: Again, from my perspective,  
5           what we do is, since we've been below budgeted  
6           headcount, we try to get up to budgeted headcount,  
7           and then we will work with OMB to increase our  
8           authorized headcount accordingly. So that's an  
              ongoing situation.

9                     As we speak, we're 149 below, as the  
10           Chief had mentioned. So once we have this hire-back  
11           coming up in May, we'll be closer to the budgeted  
12           headcount and continue to work with OMB to adjust  
              that allocation accordingly.

13                    COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Is pay the problem  
14           of attracting people for the work or something else?  
15           Is outreach an issue? What is causing these  
              vacancies? Let's start with crossing guards.

16                    DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: Right. So, crossing  
17           guard recruitment efforts are very similar to School  
18           Safety Agents. We utilize our Borough Coordinators,  
19           as well as our Level II Supervisors, to do their  
20           recruitment, as well as officers. And then we ask our  
21           partners in the DOE, our community partners, PTAs, to  
              help in a recruitment process.

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2 We also leverage social media to get the  
3 word out. But you know, school crossing guards are  
4 unique. They're local, they're working in close  
5 proximity, and they live in close proximity to the  
6 schools. They're often retirees, or they have  
7 children who are school age, so this is a position  
that works for their families.

8 So we are, as the numbers show, and what  
9 I explained to you, we're at or very close to our  
10 allotment, especially when you count in the 100 that  
11 are coming in for May 11th of 2026. Once we bring  
12 that 100 in, we're going to meet or be very close to  
our allotment.

13 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Thank you so much.  
I'll save my next question for round two.

15 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Perfect. Thank you so  
16 much.

17 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. Council  
Member Ariola?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you, Chair.

19 So my questions may seem a little  
20 redundant, because I agree with Chair Feliz and Chair  
21 Dinowitz—I almost said Epstein, because that's where

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              Committee on Public Safety

2           I was before I came here, Chair Dinowitz—is that  
3           your numbers are just not adding up, right? So, I  
4           would just want to go back to numbers. What is your  
5           vacancy? You said 360?

6                     DEPUTY CHIEF KING: That's correct.

7                     COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: That's correct? So  
8           realistically with-- and how many are on staff, how  
9           many are working? How many agents do you have?

10                    DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Right, 3,555.

11                    COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Okay, 3,555.  
12           And then we have how many schools?

13                    DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Roughly over 1,800  
14           schools.

15                    COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Okay, 1,800  
16           schools. And the number of students that are in those  
17           schools goes into the tens of thousands, correct?

18                    DEPUTY CHIEF KING: That is correct.

19                    COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: So there really is  
20           no possible way that you could be staffing with such  
21           a low headcount to the ratio of schools to students.  
              There's no way for you to be staffing that. And yet  
              you say you are staffing that, but you're staffing it  
              with overtime being off the charts.

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2                       Now, you said there was a class of 1,000  
3 that was--did I get that right? One thousand that  
4 have come through the class?

5                       DEPUTY CHIEF KING: No, candidates. There  
6 are...

7                       COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Candidates?

8                       DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yeah, for the  
9 Assistant School Safety Agent title, and then 881,  
10 who just passed the School Safety Agent test.

11                      COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: So they've passed-  
12 881?

13                      DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yes.

14                      COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Okay, so now, when  
15 will that list begin to be called?

16                      DEPUTY CHIEF KING: I don't have that. I'm  
17 not privy to that information yet.

18                      COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: So they passed the  
19 test, they go on the list, and then you have to wait  
20 for OMB to fund it? Are there lines open for this?  
21 Obviously, 360 lines are open.

                      MR. SEVERINO: So just to clarify from the  
OMB perspective, we work with them to get approval to  
hire, and there's been no issue getting their  
approval to hire SSAs.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: So, what do you  
3 think a timeline is?

4 MR. SEVERINO: I think it goes back to  
5 when the list becomes certified, and then we have our  
6 Personnel Bureau have to vet the individual  
7 candidates and perform background checks.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: How long does it  
9 take for a list to be certified?

10 MR. SEVERINO: I don't have the answer to  
11 that.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Does anyone know?  
13 Where did DOE go?

14 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: We can definitely get  
15 back to you on that.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Okay, so, as Chair  
17 Dinowitz said, if you have someone with your group  
18 that's here who could find those answers out, that's  
19 much better than telling us you don't have the  
20 answer. I walked in here completely on your side, and  
21 I'm sitting here thinking, what's going on here?

How many call-outs per day do you get  
from the agents that you have on? People get sick,  
and they don't come in. What happens at a school that

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2           has one Safety Agent and they're sick that day? What  
3           happens?

4                     DEPUTY CHIEF KING: At all times, there  
5           will be a one School Safety Agent at every school in  
6           New York City.

7                     COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Do you have  
8           floaters?

9                     DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yes, you would have  
10          floaters. That's why I keep bringing, uh, instituting  
11          administrative rollout and our mobile task force. I  
12          said at the beginning, well, actually I had to go  
13          back to it, but I had mentioned that we transferred  
14          over 100 agents that were assigned to administrative  
15          spots back to schools. As I said, we also have over  
16          100 Assistant School Safety Agents assigned to  
17          elementary schools. Probably the numbers, and maybe I  
18          should have clarified that. I'm trying to ascertain  
19          what the number is, but most of the schools that we  
20          cover are elementary schools. That's probably why the  
21          number doesn't add up.

                    So elementary schools, obviously, they're  
                    going to be a smaller size, you know, they're  
                    probably going to have 200-300 kids. And those are  
                    the schools that we're really, really pushing for,

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2           uh, for the title of Assistant School Safety Agent to  
3           take the title, so that we could send those to  
4           reinforce deployment at the schools where we might  
5           probably have a minimum of one School Safety...

6           (CROSS-TALK)

7                        COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: The elementary  
8           schools go to what grade? Under your purview, what  
9           does it go to? Middle school? Does it go up to middle  
10          school?

11                       DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yes... (CROSS-TALK)

12                       COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: So, say from pre-K  
13          to 6th grade?

14                       DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yeah, 6th grade.

15                       COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Sixth grade.

16                       So, when you have middle schools, you  
17          have to have more at the middle schools. You have to  
18          have more Safety Agents?

19                       DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yes, which we do...

20                       COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: At the middle  
21          schools, and you have to have the metal detectors at  
              some or most of the middle schools... (CROSS-TALK)

                      DEPUTY CHIEF KING: At some of those.

                      Metal detectors are mostly in high schools, and if it  
                      happens to-- obviously, some of the schools are co-

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              Committee on Public Safety

2           located. So you might have a campus where (TIMER)  
3           it's a high school but also has a junior high school.

4                        COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Right, well, we  
5           have a lot of schools that are co-located, right? We  
6           have junior high schools and high schools.

7                        Chair, just a few more minutes?

8                        So what I'm trying to say is that what  
9           you're saying is not making sense.

10                       So if you have to take somebody from  
11           another school, a middle school that has metal  
12           detectors, and they have six Safety Guards—I have  
13           one in my district who has that—so you're going to  
14           pull from there, and then put them at-- is that what  
15           the mobile unit is? Pulling from one place and  
16           appointing them to another?

17                       DEPUTY CHIEF KING: We do our best not to  
18           redeploy personnel who are assigned to scanning in  
19           schools, because we understand how that may have an  
20           impact on the operational needs of the school.

21                       COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Any idea how many  
              schools on any given day do not have any SSA  
              Officers?

                      DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Zero. At all times,  
              you can walk into any New York City public school,

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2 and there will be a minimum of one School Safety  
3 Agent. And when I say one School Safety Agent, that  
4 will probably be an elementary school. Every other  
5 school will definitely have more than that.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Okay, and if it's  
7 a middle school and they have at least one, and  
8 there's a lot going...

9 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: More. More...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: As Chair Dinowitz  
11 said, watching the cameras, watching the metal  
12 detector, if they have one, walking through the  
13 hallways, if there is an altercation. That's just one  
14 person, right? So what we're hearing is that we're  
15 not getting people on the job fast enough. We need to  
16 get these 360 lines filled. We need to get people to  
17 come in. But I'm also hearing that they're not being  
18 deployed properly, either.

19 How many are out on long-term sick? How  
20 many do you have out on long-term sick?

21 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Just give me one  
second to get that information for you—119.

COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Okay, 119.

I cannot imagine that you have, with that  
much of a headcount, the proper staffing to keep the

1       The Committee on Education, Jointly with the   111  
          Committee on Public Safety  
2       schools and the children in those schools safe. And I  
3       can't imagine that you're not pulling, even if it's  
4       from a public school that has K-5, you're not pulling  
          a Safety Agent from there.

5                I know for a fact that some of those  
6       Safety Agents are pulled from the grammar schools in  
7       our districts, and then there's no one. And then what  
8       happens is a PTA mom sits there, or the Parent  
          Coordinator sits there.

9                So what you're testifying to, and what  
10       we're seeing in actuality, does not match. So I think  
11       that you're kind of digging a bit of a hole for  
12       yourself for what you don't know, the testimony that  
13       you're giving, saying that we have stats that debunk  
14       your facts, and the fact that OMB is holding up on  
15       881 people, who are certified, and could get out  
          there.

16               I'm happy to hear, though, that in  
17       Queensborough South, we do have a good number of  
          guards, because that's where I'm from.

18               CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you.

19               CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: One...

20               COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: This is why we  
21       have to have these hearings, and thank you, both

1           The Committee on Education, Jointly with the     112  
              Committee on Public Safety

2           Chairs, for doing this. Because we have to keep the  
3           children safe, and we have to keep the people who are  
4           working in the school safe. And we just don't seem to  
5           have the number of people necessary to do that.

6                        This is my final question. Do you blame  
7           that on what the salary is for your title?

8                        DEPUTY CHIEF KING: I can't speak on that  
9           because salary negotiations are the purview of the  
10          NYPD. I mean, do I believe that every City employee  
11          deserves better pay? Absolutely.

12                       COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: What's the  
13          incoming salary for a Safety Agent?

14                       DEPUTY CHIEF KING: It's \$40,480.

15                       COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Okay, \$40,480.

16                       All right, well, hopefully you do get  
17          back to the Chairs with the answers for the questions  
18          that you didn't have answers to, and hopefully we can  
19          get more Safety Agents on. OMB's got to get moving.  
20          We've got to start pulling. And DOE put some  
21          pressure—put some pressure. These are your schools—  
              these are your schools.

                      CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you.

                      MR. SEVERINO: May I just add? So we are  
              working with OMB to get another class. I think the

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              Committee on Public Safety

2           next class we're looking to do is around May for  
3           approximately 100 school Safety Agents. I know we  
4           always want a bigger number, but 100, I think, is  
5           what we'll realistically be able to pull in out of  
6           that 800. As I said, there's a timeframe here, and  
            our goal is to hire as many as we can.

7                         CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you, thank you  
8           so much.

9                         CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

10                        COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you. Thanks  
            for the extra time.

11                        CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you, thank you  
12           so much.

13                        And also I agree 100% with Council Member  
14           Ariola, that based on the information that all of you  
15           are stating today, including students being made late  
16           to class due to the fact that the scanning equipment  
17           is breaking down on a daily basis; 20% of the people  
18           calling out on a daily or weekly basis, I think it's  
19           very, very, very clear that the School Safety  
20           Division has a lot of needs. And I just wish that the  
21           NYPD would be a little bit clearer on that, rather  
            than us having to just pull the information out of  
            you.

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2 If you have needs, this is why we have  
3 these budget hearings. And I just wish that all of  
4 you would be a little bit clearer on your needs, so  
5 that we could resolve the issues that have existed  
6 for far too long, and that are having real negative  
consequences in our school communities.

7 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: For clarification, we  
8 have never negated the fact that we have vacancies,  
9 as I stated before. But that still, and I remain, and  
I stand tall on that, that hasn't deviated from  
10 School Safety keeping schools safe.

11 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Right, yes.

12 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: You've never negated  
14 that--you've never said anything contrary to that.  
It's clear that there are issues related to  
15 headcount, budget issues, and also equipment issues.  
16 I just wish that all of you would be a little bit  
17 clearer on those needs, rather than us having to  
discover them through questioning.

18 If there's issues with the NYPD School  
19 Safety Division, this is what we have budget hearings  
20 for. So that we can learn about the issues, and we  
21 could hopefully fund them, so that next year the

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2           issue won't exist. And it just sucks that we have to  
3           pull the information out of you rather than all of  
4           you just giving us the needs that you have.

5                       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I want to point out  
6           that the class of 100, that's for some of the 360  
7           vacancies, right?

8                       MR. SEVERINO: Correct.

9                       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay, so the 360  
10          vacancies still don't get you up to the 5,000 we had  
11          pre-pandemic. But I want to ask the DOE. As I said in  
12          my opening statement, because there aren't enough  
13          School Safety Agents, and because, despite what they  
14          testified to, there's forced overtime resulting in a  
15          lot of comp time, and they get a lot of days off,  
16          which they've earned, 20% absent rate, I think you  
17          testified to. There are principals who are forced to  
18          work with their UFT reps to create comp time  
19          positions—Comp time positions to patrol the halls,  
20          comp time positions to work in the lunchroom, jobs  
21          that would otherwise typically be done by School  
              Safety Agents. Are you aware of this issue that is  
              going on in some of our schools?

                      CHIEF RAMPERSANT: I'm not aware of any  
              comp time positions that have to be created by

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              Committee on Public Safety

2 teachers or for teachers to do hall patrols and so  
3 forth. There is something in the system, as you know,  
4 in the contract that allows, through Circular 6, for  
5 these assignments to be assigned to teachers, but I  
6 don't know of any comp time positions, unless it is  
7 before the contractual day or after the contractual  
8 day.

9                           CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Before the  
10 contractual...

11                          CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Start of the school  
12 (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

13                          CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Oh, start of school  
14 day, well...

15                          CHIEF RAMPERSANT: (INAUDIBLE) staff  
16 member.

17                          CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: All right, well,  
18 the comp time positions are taking teachers out of  
19 the classroom to do other duties, administrative  
20 duties.

21                          CHIEF RAMPERSANT: I don't know of any  
cases where that is happening. I don't dispute  
whether or not it is happening in a school where, in  
fact, there may be a shortfall of School Safety  
Agents. I do reiterate that the importance of safety

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2           is the responsibility of all adults in the building.

3           Uh... (CROSS-TALK)

4                         CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Agree, but I'm  
5           talking simply from a fiscal perspective that a  
6           teacher's salary can be over six figures, over  
7           \$100,000. That's significantly more expensive for a  
8           system than \$40,000-\$50,000 for School Safety Agents.

9                         So, just simply from a budgetary  
10          perspective, it seems like we as a city are spending  
11          money-- instead of spending money on teachers doing  
12          comp time positions, or hiring an extra dean for a  
13          teacher, instead of hiring a teacher. It seems to me  
14          that it's not the wisest use of our funds.

15                        But it seems that the DOE doesn't collect  
16          data, or even anecdotal or qualitative data, on why  
17          these comp time positions are being created or why  
18          principals feel the need to hire extra deans outside  
19          of what they would have otherwise hired.

20                        CHIEF RAMPERSANT: For the purposes of  
21          safety, I'm not aware of any data collected for those  
22          purposes.

23                        CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I understand that--  
24          - Remind me what they're called, the School Safety  
25          Agents that are 18, 19, 20 years old?

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2 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Assistant.

3 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Assistant, thank  
4 you. The Assistant School Safety Agents were created  
5 because school aides were doing so much of that work  
6 that it was a new position that you created. Is that  
accurate?

7 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yes, it was created  
8 with the intent to create career opportunities for  
9 young adults, and obviously to create a clearer path  
to the title of School Safety Agents as well.

10 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And to also clarify  
11 that school aides shouldn't be the ones sitting at  
12 desks, unless absolutely necessary, but there was so  
13 much of that going on that you created these  
positions?

14 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: That's the reason why  
15 we continue to push... (CROSS-TALK)

16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yes.

17 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: for the title, so that  
18 we could, obviously, reinforce deployment at those  
elementary schools. Or... (CROSS-TALK)

19 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And to clarify, the  
20 3,555 agents include the Assistant School Safety  
21 Agents?

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2 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: That is correct.

3 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay. Thank you.

4 I'm going to turn over to Council Member  
5 Zhuang.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: Thank you, and I  
7 want to thank our School Safety Officers. They  
8 actually work very hard, and a couple of months ago,  
9 a stabbing happened in Brooklyn in one of the middle  
10 schools. I'm a parent, and one of my daughters is  
11 ready to go to middle school.

12 A lot of times, our office gets phone  
13 calls, especially from middle schools and high  
14 schools, where the principals ask for help. Because  
15 their kids are at the age, physically they are grown,  
16 uh, grown men and women, but mentally they are not  
17 ready. A lot of times, these types of kids need  
18 additional attention.

19 Between high school, middle school, and  
20 elementary school, do you have the ratio difference  
21 between how you dedicate your Safety Guards-- Safety  
Officers?

Like, say, a high school has one Safety  
Officer versus 200 kids; middle school, one Safety

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2           Officer versus 500 kids, or an elementary school that  
3           has one officer versus 1,000 kids?

4                       DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Thanks for your  
5           question.

6                       As I mentioned before, the allocation of  
7           School Safety Agents is mainly based on student  
8           population crime trends. Obviously, there are going  
9           to be, probably, high schools that maybe you might  
10          not have so much going on, as opposed to others. And  
11          whether or not the school is a scanning school.

12                      COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: And also, what's  
13          the measurement you guys have per age for a school  
14          safety guard? How do you protect people who work  
15          there? Because on the news, we very often see school  
16          safety guards getting stabbed. And I actually spoke  
17          to a couple, they said that they lost a colleague a  
18          few years ago. How do you make sure they are safe,  
19          too?

20                      DEPUTY CHIEF KING: That is a great  
21          question. Thank you for that. That was a very  
              unfortunate incident that happened in Brooklyn. And  
              that speaks to the commitment and the devotion that  
              our Safety Agents have for the role that they  
              represent in our schools. When a School Safety Agent

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2       tried to break up a fight, and ends up,  
3       unfortunately, getting injured.

4           But, obviously, what we do, as part of  
5       the training, is to make sure that we are providing  
6       them with tactical training and tactical refreshers  
7       on a yearly basis—to keep their distance, to  
8       de-escalate, and so on.

9           COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: Do you also have  
10       the data by gender, how many men versus women? What's  
11       the ratio? And people of color, especially, I see  
12       that School Agents, a lot of times, are people of  
13       color, especially women, who work there. Do you have  
14       that ratio and the data?

15           DEPUTY CHIEF KING: I don't have the exact  
16       numbers, but to your point, school safety is very  
17       diverse, but many of our agents are female.

18           COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: Okay. For Black  
19       women versus white women, what's the ratio?

20           DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Diverse.

21           COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: Diverse?

          DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yes, we...

          COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: Okay, we'd like to  
see the numbers also... (CROSS-TALK)

21

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2 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: We have agents who are  
3 Hispanic, we have agents who are Black, we have  
4 agents who are white.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: And also for  
6 school safety, it's not only internally, where we  
7 have School Safety Agents. A lot of the time, kids  
8 don't fight inside the school when dismissal time  
9 happens. What's the coordination between school  
10 agencies, schools, and NYPD local precincts? Do you  
11 guys have a plan? Because very often I get complaints  
12 saying that they have a school, uh, outside the  
13 subway station that belongs to 34 Transit. And the  
14 transit police officer is up there, but they see kids  
15 down on the transit platform fighting. They don't  
16 come down to help. And my school principals and  
17 assistant principals are on the streets to keep kids  
18 safe.

19 So what's the coordination between School  
20 Safety Agents, NYPD, local precincts, and transit  
21 police?

DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: Thank you for that  
question, Council Member.

Just to lay it out, our strategy, at the  
start of the 2025 school year, we laid out, or we

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2           designated what we call (TIMER) Youth Safety Zones.

3           It's kind of modeled after our Violence Reduction  
4           Zones, where we're deploying officers to certain  
5           corridors where students are coming and departing  
6           school-- coming to school and departing school, for  
7           the purpose of keeping them safe, while they're  
8           commuting back and forth. And we want to deploy to  
            the areas where our young people are most at risk.

9                       Looking at the data since the inception  
10           of us creating these zones, which sometimes includes  
11           transit stations, overall youth-related crime in  
12           these zones, for the school year, is down 55%, 134  
13           crimes versus 297. Shooting incidents are down 56.2%,  
            or seven versus 16.

14                      COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: This is called  
15           reported data, right? My background is in data. I  
            know how to manipulate the data, too.

16                      DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: No, no. So basically,  
17           these are zones that we have identified by doing a  
18           year-look back, and we say, hey, these are the  
19           corridors that we know that see students, as they're  
            going back and forth to school, are victims of crime.

20                      So we want to increase our police  
21           presence in these corridors. Sometimes they might be

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2 at certain establishments where we've seen violence,  
3 perhaps McDonald's or a train station. So it's very  
4 precise, and it's data-driven, and we create these  
5 zones, and the strategy is to get the officers in  
6 these zones, protect these students, so they can have  
7 safe passage, go to school safely, return home  
safely.

8 So it's a deterrent. And our data is  
9 showing, since September 1st, when the school year  
10 started, to the current date, that crime, especially  
11 violent crime, in these zones, is decreasing  
12 significantly. So the shooting victims are down  
13 55.6%, or eight versus 18. That's a big number. This  
14 is part of our overall strategy, our Violence  
Reduction Strategy, but it's also specific to  
schools.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: Do you have any  
16 data about the smaller crimes? If it's a shooting, I  
17 think it's too late. And I actually get more phone  
18 calls from schools. They don't want to publicize it,  
19 but students are afraid to go to school because at  
20 dismissal time, people from outside hang out around  
21 the school. Kids bring knives or guns to school. They  
don't bring them inside the school; they're hiding

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2           outside the school. And during dismissal time, they  
3           pick up that stuff, and then they do violent things,  
4           not right inside the school or next to the school,  
5           but they do it three to five blocks away.

6                         DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: You're correct. And  
7           that's part of our strategy. We get into those  
8           corridors to keep them safe. And I think these  
9           numbers show our strategy is working. And every  
10          precinct across the city is required, before the  
11          start of the school year, to develop a strategy to  
12          keep our students safe as they commute to and from  
13          home. What's the strategy? And it must be implemented  
14          with the Department of Education and the employees,  
15          with their input.

16                        CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you. Thank you  
17          so much, Council Member.

18                        We'll move on to Council Member...

19                        CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I just have one...

20          (CROSS-TALK)

21                        COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: They did not  
              finish answering.

                      CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: All right, you can  
              finish the question and the point, and then we'll  
              move back to Council Member Dinowitz.

1           The Committee on Education, Jointly with the     126  
              Committee on Public Safety

2                       DEPUTY INSPECTOR KIM: All right, Council  
3 Member Zhuang. School Safety Division, we also have a  
4 uniform component, which is a Youth Response Team,  
5 which is comprised of 53 members. They also patrol  
6 the corridors. So while our agents are posted on the  
7 perimeters until 16:30, they're covering ordinance  
8 intersections. Our Youth Response Team is placed on  
9 the corridors, and they work with our patrol  
10 boroughs. They have conducted joint operations,  
11 probably approximately 20 joint operations with the  
12 precinct that covers the corridors. That speaks to  
13 the correlation and collective work over there.

12                       As you mentioned, all those incidents of  
13 shootings, our Youth Response Team responds to all of  
14 those incidents, and we make sure we work with the  
15 precinct commander and their YCOs to make sure we  
16 prevent another incident like that.

16                       COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: Just two weeks  
17 ago, we had kids get beaten up really badly in the  
18 subway station right outside the school. And there  
19 was a police officer there who said it does not  
20 belong to them; it belongs to Transit. I called  
21 Transit, and the next day, they had a transit officer  
there, but outside the transit facility. They did not



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2           there, which I see as a great success. So everybody's  
3           doing their part to make sure that students are kept  
4           safe and that we have the resources available to  
5           those students.

6                           CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you, Council  
7           Member.

8                           And before we move on to Council Member  
9           Gutiérrez, just a brief question similar to the line  
10          of questions that Council Member Zhuang was asking.

11                          So you mentioned data regarding shooting  
12          incidents. What about other types of safety-related  
13          incidents inside the schools, including bullying,  
14          gang violence, and assaults? Can you give us some  
15          data related to those incidents, and also how the  
16          data from today compares to the previous data from  
17          the previous years?

18                          DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Thank you for that.  
19          Just give me a second.

20                          So, on school grounds, we have a total of  
21          22 bullying incidents that have been reported. Deputy  
          Inspector Kim mentioned our Community Outreach Unit.  
          It's definitely involved. One of our focal points in  
          that unit is to provide services to our schools, to  
          ensure that we are addressing topics like bullying,



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2       Safety Agents, for being in the right place, in the  
3       right corridors, and interjecting and breaking up  
4       fights.

5                       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: All right. Thank  
6       you, Council Member Gutierrez?

7                       And I'd also like to note that we've been  
8       joined by Council Member Brewer.

9                       COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you,  
10      Chairs, Dinowitz and Feliz.

11                      I want to, of course, reiterate what  
12      Chair Dinowitz said at the top, which is that we  
13      always want our children to be safe. We want the  
14      staff to be safe. We certainly want the agents to be  
15      safe. But, I cannot-- I just can't justify what I'm  
16      seeing based on what I think is excessive policing in  
17      our schools. And I'm pulling from data that is  
18      submitted quarterly to the Council. So it's on our  
19      side, it's data that's supposed to be submitted  
20      through the School Safety Act.

21                      This is a question for both of you, but  
22      mostly you, Chief, especially on the DOE side,  
23      because this data really reflects disproportionate  
24      impacts on particularly Black students, where we're  
25      seeing disproportionately higher rates of

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2 interventions, of arrests. I represent the 9-0  
3 Precinct, which is one of the precincts where we see  
4 the most of these cases. And I'm hearing from the  
5 young people that it's extremely problematic.

6 So, I would love for us to, just very  
7 quickly, knowing this information, you guys are  
8 nodding your head, so you know what I'm talking  
9 about, you know, where the rates are  
disproportionate.

10 How can we move away from this in  
11 instances where we're not relying on School Safety  
12 Agents? Because I think there's a lot there. I think  
13 there's certainly a lot more there than, you know, a  
14 student came in and was being problematic, but how  
15 are we rectifying the fact that these rates are so  
disproportionate, particularly with Black students,  
based on the data that is being provided?

16 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: So I'll speak from the  
17 DOE, sorry, New York City Public Schools'  
18 perspective. As you started out, it is super  
19 imperative that there is a greater focus on our  
20 school leaders to address student behavior, versus  
21 having partners sort of respond to that. So, your

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2           question is, what can we do to ensure that there  
3           is...

4                        COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, because  
5           these numbers have been consistent.

6                        CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Sure.

7                        COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: We have fewer  
8           students now than we did before the pandemic, and the  
9           rates are the same, right? So it's not bad apples.  
10          It's not students that are-- it's a particular  
11          practice that I'm concerned about. And, I'm concerned  
12          about how we are participating in this practice in  
13          communities that are already facing violence outside,  
14          that are already interacting with PD, in my opinion,  
15          too much, and how they're interacting inside their  
16          schools.

17                        I'm also concerned about some of the ages  
18          of some of the young people that are being  
19          restrained, some as small as six, seven, or eight  
20          years old.

21                        I would love to understand how we can  
              talk about safety for students in a way that looks at  
              the equity and the disproportionate impact, and  
              saying-- I don't know how to answer for you, but what

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2           are we doing that is not just like, "We need more  
3           School Safety Agents"?

4                       CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Yeah, I certainly don't  
5           want you to answer for me in that respect. I mean, I  
6           hold myself and our agency accountable for any time  
7           there is this question of disproportionality. It is  
8           through the work that we're doing, in terms of the  
9           interventions, some of which I mentioned in my  
10          earlier testimony. It is more reliant on those  
11          respective interventions than calling in supports,  
12          right, to do the very thing of which you described.  
13          And while you see a reduction in the number of  
14          enrollments, the question that I would have is, what  
15          do those enrollment numbers look like in the areas  
16          where we're seeing the greatest level of enforcement?

17                       I would also like to triangulate whether  
18          or not those respective supports that I shared exist  
19          in those schools that you're seeing the greatest  
20          level of enforcement. And if not, the answer to that  
21          is to increase those supports and interventions so  
              that we have a greater reliance.

                          COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: And can you  
                          just, I know that you said it in your testimony, but

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              Committee on Public Safety

2           can you just maybe repeat one or two, you don't have  
3           to explain what they are...

4                       CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Sure.

5                       COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Just repeat  
6           them for me.

7                       CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Sure, Restorative  
8           Practices... (CROSS-TALK)

9                       COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And we're  
10          not sure--and I'm sorry to interrupt...

11                      CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Sure, no, it's fine.

12                      COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: But based on  
13          what you said, we're not necessarily sure where the  
14          Restorative Justice Programs exist with respect to  
15          where we're seeing these disproportionate numbers.

16                      CHIEF RAMPERSANT: So we would have to do  
17          a cross reference to see where, in fact, the  
18          enforcement is transpiring as it relates to which  
19          schools are doubling down on their restorative  
20          efforts, their de-escalation efforts, and other  
21          supports that we provide for schools.

                      COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Under  
Restorative Justice, are there any specific programs  
that you are enthused about and potentially want to  
explore and expand?

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2 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: I'm excited about  
3 restorative practices overall. I would love for every  
4 school to employ every element of restorative  
5 practices, so that we can create environments where  
6 (TIMER) young people feel seen, heard, and affirmed,  
7 as I shared earlier in my statement, and see every  
8 school enforcing all the restorative practices.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: What will we  
10 need to do to ensure that that happens? So I  
11 support-- I would love for us to fund and expand and  
12 baseline the restorative justice practices, the  
13 mental health continuum. I truly feel that these are  
14 the kind of programs that are impactful, that are  
15 creating a change, that are making it so there is  
16 less intervention. Would you all agree as well? Would  
17 you agree, Chief?

18 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Yes.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, so what  
20 do we need to do?

21 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: So I would love to talk  
to you further about some of the things that we're  
doing and some of the ways by which we are doubling  
down to ensure access to all of our schools in the  
area of restorative practices, as well as some of the

1           The Committee on Education, Jointly with the     136  
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2           other interventions of which you've just shared. And  
3           making sure that we double down on mental health  
4           resources for schools, peer-to-peer mentoring as well  
5           as peer-to-peer on (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

6                        COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: And that's done  
7           --It's not the School Safety Agents participating.  
8           It's not PD participating. This is something  
9           completely through the DOE, correct?

10                       CHIEF RAMPERSANT: That is correct.

11                       COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

12                       CHIEF RAMPERSANT: That is correct, but  
13           having as many adults trained as possible makes the  
14           difference.

15                       COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm. Okay,  
16           thank you so much. Thank you, Chair.

17                       CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Absolutely.

18                       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you, Council  
19           Member.

20                       We were previously joined by Council  
21           Member Sanchez. I now want to turn it over to--  
22           Council Member Justin Sanchez. You know, we've got  
23           two of them.

24                       And now I want to turn over to Council  
25           Member Brewer.

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Committee on Public Safety

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very  
3 much.

4 I just want to say, I think I know all of  
5 the SSAs in District 3. I give them a hug when I walk  
6 in. I always have a million pieces of paper in my  
7 briefcase. They hold it for me. It's like a whole  
8 thing. So I want to thank you.

9 And then Candy Rodriguez got the Sloan  
10 Award some years ago, as you may remember, as an SSA,  
11 because I recommended her, and she volunteers, now  
12 that she's retired, back in her school. That's how  
13 much you guys are loved, the people who you work  
14 with. I just want to make that clear.

15 My question is about the school crossing  
16 guards. My knowledge, everybody laughs at me because  
17 I talk about things from 30 years ago, but the thing  
18 is, we've had the same conversation for 30 years,  
19 which is because they don't have the full-time, they  
20 don't get the vacations, et cetera, and the pay is  
21 low, it's very hard to access, where needed, a school  
crossing guard. I get that, I've been talking about  
this for 30 years. Are there any changes in how we  
can support that? I know you have an incoming class,  
that's very exciting. But how do we deal with the

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              Committee on Public Safety

2           school crossing guards, who are loved, needed, et  
3           cetera? What can we do to change the scenario so  
4           you'll have more of them?

5                     DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: Thank you, so school  
6           crossing guards, Level I, are part-time employees...

7           (CROSS-TALK)

8                     COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know that.

9                     DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: They make \$19.14 per  
10          hour.

11                    COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yes, yep.

12                    DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: Level II are  
13          full-time, and they get paid \$44,533.

14                    Obviously, I'll state the obvious: an  
15          increase in salary would help in retention and  
16          hiring. But with that comes a cost, so I would defer  
17          that question to our Management and Budget.

18                    COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yeah. Are you  
19          advocating for them? Because I assume you get a lot  
20          of requests for crossing guards. I write letters all  
21          day long for crossing guards. I assume others do,  
                      too.

                      DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: I understand your  
                      sentiment, and what you're saying, and it's very

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2           logical, but again, that's a question for Management  
3           and Budget.

4                        COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: But, well, no, my  
5           question to you is, do you advocate for them? Do you  
6           feel there's a need for them as people who are  
7           involved?

8                        DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: Again, I'll just leave  
9           that question...

10                      COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Oh, okay, okay.

11                      DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: to another...

12                      COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: All right.

13                      Now, number two, though, what another  
14           question would be, just in terms of the, uh, like  
15           Council Member Gutiérrez, I believe very strongly--I  
16           have about, I don't know, 10 high schools at least,  
17           maybe 12-13, a lot of high schools. And, two things  
18           when we ended up doing, because of people being  
19           outside, young people being outside, I don't think  
20           it's your job. So we hired, with money, young groups  
21           that do basically restorative justice outside the  
              school in the community. And I assume that helps. Is  
              that something that is part of the DOE, or is it just  
              going to be inside?

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2 Let me just say one more thing about  
3 inside. The gangs are coming inside. Everybody's got  
4 ski masks on. You have to have a big sign that says,  
5 "No Ski Masks". And people are trying to deal with  
6 it. So there's no question that restorative justice  
is needed in so many different places.

7 So I think what Council Member Gutiérrez  
8 was stating was, can we get a list of where there are  
9 restorative justice programs and where else they're  
10 needed? To me, they are desperately needed, inside  
the school and outside the school.

11 So I just wanted to hear a little bit  
12 more about what you're going to do about that issue—  
13 ski masks, *ski masks*.

14 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: So, yeah, thank you.  
15 Ski masks are a problem. They are a problem at  
16 schools, and there should be enforcement in  
schools...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: They're trying.

18 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: where--yeah, So, but we  
19 don't want to use a punitive measure... (CROSS-TALK)

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: No, I don't  
21 either.

1 The Committee on Education, Jointly with the 141  
Committee on Public Safety

2 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: to deal with ski masks,  
3 right? So schools are taking various approaches to  
4 just remind students that you're in school, and we  
5 would love to see your handsome faces. Right? And so  
6 there's no need to cover your face, right?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I agree.

8 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: As it relates to the  
9 restorative justice on the outside of schools, we're  
10 sort of doubling down and doing training for parents  
11 as well, right? Taking all volunteers. We want to  
12 make sure that there is a community approach to  
13 addressing our young people, not necessarily a  
14 punitive approach, right? And I'm sure that you will  
15 agree that there are a number of volunteers out  
16 there, outside of our schools, who are helping to  
17 transition our young people to and from schools  
18 safely, including our merchants, our community  
19 members, clergy, and community-based organizations.

20 So this is the work that we're continuing  
21 to discuss different ways by which we can elevate to  
ensure that all of our schools and communities remain  
safe.

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Committee on Public Safety

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: The only thing I  
3 would add is that in the high schools, they're not  
4 from the district; they're young people who come in.  
5 So that approach doesn't work. That's why I am  
6 working—paying—groups that do, I guess, I call it  
7 restorative justice outside the schools. It's  
8 working. But it's expensive.

9 So I'm just suggesting that it needs to  
10 be looked at even more intently, particularly the  
11 high school level, because you do not have parents  
12 from that area who are part of the school.

13 I'm just saying it's pretty constant,  
14 what I just described. We want nobody arrested. I  
15 don't even want anybody suspended. I do want somebody  
16 in there, though, to address the concerns, because  
17 they are real. (TIMER)

18 I'd like to hear more about that later.  
19 Thank you.

20 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Absolutely.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And, you've got to  
do something about these crossing guards.

CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you, Council  
Member Brewer.

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Committee on Public Safety

2 I do want to point out that Section  
3 14-150 of the Administrative Code requires a  
4 quarterly report, that for each school operated by  
5 the Department of Education to which School Safety  
6 Agents are assigned, the number of School Safety  
7 Agents averaged for the quarter assigned to those  
schools is reported.

8 I'm having trouble finding that data on  
9 the NYPD website. No one in the Council could seem to  
10 find the information, even though it's supposed to be  
submitted to the Council.

11 And I'll just read it: "The New York City  
12 Police Department shall submit to the City Council,  
13 and post on its website in a machine-readable format,  
14 on a quarterly basis, the following data and  
reports."

15 And it lists a number of things in the  
16 last part of Section one of that 14-150 says, "Such  
17 report shall also include, for each school operated  
18 by the department of education to which school safety  
19 agents are assigned, the number of school safety  
20 agents, averaged for the quarter, assigned to each of  
those schools."

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Committee on Public Safety

2 And I bring that up because we've had a  
3 lot of questions about how many Safety Agents there  
4 are in addition to the absences, but just how many  
5 there are in a giant high school, with scanning  
6 machines. It's been really tough to get some of that  
information, some of the ratios that should exist.

7 Where can we find those quarterly  
8 reports?

9 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Thanks for your  
question, Chair.

10 I'm going to verify and double check with  
11 our OMAP (Office of Management Analysis and Planning)  
12 Certificate Initiatives Bureau, and I will get back  
to you on that.

13 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: In how many  
14 minutes? I mean, today, now, like during the hearing,  
15 is the time to do it. I think this is, you got a  
16 lot-- you've got really smart, great people working  
17 in the NYPD who can, I'm sure, look this up and get  
back to us during the hearing.

18 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: As soon as I'm able to  
19 obtain that information.

20 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay. I'll check  
21 back on that during the hearing. Because as we've

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2           seen before, there are lots of really smart, capable  
3           people here in the NYPD. We've gotten some of the  
4           information already, which we're very pleased about,  
5           during the hearings. So I expect to know where those  
6           reports are, as well, and the status of those  
7           reports.

8                        I do want to turn a little bit back to  
9           Restorative Justice and Project PIVOT.

10                       Project PIVOT is funded at approximately  
11           \$15 million annually and deploys community-based  
12           organizations to provide school-based programming at  
13           138 schools. Can you talk a little more about what  
14           Project PIVOT is?

15                       CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Yes. So thank you very  
16           much for the question.

17                       And just as a point of correction, the  
18           number of schools that we provide support to is  
19           actually 351.

20                       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And these are  
21           Project PIVOT schools?

                      CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Yes, schools that are  
supported by Project PIVOT. And basically, what  
Project PIVOT is is a supplementary program for  
schools, right? So many people think about project

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2           PIVOT, and they automatically think about violence  
3           interrupters and safe passage corridors. That's some  
4           of the work that is done through the CBOs that are  
5           providing direct services to schools.

6                        As I shared an opening testimony, it's a  
7           safety and violence prevention initiative. It also  
8           has leadership and career readiness, mentoring,  
9           enrichment and arts support, and family support, as  
10          well as wellness.

11                       So a particular school will get Project  
12          PIVOT funding and focus on the areas where they are  
13          seeing the greatest declines. For instance, if there  
14          are groups of students who are having attendance  
15          issues, they can use that funding for an initiative  
16          to get, you know, young people motivated about coming  
17          to school.

18                       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Great. And I've  
19          heard very positive things from the schools that have  
20          engaged with the CBOs. And I'll get to that in a  
21          second. But just following up Council Member  
              Gutiérrez's remarks, because I didn't quite hear,  
              does the DOE conduct an analysis of which Project  
              PIVOT CBOS, or which restorative justice programs are  
              successful in reducing the number of suspensions,

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2           reducing the number of ORS reports, or even improving  
3           academic outcomes?

4                     CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Yeah. So we can  
5           definitely talk more about the specific programs.  
6           We'll break that down for you where we're seeing the  
7           greatest successes, but based on... (CROSS-TALK)

8                     CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I just want to ask,  
9           does the DOE do that analysis? I'm not asking for  
10          that analysis today. I'm asking if the DOE does the  
11          analysis.

12                    CHIEF RAMPERSANT: I don't want to say yes  
13          without having confirmed... (CROSS-TALK)

14                    CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: You should say yes,  
15          that would be a good... (CROSS-TALK)

16                    CHIEF RAMPERSANT: I should. It would be  
17          great to say yes, but I don't want-- I'm under oath,  
18          remember that.

19                    CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: (LAUGHS) touché.

20                    CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Triple check to make  
21          sure that we are doing cross reference directly  
              with-- We do have some cases where community-based  
              organizations are utilized by schools, and schools  
              are not satisfied with the service that they receive.  
              Therefore, they went on to another community-based

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2           organization. So that's why I want to be able to look  
3           and see, cross-reference to see where the real  
4           successes are.

5                        But as it stands now, we're seeing  
6           schools that are supported by the Project PIVOT  
7           initiative. We're seeing declines in incidents,  
8           right? We're seeing declines in incidents of chronic  
9           absenteeism, attendance overall, and suspension as a  
              reliance.

10                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And that's as  
              compared to non-Project PIVOT schools?

11                      CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Yes. But here's...

12                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Meaning like it's a  
13           causal relationship?

14                      CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Here's what I want to  
              make sure I'm clear on that, right?

15                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay.

16                      CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Schools that have  
17           Project PIVOT initiatives or are supported by Project  
18           PIVOT can be supported by other initiatives as well,  
19           right? So I don't want to directly attribute that  
              success solely to Project PIVOT, if that makes sense.

20                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: It does. Can you  
21           give an example?

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2 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: So in a Project PIVOT  
3 school, they may be restorative. Restorative  
4 practices may be implemented in that school as well.  
5 There may be a peer mediation program that exists  
6 that is super successful. That school may be doubling  
7 down on its attendance efforts by way of other  
8 initiatives that they're utilizing. But the KPI's for  
9 Project PIVOT are the ones that I've outlined, and  
10 they're seeing a decline in those respective areas.  
11 So it is not a and/or, it's everything...

12 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Right.

13 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: that contributes to the  
14 support in the young people.

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: But the other  
16 schools that don't have Project PIVOT funding,  
17 nothing precludes them from having the peer tutoring,  
18 peer mentoring, restorative justice program?

19 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: No.

20 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Meaning, I think it  
21 would be beneficial, as we're talking about a budget  
where there are limited funds, to know that we're  
leveraging our funds properly, that if there's a  
really successful program. And just financially,  
these programs save money when kids graduate on time.

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2     I don't have to explain to anyone here; we all get  
3     it. But it would be of value if we actually had an  
4     analysis of the causal relationship between the  
5     reduction in suspensions and the better academic  
6     outcomes. So that is something we're looking for in  
7     this committee.

8                   On the flip side of that, when Project  
9     PIVOT was announced and released, there was a list of  
10    a number of CBOs that were eligible for this funding.  
11    Is that correct?

12                   CHIEF RAMPERSANT: So it wasn't-- what was  
13    announced were a number of CBOs that schools can  
14    select, right? It didn't preclude other CBOs from  
15    being selected by a school. If that makes maybe...  
16    That's clear?

17                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah. However, I  
18    think there's some discrepancy there...

19                   CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Sure.

20                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: because what was  
21    communicated to me by a number of school leaders was  
22    that they were given a list of CBOs that were  
23    eligible for Project PIVOT funding, and it was  
24    communicated. They kind of had to go from the list,  
25    and many on those lists didn't exist; maybe they



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2           clearly outlined that they were able to select the  
3           CBO of their choice.

4                       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And on the list of  
5           CBOs that was provided by the Department of  
6           Education, there were no complaints of these CBOs  
7           being nonexistent or not able to fulfill the duties  
8           for which they were hired?

9                       CHIEF RAMPERSANT: I think that some of  
10          the complaints that were shared by some of the folks  
11          that supported schools were that they were unfamiliar  
12          with a number of the CBOs, as many of them were new  
13          to providing these respective supports to the school  
14          system. And so schools went with CBOs that they were  
15          familiar with.

16                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So, given that this  
17          is generally-- I think we need to come back to that.

18                      CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Sure.

19                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I think we need to  
20          reconvene with your local school leaders, because  
21          there are discrepancies in what you're telling me and  
22          what I'm hearing from school leaders.

23                      But beyond that, given the general  
24          success of this program and the satisfaction  
25          principals, assistant principals, teachers, and

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2           families have with these programs when they work, is  
3           the Administration committed to increasing funding  
4           for Project PIVOT?

5                        CHIEF RAMPERSANT: So as you know, there  
6           are current, we're currently in sort of budget  
7           negotiations, I can't speak on what the final  
8           decisions are about, you know, budgetary commitments  
              at this time.

9                        CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay.

10                      I want to switch to specifically  
11           restorative justice, which is like a different pot of  
12           money and very specific. You said that it operates in  
13           approximately 972 schools at a cost of \$12 million  
14           annually. And how much was allocated in the  
              Preliminary Budget for restorative justice programs?

15                      CHIEF RAMPERSANT: I can tell you in a  
              second. You're going to be sworn in.

16                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Oh, yes, please  
17           raise your right hand.

18                      Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
19           whole truth, and nothing but the truth before these  
              committees?

20                      EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HALL: I do.

21

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2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. Please  
3 state your name for the record.

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HALL: Shonelle Holder  
5 Hall.

6 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HALL: Can you repeat  
8 the question?

9 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: DOE's Restorative  
10 Justice Program operates at approximately 972 schools  
11 at a cost of approximately \$12 million annually. How  
12 much was allocated or set aside in the Preliminary  
13 Budget for restorative justice programs?

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HALL: So the actual  
15 number of schools is 987, and their overall budget is  
16 \$16.8 million.

17 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: (UNINTELLIGIBLE)  
18 Okay. And then how much was allocated in the-- so  
19 that's for this current fiscal year, \$16.8 million.  
20 Thank you for the correction.

21 And how much was allocated or proposed in  
the Preliminary Budget?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HALL: The budget is  
still under review and being finalized.

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2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Well, there was a  
3 Preliminary Budget that was...

4 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: (UN-MIC'D) (INAUDIBLE)

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: proposed.

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HALL: That initial  
cost was \$12 million.

7 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay, \$12 million,  
8 so that's a gap of \$4.8 million in the restorative  
justice programs?

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HALL: Correct.

10 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay. And what are  
11 your-- I'm under the assumption, given your  
12 testimony, that the restorative justice programs are  
13 successful. We like them, we're fans, everyone on the  
Council likes them, and we're fans of them.

14 Why was it proposed to cut funding to  
15 restorative justice programs if it's generally agreed  
16 upon that these are successful programs and generally  
17 successful in reducing suspensions and things that  
detract from our schoolwork?

18 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: I don't know that  
19 restorative is cut as the budget is not finalized, as  
20 you know. I will...

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2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: It was a proposed  
3 cut, so you know it's not finalized...

4 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: proposed (INAUDIBLE)

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: but it was proposed  
to be cut.

6 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Right. But I don't know  
7 if that's final. So I don't want to go on record to  
8 say that that's final as it relates to restorative.

9 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay, obviously  
budgets are ongoing...

10 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: That's correct.

11 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: But just know that  
12 this Council is committed to restorative justice  
13 practices.

14 Now, in the DOE details in The Terms and  
15 Conditions Report, I know you said 987, but the terms  
16 and conditions say 972. I'm interested in the  
17 discrepancy there, but there are restorative justice  
18 programs, and schools fall into direct and indirect  
19 categories. And can you discuss the differences  
between these designations, especially as they relate  
to staffing and programming?

20 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: We're going to have one  
21 of our restorative team members who is deeply

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2           engrossed in the work, as well as the financing and  
3           programming, to talk to you more about those  
4           designations of direct and indirect.

5                         CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay, please raise  
6           your right hand.

7                         EMILIE MITTIGA: Hi, Emilie Mittiga.

8                         CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Hi.

9                         Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
10           whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your  
11           answers before these committees?

12                        EMILIE MITTIGA: I do

13                        CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. Please  
14           state your name again for the record, Emily Mittiga.

15                        CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

16                        EMILIE MITTIGA: The discrepancy between  
17           the 972 and the 987, the 972 is last year's number.  
18           And when we saw some of our schools closed and/or  
19           collapsed, like middle, you know, a middle school may  
20           have been consolidated with a high school into one  
21           new (INAUDIBLE). And so that's how we have the  
              difference in the two numbers. And we have the...

                          CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Sorry, what is the  
22           number of-- if two different schools had restorative  
23           justice, and they combined to one school, wouldn't

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2           that have decreased the number of schools that had  
3           restorative justice programs?

4                   EMILIE MITTIGA: Yeah. So each year, we  
5           see some schools close, other schools open, and some  
6           schools consolidate. And then... (CROSS-TALK)

7                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: You're saying more  
8           schools open than closed, more schools added  
9           restorative justice programs, right?

10                   EMILIE MITTIGA: Yeah. So we...

11                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay.

12                   EMILIE MITTIGA: And then there are some  
13           years that an individual school gets added to the  
14           program because of a specific need. A Superintendent  
15           makes a request to add that school because there's an  
16           extraordinary circumstance going on at the school,  
17           and they weren't previously on the list.

18                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay.

19                   EMILIE MITTIGA: So those are the things  
20           that account for the change in number between years.

21                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. And can  
              you differentiate between direct and indirect  
              categories?

                  EMILIE MITTIGA: Yes. So, given our  
              current central staffing capacity, we have the two

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2 different categories: direct schools receive a coach.  
3 They receive access to our full menu of trainings.  
4 They receive access to our centralized youth  
5 programming. They receive access to our entire  
6 curriculum. Whereas the indirect schools, although  
7 they have someone from our central team assigned to  
8 them, don't get constant implementation coaching.  
9 They don't necessarily have access to all the things  
10 that I just described. So they do have access to our  
11 full training catalog and our curricula, but they  
12 don't have somebody going in and coaching them on a  
13 regular basis around the implementation.

14 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And, then...

15 EMILIE MITTIGA: Sorry, the direct schools  
16 also have access to funding to be able to fund teams  
17 at the school to do the work.

18 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Great. And have you  
19 assessed, similar to the Project PIVOT question about  
20 assessment, have you evaluated the efficacy of direct  
21 coaching-- direct services versus indirect service--  
direct services versus indirect services as it  
relates to things like suspension rates, things like  
academic outcomes, things like student satisfaction,  
teacher satisfaction?

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2 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Yes. And so the direct  
3 services really speak to the investment of the school  
4 community in the restorative practices. And  
5 obviously, the more people and the more dedicated you  
6 are to these practices, you're going to see those  
7 greater outcomes. So we do see a difference in direct  
8 schools versus the indirect schools. We would love  
9 for all of our schools to be direct schools. That  
10 means more people are providing those respective  
11 services. And just like the NYPD giving you real-time  
12 correction and real-time data, I don't want to walk  
13 out of here and have you say bad things about me.

14 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I would never. I  
15 would say bad things about your data, but not about  
16 you.

17 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: (LAUGHS) The  
18 Preliminary Budget was actually \$10.8 million. The  
19 overall was \$16.8 million with a \$6 million gap.

20 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So there's a \$6  
21 million gap that's different than the \$4 million gap.

Okay, thank you. I appreciate the  
correction, the honesty, and the corrections.

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2 So the direct services have a Restorative  
3 Justice Coordinator, and the indirect, uh, would not  
4 have a full-time restorative justice...

5 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Dedicated person.

6 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Dedicated person.

7 And so, how many schools have a Restorative Justice  
Coordinator?

8 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: So let's be clear on  
9 the Restorative Justice Coordinator. The Restorative  
10 Justice Coordinator sounds like it's a person who is  
11 funded by Restorative to provide these restorative  
12 services. In the direct schools, they get funding to  
13 identify a staff member who is operating under that  
14 respective capacity, received (INAUDIBLE) before and  
after to provide Restorative training and supports to  
schools...

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I just... Not  
16 forced overtime just for the session. Okay.

17 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: (LAUGHS) That's not  
18 forced overtime. It's voluntary, right? And it is for  
19 the purposes of creating more training and  
20 involvement for kids. It's a mindset shift, as you  
know, and that's the premise of that direct service.

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2 And as you would expect with direct services, you  
3 would see better outcomes from the schools.

4 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay. But you're  
5 not strictly measuring, or you haven't identified  
6 elements that you are measuring to evaluate the  
7 impact of restorative justice and direct and indirect  
restorative justice services?

8 EMILIE MITTIGA: Yeah, no, we are. So when  
9 we look at schools that are implementing with  
10 fidelity over a three-year period, those direct  
11 schools that are getting all the supports that we  
12 described, we see significant decreases in  
13 suspensions, incident levels; we see increases in the  
number of interventions that are used outside of  
14 traditional punitive measures. Can I share them?

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: The answer is yes,  
16 you can share. (LAUGHS)

17 EMILIE MITTIGA: So, for example, schools  
18 in that subgroup see an 18% drop in principal  
19 suspension as compared to the City seeing a 3.3% drop  
when you compare--the three-year comparison period we  
20 did was 2023 to 2025.

21 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And these are just  
direct...

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2 EMILIE MITTIGA: These are the schools  
3 that were in that direct-- were receiving those  
4 direct services over a three-year period.

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And what about  
indirect... (CROSS-TALK)

6 EMILIE MITTIGA: We are looking at, like  
7 you know, if they're engaging for three years  
8 (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

9 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yes. So,  
10 restorative justice versus non-restorative justice  
11 schools— 18% versus 3 point whatever, whatever,  
3.1%?

12 EMILIE MITTIGA: Uh, 3.3%.

13 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: 3.3%.

14 EMILIE MITTIGA: For principal  
suspensions.

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay. And then the  
16 indirect, is there data related to the indirect?

17 EMILIE MITTIGA: I don't have the indirect  
18 subgroup set out in front of me, so we can...

19 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Does the DOE have  
that data?

20 EMILIE MITTIGA: Yes, we have that data.

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              Committee on Public Safety

2                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay, can we get  
3 that during the hearing?

4                   CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Not during the hearing,  
5 but we'll get it back to you as soon as we humanly  
6 possibly can. All right? All of the people in the  
back (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

7                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: For \$40 billion, I  
8 feel like you can send a text to get the data.

9                   CHIEF RAMPERSANT: We probably can.  
10 Somebody's working on that. I just want to commit to  
11 it before the hearing considering time. But I  
will...

12                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay.

13                   And 18% reduction is alarming in a very  
14 positive way, and I think it does show the causal  
15 relationship between restorative justice practices  
and positive impacts on our students.

16                   Checking in with the NYPD, Section, what  
17 did I say? Section 115-140 (**Transcriber Note:**  
18 **14-150**), that quarterly report, do you know where I  
can find it yet?

19                   DIRECTOR PUCINO: Thanks very much, Mr.  
20 Chairman.

21

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2 So this report is published, I'm happy to  
3 direct your staff to it online. It will reflect  
4 through December 2025, the reporting period within  
5 the School Safety Division, 3,417 civilians and 84  
uniform officers.

6 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: But the report  
7 itself is quarterly per school. That's the  
8 deployment, that's what the report requires.

9 DIRECTOR PUCINO: So it'll be reported on  
10 a quarterly basis. Generally speaking, we don't  
11 release information about specific school deployments  
12 because of security issues about putting that  
information out publicly.

13 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Did we change the  
14 law?

15 DIRECTOR PUCINO: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman?

16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I'm sorry, I mean,  
17 I just want to read it again. Where is it? Where is  
18 it? It's on my computer. I'm pretty sure I have the  
19 most updated Administrative Code up, and I understand  
you say you don't report it. But the Administrative  
Code says the NYPD is to report on that data.

20 And again, we were asking a lot of  
21 questions about the deployment: How many School

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2       Safety Agents are actually in our schools? Time and  
3       time again, we're hearing there are not enough School  
4       Safety Agents. You are telling us, well, there are,  
5       and we assign enough. But the data will help reveal  
6       what that actually is.

7                       And per Administrative Code 14, sorry,  
8       14-150. "The report shall also include, for each  
9       school operated by the department of education to  
10      which school safety agents are assigned, the number  
11      of school safety agents, averaged for the quarter,  
12      assigned to each of those schools."

13                      So I can ask you why the NYPD is  
14      choosing not to comply with the Administrative Code?

15                      DIRECTOR PUCINO: Mr. Chairman, I would  
16      need-- I can't give you the answer, as I sit here on  
17      this panel, about exactly what is going into that  
18      report. But what I can tell you is that, as a general  
19      matter, there are those concerns about school safety  
20      that reflect information that's released publicly,  
21      that could be potentially sensitive. And I'm very  
22      happy to take this back and figure out exactly what's  
23      going on here.

24                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I would love for  
25      you to figure out what's going on. Because this was



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2 What's the most overtime you've seen a  
3 worker or a School Safety Agent work for an entire  
4 month in overtime?

5 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: I'm sorry, but that  
6 amount varies. Obviously, everything is based on the  
7 allotted budget that we have for overtime. There are  
8 people who like to work overtime, some others don't.

9 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Right. Yeah, but  
10 what's the most you've seen a worker work in  
11 overtime? I know it varies; there's a ballpark, a  
12 range, but what's like on the higher end of overtime  
13 hours?

14 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: You could easily have  
15 a School Safety Agent working, you know, an average  
16 of 60 hours of overtime a month.

17 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Hmm. Okay.

18 What would you say are the top budgetary  
19 or the top needs of the School Safety Agent Division?  
20 We've heard a lot today about equipment and  
21 headcount. What would you say the top three needs,  
based on your knowledge of everything going on with  
the division, are?

MR. SEVERINO: So, what we typically do is  
we work with OMB regarding our needs, and basically,



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2 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Well, we're getting a  
3 larger inquiry now for certain schools requesting  
4 scanning, unannounced scanning, and wanting to become  
5 full-time scanning schools. So I would probably say,  
6 you know, in terms of operational needs, more  
equipment for scanning.

7 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay, more equipment.

8 Also, earlier today, the DOE mentioned  
9 that many of the x-ray machines break down on a daily  
10 basis. How many machines again do we have? And  
11 approximately how many break down on a daily basis or  
break down very often on a daily basis?

12 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: Respectfully, just as a  
13 clarification of the number of machines was shared by  
14 the School Safety Division, and the statement of  
15 daily breakdowns was not-- that didn't come from me,  
DOE. I just want to make that clear for the record.

16 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: On a daily basis, I  
17 think I heard you, but that's okay; they break down  
18 very often. Whatever we could (INAUDIBLE) on a  
statement...

19 CHIEF RAMPERSANT: You heard that from the  
20 Police Department, so...

21 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Right.

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2 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: But I could clarify  
3 that, and I could repeat that. I said we have a total  
4 of 208 scanning x-ray machines, 276 open gates, and a  
5 total of 817 hand wands.

6 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay, and  
7 approximately how many machines break down on a  
8 database? Would you say 10% of the machines break  
9 down on a daily basis, 5%?

10 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: It's a small  
11 percentage that might have malfunctions that could be  
12 easily repaired on the spot by our trained  
13 technicians.

14 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay.

15 All right, so I'll pause there on the  
16 School Safety Agents. We've spent a lot of time  
17 talking about School Safety Agents. It's four  
18 o'clock, it's almost three hours.

19 School crossing guards, it seems, as many  
20 of my colleagues mentioned earlier today, seem like  
21 we're having similar issues: People from our  
communities requesting school crossing guards due to  
traffic violence-related incidents in their  
community, and people making their voices heard,  
reaching out to the local precinct, reaching out to

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2           the local Community Board, and these requests  
3           generally go unaddressed.

4                     Speaking about requests, a school  
5           principal, from one of the schools in my district,  
6           earlier today, emailed me and many others, basically  
7           saying that there was a child who was struck last  
8           year. Also, there have been many near-miss incidents  
9           near that East Tremont very busy corner, and the  
              requests generally go unaddressed.

10                    So talk to us about the headcount for  
11           school crossing guards. I think you mentioned that  
12           earlier today, but just want to make it-- just want  
              to have it fresh.

13                    And also, how many vacant positions?  
14           What's the actual headcount and the budgeted  
15           headcount in vacant positions for the school crossing  
              guards?

16                    DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: Thank you for that  
17           question.

18                    As of April 13th, our authorized  
19           headcount is 2,309. Our actual head count is 2,160.  
20           So that leaves us with a vacancy of 149. We have 45  
21           that are not accounted for in that number that are  
              actually out long-term sick. We also have a class of

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2       100 expected to enter and be hired on May 11th, 2026.

3       So you add that 100 and that 45, and we're close to  
4       our actual headcount.

5                       In 2018, our actual headcount was 2,500.  
6       So in 2018, we had 340 more school crossing guards  
7       than we do today.

8                       CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: What is the pay for  
9       school crossing guards? I think you mentioned \$19.00  
10       an hour. Is there like different levels of pay  
11       depending on experience?

12                       DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: School crossing  
13       guards, Level I, are part-time employees. They make  
14       \$19.14 per hour. They work five-hour tours, 2.5 hours  
15       in the morning from 7:00 to 9:30 a.m., and then 2.5  
16       hours in the evening from 12:30 to 3:00.

17                       Our Level II guards are full-time  
18       employees who receive benefits. They get paid  
19       \$44,533.

20                       MR. SEVERINO: And in addition to what the  
21       Chief is saying, there's also a uniform allowance, as  
22       per their contract, for an additional \$226.00. And  
23       there is a longevity differential, which is \$0.43 of  
24       incremental cost for 15 years or more for Level I and  
25       \$800.00 for Level II.

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2 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: How many Level I  
3 crossing guards do we have, and how many Level II?

4 DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: So right now we're  
at-- Let's give you exact numbers...

5 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: If you don't have the  
6 numbers, could you just give us a ballpark?

7 DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: Nope.

8 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Like 60-/40.

9 DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: No, 2,219 Level I, and  
10 90 are Level II.

11 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: So basically, all of  
them are Level I with very minor exceptions.

12 DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: Right. So, typically,  
13 school crossing guards are maybe ten or more in a  
14 command, and then they have a Level II who is their  
15 supervisor and does the administrative side of the  
process, and there are one or two in a command.

16 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Yup. And yet--and by  
17 the way, I really appreciate your point earlier. You  
18 were very clear, right? It seems like the pay  
19 structure makes it difficult for people to want to  
20 apply and also stay there. This is a very expensive  
city, \$19.00 an hour, five hours a day, that's not

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2 going to get you anywhere. Won't be able to even  
3 purchase groceries with that.

4           What is the process for requesting a  
5 school crossing guard, and how many requests do we  
6 receive per year?

7           DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: So a typical request  
8 comes in either through school officials, parents,  
9 Level II, the CO themselves, the commanding officer  
10 of the Command, a borough coordinator, residents, or  
11 elected officials. It goes through the commanding  
12 officer to Command. He does an assessment, a  
13 risk-based assessment; he'll look at it. He'll look  
14 at pedestrian volume, he'll look at traffic volume,  
15 speed conditions, whether the location actually has a  
16 traffic signal or not, sight distance, and whether  
17 there are a lot of turns involved. Students age to  
18 students that actually go there, as well as, he'll  
19 look at collision data. Collision data is not the  
20 only thing they look at. There are many things.

21           So, they'll make their assessment. It  
22 will go up through the borough and will come up to  
23 the Chief of Patrols' office. My office will take a  
24 look at it. We'll either concur. And then we'll send

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2           it over to Strategic Initiatives, who will do an  
3           assessment as well.

4                     Obviously, allocation comes into account  
5           as well. So there are a number of factors going into  
6           this. You'll see publicly displayed, as I said  
7           before, there are 2,639 school crossing guard posts  
8           posted publicly. Again, I'll tell you our headcount  
              is at 2,219. So there is a gap there.

9                     A lot of those posts were historical. So  
10           basically, we know our headcount has to be evaluated,  
11           our actual count has to be evaluated, and these posts  
12           have to be evaluated, and they have to go into  
13           priority order. So we look at data and assessment to  
              prioritize.

14                    You spoke about the location of the  
15           school that was mentioned to you, and the (INAUDIBLE)  
16           Precinct is very familiar with it, uh, 1910 Arthur  
17           Avenue. I spoke with the commanding officer, at that  
18           Command, we are doing an assessment at that location  
              specifically. That command has 20 school crossing  
              guards, and they're at their allocation of 20.

19                    So some schools require more than one  
20           school crossing guard, because the crossing is so

21

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2 dangerous. That's one way we like to keep our school  
3 crossing guard safe—double up posts.

4           So we're always making these assessments,  
5 every year before the start of the year, we make that  
6 assessment, and we do our priority posts. Sometimes  
7 they move up, sometimes they move down. But our  
8 allocation is our allocation, our headcount is our  
9 headcount, and our post list is our post list.

9           But there are a lot of decision makers,  
10 and we all come together and make that assessment.

11           CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: All right. Thank you  
12 for that information.

13           So the 2,219, is that the total headcount  
14 or is that the Level I headcount?

15           DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: So that's the Level I,  
16 then you have another 90 on top of Level II guards,  
17 which will bring you to 2,309.

18           CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Got it. Okay.

19           DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: So, Level II, just so  
20 you know, also fill in when there's a gap, or there's  
21 a vacancy, or there's a school crossing guard that  
may call out, so they'll assist as well.

              CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Approximately--going  
back to the question, approximately how many

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2           applications do we-- or how many requests do we  
3           receive per year? And if there's no formal process,  
4           what would be a super rough number that you say, if  
5           you were to guess?

6                         DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: I don't want to guess.  
7           I don't have that number.

8                         CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Would you say it's  
9           more than 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, or 5,000? It's  
10          a big city.

11                        DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: As a former commanding  
12          officer, two times, I frequently got requests for  
13          school crossing guards. Who wouldn't want a school  
14          crossing guard? Their beloved people, they are  
15          community members, they live in the command. They're  
16          out there day in and day out, in all types of  
17          weather. And they're just lovely people, so we get  
18          these requests quite often.

19                        CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: How's retention in  
20          this division? How often do they usually, when hired,  
21          how long do they usually stay for?

                       DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: So that's something  
I'd have to get back to as far as retention.

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2 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. If you don't  
3 have any data, is that an issue you've seen with the  
4 school crossing guards?

5 DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: I painted a picture of  
6 our staffing. We're currently very close to our  
7 allocation. So we got the 100 who are in the class  
8 who are going to get hired on May 11th, and with the  
9 45 long-term sick, we're at the allocation. So I  
10 think our recruitment efforts are working and are at  
11 the allocations.

12 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: What are the factors  
13 that you consider when determining whether an  
14 intersection or school is going to get a crossing  
15 guard? I'm sure foot traffic, as well as the vehicle  
16 collision rate, but is there anything else?

17 DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: So we don't just do  
18 collision data, because that would be reactive. So  
19 we'd like to be proactive. And pedestrian volume, if  
20 you have a lot of people attending that school and  
21 there's a lot of pedestrians crossing, traffic  
volume, is there a lot of cars coming through? Speed  
conditions, is it a wide open street where vehicles  
can get up in speed? What type of crossing is it? Is  
there traffic crossing/traffic/signals at the place

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2 that can help mitigate the dangers, sight  
3 distance—are there a lot of turning vehicles? Then,  
4 when we look at students' age, we tend to really  
5 prioritize elementary and junior high schools.

And then we look at collision data.

6 Collision data is a metric we use to see how we're  
7 doing as a whole. So if you look at pedestrian youth,  
8 this is 17 years or younger, pedestrian juveniles, 17  
9 years or younger, between the start of the school  
10 year, September 1st, 2025, to April 19, 2026, between  
11 the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., to school hours,  
12 we're down in juvenile pedestrians being struck and  
injured by a vehicle, 13%.

13 So that's a metric that we use as a  
14 barometer to see if we are doing well with our  
15 deployment. It's strategic. We're basing it on this  
16 data—and our assessments from our commanding  
17 officers, our coordinators, or Level II. So we're  
18 getting a lot of feedback about where and how we  
deploy.

19 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Do we have any data on  
20 the number of school crossing requests that have gone  
unaddressed?

21 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: That I don't have.

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2 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Also, just thinking  
3 about the daily manpower of the School Crossing Guard  
4 Division, approximately 2,300. How many school  
5 crossing guards are called out on an average day or  
6 week?

7 DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: Yeah, that's a  
8 question that I've been hearing you ask, and I have  
9 to get back to you on that one. I don't have that.

10 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. Even if we don't  
11 have data, is that an issue that we've heard about  
12 with them not showing up?

13 DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: So, Level I is  
14 part-time employees who get paid an hourly salary. We  
15 could probably track that. But I'd have to look at  
16 the Level II, who are salaried employees. With Level  
17 I, if you don't work your 20 hours, it can  
18 contractually cause you issues as far as coverage,  
19 medical coverage specifically. I don't know if  
20 calling out is an issue, but I'd have to get back to  
21 you.

22 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: How many school  
23 crossing guards work less than 20 hours? Is that the  
24 entire 2,219, or is there-- because I know less than  
25 20 hours they don't qualify for benefits.

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2 DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: So, 2,219 are all the  
3 Level I guards. Those are the ones that you see on a  
4 daily basis in the crosswalks. They're the ones who  
get paid the hourly rate.

5 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Yeah, and how many of  
6 those work less than 20 hours?

7 DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: That I would have to  
8 get back to that analysis.

9 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. How many school  
10 crossing guards, based on-- and I know there's,  
11 again, not that much data on given a request that you  
12 get, but I think we could agree that it's a lot of  
requests.

13 DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: Yeah.

14 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Just curious, what  
15 would be a number that you think would get us to a  
16 better point when it comes to addressing these  
17 requests that students, parents, or school educators  
18 are making for school crossing guards? What would be  
a number that would put us in a very good position on  
this issue?

19 DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: I'll just go back to  
20 this—in 2018, we had 2,500 school crossing guards.

21 That was 340 more than we were today. On our publicly

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2 displayed database, where you see our posts, I want  
3 to say the number was 2,639. So, I'll let you make  
4 that assessment. Those are the factual numbers.

5 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you for that  
6 information. Do we have any data on incidents,  
7 traffic-related incidents that have happened in the  
high-risk intersections around schools?

8 DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: Yeah, that's a great  
9 question. Let me just start off by saying, on October  
10 20th, 2023, a 13-year veteran, 63 years of age,  
11 Krystyna Naprawa, a school crossing guard, was killed  
12 in a line of duty while she was crossing a family in  
13 Woodhaven, Queens. Tragic. She was beloved, and it  
14 was painful for the Department. We came together as a  
15 department and assessed what happened. We had a  
16 six-day training prior to that for school crossing  
17 guards to talk about how to mitigate traffic and how  
18 to deal with aggressive drivers, conflict management,  
19 hazard recognition, use of hand signals, and making  
20 eye contact with drivers before stepping out into an  
21 intersection. And then we enhance that training  
following her tragic death. An extra day, and we  
analyzed the equipment that was given to school  
crossing guards. Typically, their uniforms are

2 reflective, every part of them, including the hat and  
3 the gloves. But we doubled down, we gave them what we  
4 call stop paddles along with a six-foot pole  
5 extension to make them more visible. Because one of  
6 the analyses, when this happened, we determined that  
7 it was a truck that struck her, and the visibility of  
8 the school crossing guard was not readily apparent.  
9 So our priority as the Chief of Patrol's office, who  
10 oversees the school crossing guards, is to keep them  
11 safe. So we revamped our training. So we do have  
12 incidents, tragic incidents at school crossings, and  
13 that's one that hurts.

14 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. Thank you for  
15 the information. And last question before I pass it  
16 to Council Member Phil Wong. And the same question  
17 that I asked about the School Safety Agents, what  
18 would you say are the top three needs to fully  
19 stabilize the school Crossing Guard Division—  
20 budgetary needs, headcount, anything and everything  
21 legislative, operational needs? What would put the  
School Crossing Guard Division in a much better  
position, given the many things that people come to  
us with concerns and requirements, and et cetera?  
Paying them is, I'm sure, one of them, what else?

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2 DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: Again, the training  
3 and the support for these school crossing guards. I  
4 know the school system and the principals and the  
5 employees praise these school crossing guards, and we  
6 get a lot of positive feedback from the community. So  
that's very helpful.

7 I'll keep drilling home that we have  
8 2,639 posts displayed on our public website. Our  
9 headcount in 2018 was 340 more than it is today.  
10 We're currently running at our allocation number—at  
11 or about. So I'll just say that. And then lastly, I  
12 know the questions are always about pay. Obviously,  
13 that will improve retention and hiring, but that is a  
question beyond my scope.

14 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. And what's the  
total budget for the school crossing guard?

15 MR. SEVERINO: Sure. So, based on our  
16 current budgeted headcount numbers, the actual  
17 dollars associated with the school Crossing Guard  
18 Program are roughly \$49.3 million. And again, to the  
19 Chief's point, we're going to work, we're going to  
20 continue to work with OMB on that funding level and  
the headcount level.

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2 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Got it. So, \$49.3  
3 million for school crossing guard operations, how  
4 much of it goes towards personnel versus other?

5 MR. SEVERINO: That's all personnel  
6 costs. And roughly \$45.3 million is for the part-time  
workers and \$4 million for the full-time workers.

7 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: All right, thank you  
8 for that very specific data. All right, so I'll pause  
9 here. I'll pass it to the Council Member Phil Wong  
10 for a second round of questions.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Thank you, Chairs.  
12 The School Safety Agents I met are spectacular. They  
13 know the names of every student coming through the  
14 doors. They know who they are. They can identify  
15 problems before they happen. So I have 100% respect  
16 for School Safety Agents. That's where I'm coming  
17 from.

18 My question actually is directed to Chief  
19 Mary King. Based on the numbers you gave me, there  
20 are 1,800 schools in New York City. And currently,  
21 your authorized head count is 3,915 School Safety  
Agents, with 360 vacancies. That means you only have  
3,555 School Safety Agents working right now, if  
everybody shows up every day. You divide that by

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2     1,800 schools, which works out to be just around two  
3     School Safety Agents per school.

4                     Now that's the elephant in the room. The  
5     elephant in the room is that when you have a small  
6     school, two agents per school is probably adequate.  
7     When you deal with the school, a big one with  
8     2,000-3,000 students, there are plenty of high  
9     schools. Take any high school, my school, Grover  
10    Cleveland, there are over 2,000 students. In the  
11    morning, they use what, six entrances? And they use  
12    six entrances for dismissal.

13                    Two School Safety Agents are clearly  
14    inadequate in schools such as Grover Cleveland. And I  
15    think that is something that everybody on this panel  
16    has to agree with.

17                    One, you need more School Safety Agents  
18    for large schools, and we have to do better, whether  
19    you ask OMB for funds or we ask the Finance Committee  
20    for more money to hire them. We don't have enough  
21    School Safety Agents based on the numbers you gave  
22    me. That is something you could agree with.

23                    DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Thank you so much for  
24    your question. Actually... (CROSS-TALK)

25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Yes or no? Yes or  
3 no?

4 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: This question, let me  
5 elaborate, please. This question is actually giving  
6 me the opportunity to update information that I did  
7 not provide earlier when I gave the number of total  
schools.

8 Yes, the total number of schools that we  
9 obviously staff is 1,896. However, most of them are  
10 co-located, so the number of physical buildings is  
1,347.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Okay, you divide  
12 that, and it comes out to like three School Safety  
13 Agents per school. Now, when you take a high school  
14 like Newtown, Maspeth High School, or Grover  
15 Cleveland, where there are 2,000-3,000 students, you  
16 need more than two or three School Safety Agents. Is  
this something you agree with?

17 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Absolutely. And they  
18 do... (CROSS-TALK)

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Okay, so, let's  
work... (CROSS-TALK)

20 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: and they do...  
21 (CROSS-TALK)

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Let's work... Let's  
3 admit that... (CROSS-TALK)

4 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: and they do... And  
5 they do... And they do have the allocation...  
(CROSS-TALK)

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Let's face this  
7 problem... (CROSS-TALK)

8 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: for that...  
(CROSS-TALK)

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Let's face this  
10 problem. We admit there is a problem, and let's work  
11 on it. All right? Because we cannot have a solution  
12 if there are people here who won't even admit that we  
13 have a problem. All right? We do have a problem.  
Right?

14 I was outside City Hall protesting when  
15 those thousands of School Safety Agents filed for  
16 retirement, because they thought they were going to  
17 get laid off. All right? So, I know a lot of them  
18 left. And I know the numbers. The numbers that you  
19 gave me. *Numbers that you gave me.* We have 1,000  
20 fewer School Safety Agents compared to a couple of  
years ago. That is a fact. All right?

21

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2 I am going to get to my question. This is  
3 not my question.

4 My question is, Council Member Brewer  
5 identified a problem where the kids travel from  
6 school to school to school trying to identify kids  
7 who may be affiliated with rival gangs. It is  
8 happening right now. My district, Grover Cleveland  
9 High School, had 18 kids show up last Friday at four  
10 o'clock, and fortunately, the doors were closed. If  
11 the doors were open, they would go right in. I don't  
12 even know what would have happened. Then,  
13 fortunately, the doors were closed, they had video  
14 surveillance, and they now know who they are.

15 When I am trying to say that, they moved  
16 on to go to other schools on the Brooklyn side. They  
17 went to 93, they went to 77, which has far fewer  
18 School Safety Agents than Grover Cleveland.

19 So, my question to you is, when you have  
20 a graduating class coming in, would you put them in  
21 these large schools, because they need more School  
Safety Agents? Would you do that?

DEPUTY CHIEF KING: The new class will be  
deployed to the schools as needed.

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2                   COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Yes, well, I'm going  
3 to tell you now, large high schools, large schools  
4 need more School Safety Agents.

5                   DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Absolutely. And  
6 that's... (CROSS-TALK)

7                   COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Thank you.

8                   DEPUTY CHIEF KING: that's something we  
9 could always reassess (TIMER)... (CROSS-TALK)

10                  COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Okay, thank you.  
11 That's it. (CROSS-TALK)

12                  DEPUTY CHIEF KING: and we will  
13 reassess... (CROSS-TALK)

14                  COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Thank you. That's  
15 it. Thank you.

16                  CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: You're hearing a  
17 lot, not enough agents, and the idea that they're  
18 somehow replaced by a mobile unit just doesn't cut  
19 it. It just doesn't comport with the lived reality of  
20 the schools. And I agree, you know, a lot of the big  
21 high schools are sharing the concerns with me more  
than-- elementary schools do, too, but large high  
schools are as well.

                  COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Thank you, Chair.

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2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: You testified  
3 before that a school of 3,000 could have one School  
4 Safety Agent. That's what you testified to; that was  
5 really troubling. You said from one to 10, kind of  
6 anywhere from one to 10. I don't think that's a good  
7 minimum of one.

8 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: And then I clarified  
9 that those locations have a minimum of one School  
10 Safety Agent for elementary schools. Obviously, as  
11 the grade levels go up, and we see the student  
12 population at high schools, which is obviously going  
13 to be larger, that number fluctuates and will  
14 obviously be bigger.

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Right. But...

16 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: That's what I stated.

17 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay, I accept the  
18 clarification; although, it is still not an actual  
19 ratio. We still don't have clarity or a sense of how  
20 many School Safety Agents there should be. And the  
21 answer is, yes, larger schools should get more. High  
schools should get more, it's sort of obvious. But we  
still don't understand if school... Is the ratio  
500:1, is it 1,000:1, is it 3,000:1? We don't know.  
We just know that it is not enough. We know, in

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2           addition to what you said, the 20% (INAUDIBLE) rate,  
3           the vacancy rate, and not reporting on it, it is  
4           really hard to make headway with this when the  
5           numbers are not being reported as per the  
6           Administrative Code, and when we are just getting  
7           different testimony that is not what we are  
              experiencing in our schools.

8                         Again, I was at a school last week, one  
9           to two School Safety Agents, and there's 1,300 kids,  
10          two schools. I just don't see how that is feasible.

11                        DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Would you be able to  
              share those schools... (CROSS-TALK)

12                        CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Oh, I am happy to  
13          share them with you, and I will invite any principal  
14          or teacher to share, publicly, wherever the camera  
15          is, to share directly with me. I am happy to share  
16          with you. But I am telling you what they are told.  
17          They are told that there aren't enough School Safety  
              Agents, which is true.

18                        But it isn't what you are telling me. You  
19          are telling me, "It's fine. We fill the gaps." But  
20          the gaps are not filled. And there are schools that  
21          want to do these afterschool programs, and they have  
              to manage the School Safety Agents, who are told,

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2       despite what you are telling me, that they have to do  
3       forced overtime, and they just have to figure out the  
4       schedules.

5           So, I am happy to share those schools  
6       with you, if the schools are comfortable doing that.

7           DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Please do.

8           CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Because I would  
9       like to work on these numbers and ratios.

10          And, lastly, I just want to confirm, I  
11       know we asked it earlier, but I just want to make  
12       sure that the protocols, that the guidance for ICE or  
13       non-local law enforcement, the guidance is limited,  
14       as I understand it, to activity inside school  
15       buildings. But you are saying there are protocols for  
16       outside of the building as well?

17          DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: So anything outside  
18       that has the potential to affect schools in any way,  
19       schools are trained to activate a GRP activation...

20       (CROSS-TALK)

21          CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Right, which  
22       includes the perimeters and arrival and dismissal,  
23       which includes the... (CROSS-TALK)

24          DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: It includes the  
25       perimeter for arrival and dismissal, right? If we are

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2           aware of any sighting or enforcement taking place in  
3           close proximity to the school perimeter, the school  
4           can activate what is called a shelter-in, which is  
5           meant to keep all things out.

6                         CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yes, I do want to  
7           share- I already read it again, but I think...

8                         DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: Mm-hmm?

9                         CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: those protocols  
10           need to be shared again, because there is confusion,  
11           and there was a directive that there wasn't clarity,  
12           particularly in co-located schools. This was a  
13           co-located school. But I have other advocacy  
14           organizations where the guidance is not necessarily  
15           clear.

16                         So, if you are testifying that it is  
17           clear, that we have clear guidelines and updated  
18           guidance for inside the school building, and on the  
19           perimeter, those should be resubmitted to the  
20           principals and to school leaders, and to the BRT, so  
21           that there is clarity. If you have them, great. Our  
              students need to be safe.

                          DEPUTY CHIEF ALPS: I can absolutely do  
                          that. I would really appreciate it, even after, if  
                          you can share that particular school with me, so that

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2           I can go to that school, or have my Borough Safety  
3           Director go to the school and walk through with the  
4           principal and the co-located leaders, to talk about  
5           what transpired, and what they were clear about and  
6           not clear about, so that we will have a repeat of  
7           that.

8                           CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

9                           And, back to the School Safety Agents, I  
10           had mentioned in my opening about international  
11           schools, schools with a high population of immigrants  
12           or non-English speaking language students or their  
13           families, uh, is there any consideration when you  
14           deploy School Safety Agents to ones that are  
15           bilingual or multilingual, going to those  
16           international schools, so there can be cultural  
17           competency and they can have those conversations with  
18           students? Because as much as we love our School  
19           Safety Agents, we love our students, and the students  
20           told me they love our School Safety Agents, but it  
21           has resulted in tensions when there's a language  
              barrier, and it does get very frustrating to the  
              parents who want to see their kids, and there's a  
              language barrier. So, is there consideration given to  
              bilingual School Safety Agents?

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2 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Absolutely. I am the  
3 perfect example of that. Having bilingual School  
4 Safety Agents when I went through high school was  
5 scaring me, and helped me to assimilate into the  
6 American mainstream. So yes, absolutely  
(INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

7 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: No, I know that  
8 they exist; what I am asking is that we have some  
9 schools that are designed to have more bilingual  
10 programs. Schools that are designed for newly arrived  
immigrants... (CROSS-TALK)

11 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: We take that in...  
12 (CROSS-TALK)

13 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And I am asking if  
14 that is part of your deployment strategy?

15 DEPUTY CHIEF KING: Absolutely. It is  
something that we take into account.

16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay. I think there  
17 is a lot more work to do there, because there does  
18 seem to be miscommunication or a lack of  
19 communication. If you are testifying to that, but the  
20 schools are reporting that it is not the case, then  
21 something needs to be fixed in that line of  
communication. Because we all want the same thing, we

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2 want our schools to be safe. We want our School  
3 Safety Agents to be respected, as they deserve. And  
4 we want our communities to thrive.

5 So I am looking forward to that continued  
6 conversation. I am looking forward to-- well, with  
7 three hours and 40 minutes of testimony, there is a  
8 lot that I am looking forward to—and no answer on  
14-150, yet, no? Your quarterly report?

9 DIRECTOR PUCINO: Yes, I am happy to  
10 engage with you on that (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

11 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah, we will have  
12 to engage. Because it is required by Local Law, it  
13 hasn't been reported yet on your website, to my  
14 knowledge, and that has not been submitted to the  
15 Council. So we will certainly continue that  
16 conversation.

17 I want to thank the NYPD and the DOE for  
18 attending today. This was, I think, a very thorough,  
19 a lot of thorough questions about what's going on in  
20 our schools and with our School Safety Agents. And,  
21 you know, I think we all want the same thing, which  
is safe schools. And we have to make sure we're on  
the same page in how we get there. So I want to thank  
you once again, NYPD. Thank you, uh, New York City



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2 DONALD NESBIT: Good afternoon, Chairs  
3 Dinowitz and Feliz. I am Donald Nesbit, Executive  
4 Vice President, Local 372 - NYC Board of Education  
5 Employees, District Council 37- AFSCME. It is an  
6 honor to come before the Council to speak on behalf  
7 of the School Crossing Guards and the vacancies that  
they have.

8 Local 372 has long testified to the need  
9 to hire additional school crossing guards. It is  
10 vital in order to keep our children safe from the  
11 dangers of reckless drivers and to ensure that school  
12 crossing guard members are not stressed by the  
continuous decline of staff.

13 Student pedestrians also often face major  
14 safety traffic hazards every day caused by double and  
15 triple-parked cars at bus stops sited in close  
16 proximity to our school buildings. School crossing  
17 guards are often the first line of defense in  
ensuring the safety of these students.

18 These workers have risked their own  
19 health, safety, and lives to perform vital services  
20 to the community, and as the number of school  
21 crossing guards continues to decline, thousands of  
school children cross main intersections without any



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2 DONALD NESBIT: By eliminating these open  
3 positions and not hiring additional school crossing  
4 guards, the City sends a dangerous message: The  
5 safety of our children in New York City is not the  
6 City's priority. Local 372 respectfully requests that  
7 the City restore these 500 open positions and hire  
8 additional School Crossing Guards, providing our  
9 school children with heightened protection as they  
travel to and from school.

10 Again, thank you for the opportunity to  
provide this testimony before the Council.

11 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

12 STAMO KARALAZARIDES: Good afternoon,  
13 Chairs Dinowitz and Feliz, and Members of the  
14 Council. I am Stamo Karalazarides, First Vice  
15 President at The Council of School Supervisors and  
16 Administrators. I am here today on behalf of our  
President, Henry Rubio, and our CSA leadership.

17 School safety is one of the most urgent  
18 issues facing our schools right now. When students  
19 don't feel safe, nothing else works. Instruction  
20 suffers, families lose confidence, and school leaders  
21 are pulled away from teaching and learning to manage  
crises.

2 What we're seeing on the ground is a real  
3 shift over the last few years. Students are coming  
4 into schools with higher levels of anxiety and  
5 stress. Families are more worried than ever about  
6 bullying, social media conflicts, mental health, and  
7 violence both inside and outside of school buildings.  
8 At the same time, we have far fewer Safety Agents  
9 than we did before the pandemic. And despite that,  
10 thousands of dangerous items, including firearms, are  
11 still being intercepted in our schools each year. The  
12 risk is real, and the staff we have are doing the  
13 critical work, but we don't have enough of them.

14 We're also asking school leaders to do  
15 more with less. This is where the role of assistant  
16 principals becomes critical. Assistant principals are  
17 often the first responders inside a school. When  
18 there's a fight, a medical emergency, or a student in  
19 crisis, they're the ones stepping in immediately.  
20 They coordinate with Safety Agents, support teachers,  
21 communicate with families, and stabilize situations  
in real time. But beyond emergencies, they're also  
doing the daily work that prevents those situations  
from happening in the first place: Monitoring school  
climate, addressing conflicts early, supporting

2 struggling students, and keeping systems running  
3 smoothly.

4 Right now, dozens of schools are  
5 operating without an assistant principal. That  
6 creates a real gap. It means fewer trained leaders  
7 available in critical moments, slower response times,  
and less capacity to prevent before they escalate.

8 As class size reductions bring more  
9 teachers into buildings, the need for leadership  
doesn't stay the same; it grows. Without  
10 corresponding increases in supervisory staff, we're  
11 putting more pressure on fewer people to manage  
12 increasingly complex environments.

13 But the bigger issue is that our system  
14 is still mostly reactive. We respond after incidents  
15 happen instead of preventing them. If we're serious  
16 about safety, we need to invest in prevention, mental  
17 health supports, counseling, and restorative  
practices. Right now, those supports are inconsistent  
and often insufficient.

18 We also need to fix systems that  
19 unintentionally (TIMER) make things worse, like  
20 safety transfers that move challenges from one school  
21 to another without proper information or support.

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2 The path forward is clear: Restore  
3 staffing, strengthen leadership, ensure technology  
4 works, and shift towards prevention. Safety isn't  
5 just about responding to incidents; it's about  
6 building school environments where those incidents  
7 are less likely to happen in the first place. Thank  
you.

8 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you so much  
9 for your testimony. When you mentioned safety  
10 transfer, it just reminds me that the easiest way to  
11 get transferred out of a school is to get beaten up.  
Just a weird way to run a school system.

12 Chair Feliz?

13 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you very much.  
14 Thank you both for being here and also for all the  
15 important work that you do to support school crossing  
guards and our School Safety Agents.

16 My question is for Donald, uh,  
17 specifically about school crossing guards. I know you  
18 and your team have conversations very often with  
19 school crossing guards. What would you say are the  
20 top issues that you think we should work on to make  
21 life better and easier for these crossing guards? I  
know you mentioned a higher headcount. What do you

2 think would be an appropriate number? And also  
3 salary, I don't think anybody would disagree that  
4 \$19.00 an hour is poverty wages, and that is beyond  
unacceptable.

5  
6 Based on your conversations with crossing  
guards and the stakeholders, what do you think would  
7 be a fair salary for these crossing guards?

8 DONALD NESBIT: So, one, I believe  
9 restoring the number to the 2,500 headcount. What we  
10 saw with Krystyna Naprawa on Woodhaven and Atlantic,  
11 where she was struck by the truck, wasn't only that  
12 there weren't any signs or visibility. Those were  
13 issues, but she was the only one there. We repeatedly  
14 said, on corners of this magnitude, if you have ever  
15 been to Woodhaven and Atlantic, you know that's not a  
16 normal corner or intersection. You need multiple  
17 school crossing guards at all four of those corners.  
18 A lot of our schools have school crossing guards  
19 where there are multiple corners of a school, yet  
20 there's one school crossing guard on one  
intersection, where students are traveling from  
several different corners to get to school. So  
restoring their headcounts would be the priority.

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2 In terms of salary and pay, we've done  
3 multiple things in increasing the whole-- we think of  
4 our members as holistic members. So there were plenty  
5 of issues, uh, the City, during the summertime, when  
6 the school crossing guards didn't work, they didn't  
7 have health insurance like every other City worker  
8 while being off. We had to testify before panels to  
9 increase, and now every school crossing guard's  
health insurance is covered year-round.

10 We created the Level II position that you  
11 heard about today. The Level II position was created  
12 because they were going to give other members of the  
13 Police Department supervision over a school crossing  
14 guard while performing other duties. And police  
15 officers at the time couldn't do it. So we created a  
16 Level II as a promotional path for school crossing  
17 guards. So, a full-time school crossing guard, which  
18 by the way is the only full-time school crossing  
19 guard anywhere in the US, we created that position so  
they can have a promotional path towards a full-time  
position as a school crossing guard. So that was  
something that we actually created.

20 But there's a need for more in terms of  
21 school crossing guards. Quick example, if there's a

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2           snow day related to schools, schools are closed, the  
3           school crossing guards do not get paid, right? They  
4           do not get paid for the day.

5                       CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Right. Right.

6                       DONALD NESBIT: It just doesn't make any  
7           sense. If they're closely related to schools like  
8           everyone else, they should be compensated for the  
              day.

9                       So there's multiple things and we  
10          continue to make the life of a school crossing guard  
11          better, But, I would say there's a lot-- And lastly,  
12          I'll just say that safety equipment and materials,  
13          what we've learned and studies have shown, school  
14          crossing guards that are hit on the impact from a  
15          car, their head material, most of them die from head  
16          trauma. So safety material to keep them protected,  
17          and their lives protected, is important.

18                      CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you. Thank you  
19                      so much for the information.

20                      And a similar question regarding School  
21          Safety Agents, what do you think would be the proper  
              headcount? I know you mentioned that technology is  
              crucial, but if there aren't enough agents to use the  
              technology, then we won't be able to get the safety

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2 that we need inside our school. So, what do you think  
3 would be the proper headcount? And anything on  
4 technology? Do we need additional technology?

5 STAMO KARALAZARIDES: Regarding the number  
6 of Safety Agents that we need in school, it would be  
7 nice if we could come up with a ratio for a student:  
8 safety agent. Certainly, we need, at a minimum, what  
9 we had before the pandemic, which was approximately  
5,200. We need at minimum that amount.

10 Also, I just want to bring to your  
11 attention that the attrition rate is that we're  
12 losing approximately 25 to 30% of our SSAs each year.  
13 So we do not have enough SSAs coming into our school  
14 buildings to keep our students safe. That attrition  
15 rate is simply unsustainable.

16 And high schools with large populations  
17 who have multiple SSAs don't have enough SSAs, don't  
18 have what they had before the pandemic, and very,  
19 very, very frequently, I would say daily, have their  
20 SSAs pulled from their buildings to cover those  
21 absences, which we were told today are 20%.

So we're looking at about 30% less than  
the pandemic and 20% absences every day. The numbers  
don't lie.

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2                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Were you surprised  
3 by the 20% number?

4                   STAMO KARALAZARIDES: I do hear of a lot  
5 of absences each day. And our school leaders  
6 frequently don't know someone's absent until the  
7 beginning of the day when they arrive at school. And  
8 then they have to wait for an agent to come. So we've  
9 had complaints where our leaders are waiting  
10 sometimes until 11:00 a.m., or even noon, for a  
11 Safety Agent to come in.

12                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Mm-hmm. And they  
13 testified that when they have those absences, they  
14 have those mobile units. Can either of you talk about  
15 your reaction to hearing that testimony?

16                   DONALD NESBIT: So, as the person who  
17 worked in a school building, like yourself,  
18 Councilman, we understand that the mobile units  
19 respond to situations, especially with a reduction in  
20 headcount; they respond to serious situations  
21 throughout the city. And so once you place them in a  
school, let me just take a step back-- the Assistant  
School Safety Agent was put in place because, as CSA  
has testified to, you know, the principal is waiting,  
so they put a parent coordinator or a school aide.

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2 And in terms of safety, we as a union  
3 said, well, our members are not trained tactically to  
4 even be at a desk, right? So if someone comes in and  
5 is looking to do harm to folks within the school  
6 building, our members are not trained like a School  
7 Safety Agent to protect folks. And we're going to do  
8 whatever we have to do to protect folks, like  
9 everyone in the school community. But we need that  
10 level of training. So the creation of the Assistant  
11 School Safety Agent was just in response to the Union  
12 pushing back for the safety of our school aides who  
13 may be there, or someone else.

14 But let me say principals have to do what  
15 they have to do to protect the school building...

16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah.

17 DONALD NESBIT: Right? And so we never  
18 blame them for doing what they need to do. We just  
19 say that the safety is still in question when someone  
20 is there who's not tactically trained to do the job.

21 STAMO KARALAZARIDES: The rate of our  
agents is so low that we're essentially taking from  
Larry to pay Paul. These are the situations. And  
we're taking, in many cases, personnel, as you  
mentioned, Council Members, teachers, school aides,

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2           from their duties that are very, very necessary to  
3           perform the duties of our Safety Agents. And even the  
4           mobile unit that we spoke about, everyone in this  
5           system has an assignment and a responsibility. And  
6           when you're taken out of that responsibility to play  
7           a different crucial role in a building, which is to  
8           cover the Safety Officer that is missing, that's  
9           preventing other services from being given to  
10          students and... (CROSS-TALK)

11                           CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Can I just ask, did  
12           it surprise you that the DOE was not aware that this  
13           was happening in the schools?

14                           STAMO KARALAZARIDES: I'm not sure why  
15           that was stated. It's very surprising to me. It is  
16           frequent that our principals have to figure out ways  
17           to keep their schools safe, and they do. And we  
18           applaud them. We applaud all of our school leaders.  
19           But the fact is, these are resources that could be  
20           given to our students to help them in the classroom,  
21           help them to learn, help them with their emotional  
              needs, their academic needs.

                          We should have the Safety Officers that  
                          are needed in our schools, and we shouldn't be taking  
                          other personnel to cover those responsibilities.

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2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Agreed.

3 Council Member Wong?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Yes, hi.

5 Quick question, take, again, Grover  
6 Cleveland High School, when in the morning, six doors  
are open, and at dismissal, six doors are open.

7 What's your opinion on how many School  
8 Safety Agents it should have? And what is the right  
9 ratio, like the number of School Safety Agents per  
student?

10 STAMO KARALAZARIDES: I would ask Grover  
11 Cleveland what they had before the pandemic. I mean,  
12 a school with six entrances, you have to have Safety  
13 assigned to all of those entrances at a minimum. And  
14 as you said, it was stated before, how many floors  
15 are in the high school? I'm not familiar with that  
16 school. But you have to patrol the floor, patrol all  
17 the corridors. You're saying five floors, and you're  
18 saying how many entrances, six? And how many main  
19 entrances? Two, two main entrances, five floors, all  
20 those corridors, all those students, all that  
21 patrolling, including the perimeter, they are very,  
very low in the number of safety agents that they  
need.

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2 But all of that should be taken into  
3 consideration, among other factors, including  
4 incidents. But of course, if those measures are what  
5 they should be, the incidents would drop.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Thank you. Thank  
7 you.

8 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I want to thank  
9 this panel, of course, the, you know, the work you do  
10 every day, you know, just like the School Safety  
11 Agents, our principals, our crossing guards, our  
12 people who serve their lunch, the school aids,  
13 paraprofessionals, teachers, you know, we're all here  
14 to keep the kids safe. And I appreciate your input.

15 Hopefully, we can get to a place where we  
16 can all work together, and just get on the same page,  
17 first of all, what is actually going on in our  
18 schools, and at our intersections, and then, do what  
19 we need to do to invest in the safety of our kids.

20 Thank you so much for testifying.

21 Okay, now we've got some students. You're  
all in uniform. I love it. All right, I'm going to  
call you up. Whenever you're ready, come up to  
testify: Yaretzi Valera, Brianna Lucero, Molly

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2     Haegele, Crystal Espinal, Paulina Milewska, and last  
3     name [Schmaya] Charles.

4                     UNIDENTIFIED: Schmaya.

5                     CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Schmaya. Thank you  
6     very much.

7                     And whenever you're ready to begin-- I'll  
8     go from my left to your right. You'll start. And if  
9     you can say your name. And you're all from the Circle  
10    Keepers: Dignity in Schools, is that right? And if  
11    you could also state what school you go to, that  
12    would be for the record, please.

13                    Okay, you can just begin when ready.  
14    They'll do the clock. You worry about testifying,  
15    they'll worry about the clock.

16                    CRYSTAL ESPINAL: Good afternoon. My name  
17    is Crystal. I go to Mary Bertram High School. I  
18    organize with the Circle Keepers and Dignity in  
19    Schools Campaign.

20                    Today, I want to specifically speak about  
21    the cuts threatening immigrant student education. I  
   feel like cutting any funds related to Immigration  
   Services is not only harmful, but it's pointless.  
   Immigrants come to this country to pursue education,  
   to build a better life for their families, to

2 experience world history and culture, and to  
3 experience the so-called melting pot. Not allowing  
4 immigrant New Yorkers access to services and  
5 resources such as ESL classes, translation and  
6 interpretation services, bilingual paraprofessionals  
7 and social workers, and culturally responsive  
8 families and community outreach, for example, is  
9 unfair when immigrant New Yorkers contribute so much  
10 to New York's economy and culture.

11 International students are just as  
12 entitled to the services and resources they need as  
13 English-speaking students. While we should be  
14 increasing funding for our growing immigrant  
15 population from all over the world, we are cutting  
16 funds and forcing them to struggle to attain the  
17 future they deserve. Defunding the restorative  
18 justice practices that support the empathy needed to  
19 welcome all students with an open arm, and the mental  
20 health support needed to transition into a new  
21 country, only hurts student learning. That is not  
what schools should be about. Instead, we should move  
the money away from school policing, including all  
NYPD recruitment, hiring, and training of school  
police, and stop funding for surveillance technology.

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2           Instead, we should use the \$90 million we could save  
3           by de-investing from the police and invest instead in  
4           culturally responsive, healing-centered schools,  
5           where children are cared for and seen as human  
6           beings, regardless of their citizenship or language  
7           barriers.

8                         If your goal is truly student safety, I  
9           am asking the City Council to invest in care and  
10          divest from cops. Thank you for your time.

11                        CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. And one  
12          thing I forgot to ask, if you could please share your  
13          name, your school, and what grade you are in.

14                        CRYSTAL ESPINAL: My name is Crystal. I go  
15          to Mary Bertram High School, and I am in the 11th  
16          grade.

17                        CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

18                        MOLLY HAEGELE: Good afternoon, my name is  
19          Molly Haegele, and I am a junior at the Boerum Hill  
20          High School for International Studies and also a part  
21          of District 39's Circle Keepers program.

                          I believe that restorative justice in  
                          schools is so crucial and important to the education  
                          of our future. One of the many things restorative  
                          justice does is provide a framework that creates

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2     brave spaces to educate our students on different  
3     perspectives that often get overlooked in our school  
4     system.

5                         Restorative justice also helps people  
6     have difficult conversations safely, which can open  
7     space to explain the meaning behind the hurtful terms  
8     that get overlooked every day. One example of this  
9     that so many people experience in their day-to-day  
10    life would be the difference and distinction between  
11    Judaism and Zionism. Zionism as a whole is a  
12    political ideology that focuses on Israeli land and  
13    ideas, whereas Judaism is a religion that roughly  
14    15.7 million people worldwide and almost a million  
15    people in New York City alone practice. When you  
16    group together and interchange Judaism and Zionism,  
17    not only are you disregarding pro-Palestine Jewish  
18    people, but you are also hurting Jewish people all  
19    around the world. There are so many people, let alone  
20    the students of today, who are completely unaware of  
21    this difference. And so many people face the  
      repercussions of not having that knowledge and not  
      knowing how to even approach these conversations for  
      fear of ridicule or violence.

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2 A couple of weeks ago, I was walking in  
3 the hallway with one of my friends and a different  
4 student, and we were talking about spring break,  
5 which fell on many of the days of Passover this year.  
6 The person we were walking with said, "Ew, pro-  
7 Palestine," because they assumed that all Jewish  
8 people are pro-Israel. They were never taught the  
9 difference, and it is affecting everybody.

10 We need people in the school buildings  
11 who can see these things happening and acknowledge  
12 them. We need safe spaces for students who experience  
13 things like this, and that is what restorative  
14 justice provides.

15 We need your help to ensure that Intro  
16 175-B stays vetoed, and that bills 175-A, 327, 001-A,  
17 and any law restricting the right to assemble or  
18 giving public dollars to cameras are denied. These  
19 bills do not keep students safe. So we are addressing  
20 our concerns, and you need to listen (TIMER) just  
21 like how the restorative justice workers will listen  
to us in our schools. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

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2 Oh, I'm sorry, I need to pause for one  
3 second. I forgot to read:

4 I now open the hearing for public  
5 testimony. I remind members of the public that this  
6 is a government proceeding and that decorum shall be  
7 observed at all times. As such, members of the public  
shall remain silent at all times.

8 The witness table is reserved for people  
9 who wish to testify. No video recording or  
10 photography is allowed from the witness table.

11 Further, members of the public may not  
12 present audio or video recordings as testimony, but  
13 may submit transcripts of such recordings to the  
Sergeant at Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.

14 If you wish to speak at today's hearing,  
15 please fill out an appearance slip with the Sergeant  
16 at Arms and wait to be recognized. When recognized,  
17 you will have two minutes to speak on today's  
oversight topic.

18 If you have a written statement or  
19 additional written testimony you wish to submit for  
20 the record, please provide a copy of that testimony  
to the Sergeant at Arms. You may also email written



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2           and civilians to use our voice, as promised when we  
3           first stepped into this land.

4                     If you wish to protect marginalized  
5           groups and keep people safe, why would taking our  
6           right to protest and our voice be helpful?

7                     Please consider a student's voice like  
8           mine and millions of others who do not wish for this  
9           bill to pass. We want understanding and support, not  
10          surveillance and loss of protest. We, The Circle  
11          Keepers, and as a student myself, can speak for many  
12          when I say this helps no one.

13                    I hope you will consider my voice. Thank  
14          you for your time.

15                    CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. Brianna.  
16          You testified last time, right?

17                    BRIANNA LUCERO: Yes.

18                    CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: That was incredible  
19          testimony. You are very confident, so I really  
20          appreciate it.

21                    Can you tell me what grade you're in?

                    BRIANNA LUCERO: Eleventh.

                    CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Eleventh grade.

                    Okay, thank you. That was-- tons of confidence. I  
                    loved it. I loved it. Thank you.

2 PAULINA MILEWSKA: Good afternoon. My name  
3 is Paulina Milewska, and I'm a part of the District  
4 39 Circle Keepers program. I'm also a sophomore at  
5 the Brooklyn Latin School. I am also an immigrant. I  
6 know how it feels to spend your afternoons  
7 translating documents for parents who are trying  
8 their best. But even before that was my role, it was  
9 my sister's. She did it when she barely knew English  
10 herself in the 4th grade. She made sure that I didn't  
11 have to worry about that. I know that my sister  
12 benefited greatly from ESL classes. I also know that  
13 I go to school with students who have parents who  
14 graduated from Ivy League universities. There are  
15 students such as myself who don't have that level of  
16 guidance because their parents don't know English as  
17 well. I know that cutting immigrant family  
18 communications would give those immigrant students an  
19 even bigger disadvantage than they already have in  
20 navigating a new country.

21 I also know that I am white. I know that,  
22 unfortunately, immigrants of color are being targeted  
23 by crime, violence, and especially deportation. I say  
24 unfortunately, because no one should be criminalized  
25 for wanting the best for their families. Every

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2     immigrant family left their country for the same  
3     reason that my parents left Poland—for opportunities  
4     for their kids, for money to feed their families, for  
5     a better life. I'm asking you to give us that better  
6     life by allowing us to have the resources we need in  
7     schools. Allow us to protest in and around our  
8     schools.

9                     The buffer zone bill threatens to take  
10    that away from us in the frame of safety. But this  
11    would include outlawing walkouts. On January 30th, my  
12    school, along with many others, did a walkout to  
13    protest against Donald Trump threatening our  
14    democracy. We were protecting ourselves. How can you  
15    say that you are protecting us when you are taking  
16    away our right to do that protest? How can you take  
17    away our right to protest about other important  
18    topics? These include immigrants and especially  
19    immigrants of color fighting for their safety. This  
20    includes Jewish people protesting against  
21    anti-Semitism, who are the people you are claiming  
22    this bill protects.

23                     I am a student, and I am telling you what  
24    I need to feel safe at school. Don't overturn  
25    Mamdani's (TIMER) veto on the buffer zone bill, and

1           The Committee on Education, Jointly with the     225  
              Committee on Public Safety

2           don't take away our immigrant family communication  
3           resources. Thank you for your time.

4                       YARETZI VALERA: Hi, good afternoon. My  
5           name is Yaretzi. I go to IS 162. I'm in 8th grade;  
6           I'm 13 years old, and I'm a youth leader at Make the  
              Road New York.

7                       I come today after a long day at school  
8           because this matters deeply to me. I care about my  
9           education, my peers' education, and our future. And  
10          I'm here to speak up for those whose voices need to  
              be heard.

11                      Right now, I don't always feel supported  
12          at school. Just the other day, I was involved in a  
13          situation that left me in tears. I felt overwhelmed,  
14          angry, and stuck. I didn't know how to make things  
15          better. And I didn't feel like there was space to  
16          work through what was happening. At that moment, I  
17          realized there should have been a better way; someone  
18          to help talk to us and get to the root of the  
              problem. That is why access to restorative justice is  
              so important.

19                      When I walk into my school, the first  
20          person I see at the front desk is a school cop. I  
21          feel uneasy when I see that. I sometimes imagine how

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2           different I would feel if it were someone else's job  
3           to welcome us and make sure we feel safe and  
4           supported when we walk in.

5                        We only have two guidance counselors in  
6           my school, and I know they're doing everything they  
7           can, but it's still hard to get the support we need  
8           when we are struggling. Sometimes students don't feel  
9           heard, and I often feel frustrated, misunderstood,  
              like what I have to say doesn't matter.

10                      When it comes to safety, what I've seen  
11           doesn't always match what schools say. Some of the  
12           school cops I've seen come off as harsh, rude, and  
13           even brutal. There was a time I went to visit the  
14           school to support my cousin for her swimming  
15           practice, and three officers approached me with some  
16           of the worst attitudes I've ever experienced. I ended  
17           up feeling treated like I don't belong, like they are  
18           watching my every move, and waiting to call me out on  
19           something instead of trying to provide support and  
              ask me what help I need. Real safety is about trust,  
              respect, and being seen as a person and not a  
              problem.

20                      We also need better mental health support  
21           (TIMER) in schools. Therapy shouldn't be rare or hard

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2 to access, especially when students are dealing with  
3 stress, anxiety, or grief. I lost my grandmother  
4 during COVID, and I still carry that pain because I  
never had space to fully process it.

5 Many students are going through similar  
6 feelings of loss and isolation, even if it doesn't  
7 always show. That's why I'm here calling for change.  
8 Having police in our schools has never worked, so why  
don't we try something different?

9 We need to focus on the needs of our  
10 students. Police in schools have never created the  
11 kind of safety students truly need. We need a hiring  
12 freeze on school police in New York City. We need to  
13 end (INAUDIBLE) school cop positions and redirect all  
14 that money back into our schools towards more  
15 counselors, stronger mental health, and staff who are  
actually there to support students.

16 Every student deserves to feel safe,  
17 respected, and supported. We deserve schools that  
18 invest in us, not systems that make us feel left  
behind or out of place.

19 We demand that you listen to us, invest  
20 in us, and do what's right. Thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you for your  
3 testimony.

4 SCHMAYA CHARLES: Hi, good afternoon. My  
5 name is Schmaya, and I'm a 9th grader at the  
6 International High School of Prospect Heights. I'm a  
7 leader with the Circle Keepers and Dignity in  
8 Schools. Thank you for taking the time to meet with  
me today.

9 I'm here because I do not support the  
10 buffer zone bill. It is important because (INAUDIBLE)  
11 does not make student protests more dangerous than  
12 they already are for me as a Black (INAUDIBLE) in  
America. The veto must stand.

13 I am also here to say no to Intros 175-A,  
14 227, and 001-A and any law stopping the right to  
15 protest or giving public money to private servants.  
16 It frustrates me that when I walk into my school, I  
17 am treated like a criminal. When I talk to other  
18 young Black men, it is their experience as well. As a  
student, I know my classmates do not feel supported  
by the police in schools.

19 By not hiring more police for schools,  
20 New York City should save \$90 million. That money

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2           could pay for immigrant services, restorative  
3           justice, and mental health services that we need.

4                       I'm going to repeat my testimony in  
5           Haitian Creole. (SPEAKING HAITIAN CREOLE)

6                       Thank you for your time.

7                       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you so much  
8           to this panel. I'd like to thank you for your  
9           testimony today.

10                      I'm going to call the next panel:  
11           Moubarak Oumaou, Witchy Carrier, Michael Adikah, Sika  
12           Agbokou, and Yelani Joseph.

13                      Are you ready? Okay, you can begin when  
14           ready. Please, again, state your name, your school,  
15           and your age. Oh, I'm sorry...

16                      YELANI JOSEPH: Good afternoon, my name is  
17           Yelani Joseph...

18                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I'm sorry. Give me  
19           one moment, I apologize. (INAUDIBLE) Okay, reset the  
20           time? Okay, yes, please begin whenever you are ready.

21                      YELANI JOSEPH: Good afternoon, my name is  
22           Yelani Joseph. I'm a sophomore from Brooklyn, New  
23           York, and an organizer with the NYCLU Teen Activist  
24           Project. I

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2           I'm here today to speak about the role of  
3 police in schools and how their presence can shape  
4 the way we define safety, including harming students  
5 in the long run.

6           Right now, many schools say they rely on  
7 police presence, but for many students, that presence  
8 doesn't feel supportive. It feels like surveillance.

9           When safety is built on control, rather  
10 than connection, it creates distance. Students become  
11 less likely to trust the adults around them or seek  
12 help when they need it. As a student, I've seen how  
13 quickly that trust can break when young people feel  
14 like they're being treated as a problem instead of  
15 the person. That's why we need to rethink how we  
16 define and invest in student safety.

17           Through my work in youth programs, I've  
18 seen that a different approach is possible. I've  
19 particularly seen this through my involvement in a  
20 restorative practice program where I participate in  
21 peer mediation. In these spaces, students are given  
the opportunity to come together and talk through  
conflict, take accountability, and actually listen to  
one another. The focus is on repairing harm and  
rebuilding trust, and by giving students the tools to

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2 resolve conflicts with one another, it not only  
3 addresses the issues but also strengthens the overall  
4 community.

5 Experiences in these spaces, that focus  
6 on connection and mutual understanding, showed me  
7 something important. Safety doesn't come from  
8 authority; it comes from connection. If we truly want  
9 students to feel safe, we need to invest in what  
10 actually supports us, like mental health resources,  
11 counselors, restorative justice programs, and  
12 extracurricular opportunities that build connections.  
Because safety doesn't come from fear, it comes from  
investment and students.

13 I urge policymakers to prioritize funding  
14 that supports student well-being rather than  
15 expanding policing in schools. Students deserve to  
16 feel safe, supported, and understood. Thank you,  
Yelani.

17 MOUBARAK OUMAOU: Good afternoon, my name  
18 is Moubarak. I am a part of the Circle Keepers; I am  
a student at International High School as well.

19 In my school, the police treat students  
20 as criminals, specifically in the International High  
21 School. International students do not need metal



2 protect, yet when I walk into my school on a Monday  
3 morning, I am patted down, scanned from head to toe,  
4 and my personal belongings, like my book bag, are  
emptied to ensure I am not a threat to my peers.

5 I understand the precaution of being safe  
6 rather than sorry, and that things can truly happen  
7 that can jeopardize everyone's safety. That is what I  
8 would say if I didn't realize how much safety  
measures can truly alter one's mindset.

9 Interactions with School Safety quite  
10 literally mirror prison processing of new inmates.  
11 Before any verbal interaction, I am treated as a  
12 potential enemy, a potential threat, and a liability.  
13 If there is danger, why are we approaching it head-on  
instead of addressing the root causes? Think of  
14 danger as a car; its root causes are the wheels that  
15 perpetuate the matter. If you fix them, you  
16 essentially remove the wheels from the car, and it's  
17 no longer mobile. However, when the root causes are  
18 not adequately addressed, and money is instead  
19 allocated to bolster the ineffective methods of  
20 combating danger, it becomes a lubricant for the  
wheel, which does more damage. Instead of

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2           disinfecting an open wound, we are pouring salt into  
3           it.

4                       Every year we keep making the same  
5           mistake. But I want to ask you this: If your child  
6           came to you about this issue, and they, too, were  
7           being treated like the enemy before words are even  
8           uttered, would you want your child experiencing that  
              every day?

9                       We're asking the City to stop allocating  
10          funding towards more police in schools and start  
11          investing in what actually works: Mental health  
12          resources, counseling, school supplies, restorative  
13          justice programs, and extracurricular clubs. Treat us  
              like students, not suspects.

14                      So I ask you once more, where do you draw  
              the line? Thank you.

15                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you for your  
16          testimony, Michael, right?

17                      MICHAEL ADIKAH: Yes.

18                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: (TIMER) Thank you,  
              Michael.

19                      WITCHY CARRIER: Good afternoon. My name  
20          is Witchy Carrier. I am a youth leader with the

21

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2 Circle Keepers and a member of the Dignity in Schools  
3 Campaign.

4           When I found out that there were more  
5 police in schools, I did not understand. There are  
6 already so many in my school. I already have to go  
7 through a metal detector. When I wear a hoodie or any  
8 kind of sweater, I already know that I will be  
9 searched. Some of you believe this will keep me safe.  
I do not agree.

10           I also do not agree that immigrant  
11 services should be cut. The idea that we should have  
12 less support and more police confirms what I already  
13 know: This city sees Black and Latino boys like  
14 criminals, but I am just a child. All I want to do is  
go to school and hang out with my friends. Your  
mentality is dangerous.

15           Also, the mentality of the gang database,  
16 which is made up of Black and Latino boys, is  
17 unacceptable. I deserve safety, care, and support,  
18 and not to be watched. This is why I support ending  
19 the use of the gang database, ending the hiring of  
20 new school police, and saying no to any bill against  
my rights. Thank you.

21

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2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: You spoke and read  
3 beautifully. Thank you so much for your testimony.

4 SIKA AGBOKOU: HI, my name is Sika  
5 Agbokou. I am here with the Teen Activist Project,  
6 and I have a lot of experience with police presence  
in schools.

7 My first extreme experience with police  
8 within my school was in middle school, and to  
9 preface, I went to the Brooklyn Science and  
10 Engineering Academy in East Flatbush. During my  
11 8th-grade year, I was attacked and assaulted by  
12 another student twice. To note, both of these attacks  
13 were unprovoked and unwarranted, with the first  
14 happening on a staircase, and the second happening  
15 when I was on my way to go home after school, while  
walking downstairs from a class, which both the  
person and I attended.

16 These attacks caused multiple injuries to  
17 me. The first attack caused nine lacerations to my  
18 face. However, I received zero protection from School  
19 Police Safety Members, with the other person only  
20 facing a week of in-school suspension, making me feel  
21 unsafe and unheard, after stating how I felt about  
the student only getting a week's suspension.

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2 The second assault caused me to visit the  
3 emergency room due to the person punching me in the  
4 head three times, biting me, and leaving me with a  
5 human bite on my left hand.

6 After explaining the situation to a  
7 School Safety Agent, I was berated, yelled at, and  
8 reprimanded. The police in my school did not protect  
9 me and have not made me feel safe once during my  
entire time at school. This made me feel unsafe.

10 Now, as a high schooler, I have witnessed  
11 many attacks, fights, and altercations between  
12 students where police merely intervened after the  
situation was already over.

13 It does not feel like the police are here  
14 to keep us safe, and it does not feel like anyone is  
holding them accountable for it. A change is needed.

15 To solve these issues, we need better  
16 assessments of the real issue. We need to stop school  
17 fights before they start. We need opportunities in  
18 schools to learn and practice how to manage  
19 conflicts. We need strong relationships. We need more  
resources.

20 When the City Council thinks about what  
21 keeps students safe, (TIMER) please don't think about

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2 easy, short-term answers. Think about creating  
3 opportunities for students to learn, grow, and build  
4 their futures. And I go to Edward R. Murrow High  
School in Brooklyn.

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. Thank  
6 you so much to this panel for your testimony.

7 I will now call the next panel: Cameron  
8 Glasgow Love, Kiley Bernard, and Ammy Heredia.

9 MOUBARAK OUMAOU: Sorry that I didn't hear  
10 earlier. I was so nervous. I just want to translate  
11 everything that I said into French to represent my  
school and my community. (SPEAKING FRENCH)

12 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: (SPEAKING FRENCH)

13 MOUBARAK OUMAOU: (SPEAKING FRENCH)

14 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: (SPEAKING FRENCH)

15 CAMERON GLASGOW LOVE: Good afternoon. My  
16 name is Cameron. I'm 15 years old, and I live in the  
Cobble Hill/Boerum Hill area. I currently attend  
17 Brooklyn Collaborative Studies High School, and I'm a  
18 part of the D 39 Circle Keepers cohort and a youth  
leader with Dignity in Schools Campaign.

19 I'm here today because I want the City to  
20 fully fund meaningful restorative justice programs,  
21 mental health access, and immigrant protections, and

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2     divest from school police and policing  
3     infrastructure.

4                   When I first heard about them taking away  
5     the funding for these things, I was angry. The reason  
6     why is that I know from personal experience that  
7     Circle Keepers and restorative justice participants  
8     are the reason many students feel heard in school,  
9     especially during conflicts. In my experience, they  
10    have been a great help in supporting me in being able  
11    to express my feelings.

12                   Immigration protection and services are  
13    also very important. ICE has been relentless in its  
14    pursuit of immigrants, even at school, targeting  
15    Hispanics, Africans, and Caribbean immigrants,  
16    despite immigrants in the US coming from across the  
17    globe.

18                   We need to protect everybody because  
19    everyone deserves a chance to have freedom and equal  
20    chances in life.

21                   When I heard that there would be an  
22    increase in police officers, I didn't feel safe due  
23    to many cops doing their jobs completely differently  
24    based on students' ethnic backgrounds, which can

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2       cause (INAUDIBLE) incidents in schools, because  
3       everyone deserves equal rights.

4                       Lastly, I love my school; we are a very  
5       diverse community, and it's a place where people from  
6       different backgrounds can come together and talk  
7       about their experiences. Less funding for Immigration  
8       Services means friends of mine will go without things  
9       that they need to thrive. I can't imagine losing  
10      close friends because their needs were not met due to  
11      these cuts.

12                      You can keep my friends and me together  
13      by actually funding what student organizers have been  
14      fighting for because we know what's right:

15                      Divest from school policing by rejecting  
16      Intros 175-A, 327, and 001-A (TIMER) and any  
17      legislation restricting the right to assemble or  
18      giving public dollars to private school surveillance;  
19      maintain the Mayor's veto against buffer zone bill  
20      175-B; stop hiring any new school police; and instead  
21      expand school-based restorative justice and mental  
22      health access, including investing \$80 million in  
23      hiring School Climate Coordinators in 500 schools.

24                      This is how you show students you see  
25      them as human beings, not criminals. This is how to

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2           keep my school community whole. Thank you for your  
3           time.

4                       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you so much  
5           for your testimony.

6                       Whenever you are ready, you may state  
7           your name for the record and begin.

8                       KILEY BERNARD: Good afternoon, my name is  
9           Kiley Bernard. I'm a 10th grader at A School Without  
10          Walls and a member of the Teen Activist Project.

11                      Students are told that School Safety is  
12          there to help. However, in my many years of attending  
13          public schools, they have not shown that.

14                      I'm here to speak up for my sister.  
15          Although I have had a run-in with school safety in  
16          7th grade, today is not only about me; it is about  
17          many kids who have been subjected, firsthand, to the  
18          safety system that is set up to fail Black and Latinx  
19          students in New York City schools.

20                      Students deserve access to resources that  
21          will improve their mental health, help them  
22          communicate their emotions, and help prevent  
23          situations that call for School Safety.

24                      Recently, my sister was attacked at her  
25          high school by a fellow student. She had all of her

2 belongings in her hand and could not fight back or  
3 defend herself. As people stood around and recorded,  
4 School Safety approached, but instead of trying to  
5 separate the two of them, she just watched. Imagine  
6 my horror when watching a video of my sister being  
7 stood over by someone who was placed there to protect  
8 her. Knowing that no one stepped in to help her,  
specifically School Safety, hurt even more.

9 Fights sadly happened across New York  
10 City schools, and help should be there for all the  
kids who are in my sister's situation.

11 That's not enough. Help should be there  
12 to prevent fights from happening. Unfortunately, that  
13 is not the case. Schools are in desperate need of  
14 more mental health-focused resources. Please  
15 understand that students deserve to have spaces to  
16 acknowledge, understand, and display their emotions  
17 in positive and efficient ways. Policing is not the  
18 solution, and policing will not prevent or stop  
19 fights.

20 As explained in my previous story, kids  
21 need real help. It comes in many forms, like  
restorative justice programs and tight knit  
communities that display the importance of having

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2           someone to lean on. New York City must invest in  
3           students.

4                       Thank you for your time. I hope that you  
5           take what I have said into consideration.

6                       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you for your  
7           testimony. And lastly?

8                       JOELLE: Hi, my name is Joelle (phonetic).  
9           I am here speaking on behalf of my friend who  
10          couldn't make it today.

11                      "My name is Ammy. I'm a high school  
12          senior at a Community School in Brooklyn. I am also a  
13          youth leader at Make the Road New York and Urban  
14          Youth Collaborative.

15                      With the current federal administration,  
16          New York City must continue to protect immigrant  
17          students by moving away from school policing and  
18          punitive practices.

19                      I am here because I care about real  
20          safety. I do not want more police in my school or  
21          metal detectors. I want more counselors, mental  
              health support, restorative justice, and college  
              access.

                      Schools should be places where students  
                      feel safe to learn and grow, and that means investing

2 in systems that truly support students instead of  
3 fueling the school to prison and deportation  
4 pipelines.

5 In my experience, having police in my  
6 school is disruptive. Every morning, students arrive  
7 on time for school, but we are forced to stand in  
8 long lines waiting to go through scanners and metal  
9 detectors, which makes us late to class. On top of  
10 that, the school police often speak to us  
11 disrespectfully and pull students aside for extra  
12 searches. It feels like there is no way to win.

13 Despite my best efforts to be on time and  
14 do well, I never feel welcome. Instead, I feel  
15 targeted. I have seen friends humiliated and  
16 embarrassed by unnecessary searches that turn up  
17 nothing. During a scan, they suspected my friend of  
18 hiding something under her shirt, so she was taken  
19 into the bathroom and had to lift her shirt for a  
20 full search. Nothing was found. She came out angry,  
21 and that moment stayed with her for the rest of the  
day. And honestly, it affected all of us who  
witnessed it. We all still remember that moment  
vividly. Experiences like this make school feel less

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2           like a place of learning and more like a place where  
3           we are treated with suspicion instead of care.

4                     At the same time, I have two amazing  
5           teachers, my (INAUDIBLE) teacher and my Model UN  
6           teacher, who make me feel truly safe at school. They  
7           have supported me through difficult times and helped  
8           me grow as a student. Seeing them at school reminds  
9           me of what real support looks like. That is the kind  
              of environment (TIMER) every student deserves, one  
10          built on care, not surveillance.

11                     We're calling on the City Council to make  
12          a different choice. Students should not be  
13          criminalized for walking into school. We should feel  
14          safe and supported, not targeted. True safety means  
15          care and community, not police or ICE. Stop filling  
16          vacant school cop positions; fund us instead. It's  
17          time to invest in counselors, mental health, and  
18          restorative justice. It's time to invest in us. Thank  
19          you for your time."

20                     CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you so much  
21          for your testimony. Thank you to this panel. I  
              appreciate it.

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2 I will now call the next panel: Naphtali  
3 Moore, Imani Wilson, Tajh Sutton, Andrea Ortiz, Raul  
4 Soto, Isa Abraham Malikah, and Charlotte Pope.

5 All right, we'll go from left to right.  
6 And I have to warn this panel to please keep it to  
7 two minutes, as opposed to the youth. I'm going to  
8 insist that you keep your remarks to two minutes,  
9 okay? All right. Thank you. You may start on my left,  
10 your right, and we'll go from there.

11 NAPHTALI MOORE: Good afternoon, and thank  
12 you for the opportunity to testify regarding the  
13 School Safety in New York City Public Schools. My  
14 name is Naphtali Moore. I'm a staff attorney with  
15 Advocates for Children, also known as AFC, and we're  
16 also members of the Dignity in Schools of New York.  
17 School safety requires environments that are  
18 supportive for all students and staff, yet safety is  
19 undermined when Black students and students with  
20 disabilities are treated as threats and subjected to  
21 policing rather than support. Research consistently  
shows that punitive responses do not improve safety  
and are linked to harmful long-term outcomes, while  
approaches like restorative justice, trauma-informed

2 care, and mental health supports improve school  
3 climate.

4 We recently worked with a 10-year-old  
5 student with an emotional disability who was  
6 repeatedly suspended and subjected to law enforcement  
7 intervention rather than receiving appropriate  
8 supports. Police are not trained mental health  
9 professionals and should not be the primary  
10 responders to student behavior.

11 While police interactions with children  
12 in crisis, which is when a student in emotional  
13 distress is removed from class and transported to the  
14 hospital for psychological evaluation, have declined,  
15 there are still 2,321 incidents in the 2024-2025  
16 school year, with stark racial disparities. Black  
17 students accounted for 44% of these interventions,  
18 and 70% of the cases involved handcuffs. Too often,  
19 students with IEPs in distress are met by law  
20 enforcement instead of the trained school staff.

21 To truly invest in school safety, the  
City must restore and baseline, as recommended in the  
City Council's Preliminary Budget Response, two  
important initiatives with funding set to expire this  
June; sustain and baseline the \$6 million in

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2 Restorative Justice Funding, which helps reduce  
3 conflict and keep students in classrooms; baseline \$5  
4 million for the mental health continuum, a critical  
5 cross agency program, and invest \$8 million to hire  
6 behavioral specialists, (TIMER) ensuring every  
7 district has...

8                       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

9                       NAPHTALI MOORE: a professional with  
10 expertise to support schools in developing effective  
11 and individualized behavior plans and reducing  
12 unnecessary suspensions and referrals to private  
13 placements.

14                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. That  
15 last sentence was a long sentence, great.

16                      NAPHTALI MOORE: Yes. (LAUGHS)

17                      CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And I thank you for  
18 recognizing the City Council's Preliminary Budget  
19 Response, which does seek to restore and baseline  
20 that funding for restorative justice and the mental  
21 health continuum, thank you.

                      IMANI WILSON: Hello, my name is Imani  
Wilson, I'm a doctoral student candidate, actually at  
NYU, studying school safety, specifically here in New  
York City. I am also a community-based educator with



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2 We invest over \$400 million in policing.

3 And even in Q-3 and Q-4 data from the NYPD, it shows  
4 that School safety Agents only resolve 12% of  
5 incidents, versus 68% are solved by DOE staff and  
6 school-based educators.

7 And so, really thinking about where we're  
8 putting our funding, where we're investing this, and  
9 really seriously considering or reconsidering the  
10 ways that we're overwhelmingly investing in carceral  
11 punishment that has a real-life decade-long effect on  
12 our young people, who especially are Black, Latin@,  
13 Asian, and students with disabilities. I just want to  
14 urge you all to think about what we're investing in  
15 (TIMER) (CROSS-TALK)

16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

17 IMANI WILSON: And... (CROSS-TALK)

18 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

19 ISA ABRAHAM: Good afternoon or evening.

20 My name is Isa Abraham, and I'm the Youth Program  
21 Coordinator at Malukah, an anti-violence nonprofit in  
Queens and a member of the Dignity in Schools New  
York Coalition. I work right at the intersection of  
public safety and education, conducting self-defense

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2           and safety trainings to community members and  
3           students who are most vulnerable to violence.

4                       The students in our programs, and their  
5           peers across New York City Public Schools, primarily  
6           students of color from working-class backgrounds,  
7           often Muslim, have been made late to class, and  
8           subject to degradation through invasive searches and  
9           surveillance by police and School Safety Agents. Only  
10          for these same schools to fail to protect them from  
11          harassment, from sometimes racist and/or Islamophobic  
12          safety school staff and administration, calling them  
13          disruptive and aggressive, even when they were the  
14          ones who were physically or verbally attacked.

15                      I recently conducted an organizing  
16          workshop with students at Metropolitan Expeditionary  
17          Learning School in the Bronx, a giant school with  
18          metal detectors and Safety Agents who were talking to  
19          me about how SSA agents and metal detectors keep them  
20          in long lines that can wrap outside the block around  
21          their school, sometimes in the rain, in the snow, and  
              in the cold. And they cited this as a reason that  
              contributes to why so many students just don't show  
              up or show up halfway through the day.

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2 And the weapons uncovered by these  
3 searches that the NYPD cited earlier were, by far and  
4 large, pepper spray, tasers, knives, often carried by  
5 students, if you talk to them, due to public safety  
6 issues that they encounter because they commute,  
7 right? And so these are things that community members  
8 do carry as well. So it's a much larger issue, and it  
requires a more holistic approach.

9 I hope the conclusion after this hearing  
10 is that we do not need to invest in hiring more SSAs,  
11 as neither NYPD nor DOE addresses the staggering data  
12 that Council Member Gutiérrez brought up about how  
13 this policing model disproportionately affects Black  
14 and brown students. Clearly, it's a role that's not  
15 sustainable, managed well (TIMER), and no one wants  
to do. We need to be directing that funding  
towards... (CROSS-TALK)

16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

17 ISA ABRAHAM: teachers, restorative  
justice practitioners, and school climate.

18 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you so much.

19 CHARLOTTE POPE: Hello, my name is  
20 Charlotte Pope. I'm here with the New York Civil  
21

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2     Liberties Union. Thank you for the opportunity to  
3     testify.

4           We echo the concerns of our friends from  
5     The Dignity in Schools Campaign and of the students  
6     who have long urged the City to strive for something  
7     better.

8           We want to add to what came up earlier  
9     about metal detectors and also non-compliance with  
10    the reporting law.

11           So for the past 10 years, through the  
12    Council's Student Safety Act, the NYPD has also been  
13    required to report on the use of metal detectors to  
14    the City Council. When we tried to FOIL that data,  
15    we learned that the NYPD was simply not giving it to  
16    you. So that's on top of the other reporting about  
17    SSAs and their placement in schools.

18           By piecing together many other sources,  
19    we know that there are tremendous racial disparities  
20    in where metal detectors are deployed by the NYPD and  
21    that they target Bronx schools specifically.

          When we were part of Mayor de Blasio's  
          leadership team on school climate, we worked to make  
          the scanning protocols public for the first time.  
          School communities wanted to know how to get the NYPD

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2           to change its scanning designation. In that protocol,  
3           principals who believe they can transition off of  
4           scanners are ultimately pitted against a  
5           determination of the Police Commissioner, which is a  
6           huge and intimidating imbalance of power.

7                         We've confirmed with New York City Public  
8           Schools and the NYPD that principals rarely, if ever,  
9           start this process, and we know that it's not because  
10          they don't want to try. We believe this is because  
11          there's no support. None of our leaders has said it's  
12          a goal to help a school get to the point where metal  
13          detectors are no longer there. Scanners should be  
14          treated as a signal that a school is in dire need of  
15          investment and support.

16                        The Committee Report talks about how the  
17          School Construction Authority recently spent a couple  
18          of million dollars on the market's newest model of  
19          walk-through metal detector, and it is not being used  
20          the way it's marketed. We hear from school staff and  
21          students that the new equipment doesn't work to the  
              point where students give up, they turn around and go  
              home to avoid police harassment, and there's never  
              any public engagement in assessing police tools.

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2 Forcing students to be late to class and  
3 the long lines you mentioned are features of what  
4 scanning is. (TIMER) It's always happened from the  
beginning...

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

6 CHARLOTTE POPE: There's more in  
7 (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

8 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you for your  
9 testimony.

10 RAUL SOTO: Good evening, Council Members.  
11 My name is Raul Soto. I'm the Co-Executive Director  
12 of the YA-YA Network. We're a hub of youth activism,  
13 and for the past 27 years, we have been fighting for  
14 truly safe schools, not rooted in police, but actual  
structures inside the school building that supports  
young people.

15 The North Star remains here, very clear,  
16 that school environments need to be places where  
17 young people feel like they can learn, have  
18 programming, and form relationships with each other  
19 in a positive school climate, one that supports  
20 community building and constructive conflict  
21 resolution.

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2 We just heard from a bunch of agencies  
3 kind of confirming the point that, you know, we see  
4 that, despite there not being the same number of SSAs  
5 prior to the pandemic, we're not seeing a massive  
6 explosion of incidents in these schools. It proves  
7 the case that it's not a question of a lack of SSAs,  
8 but when we're talking about restorative justice, we  
9 know that little programs in each and every school,  
10 or in some schools, not all schools, that aren't  
11 fully funded. And those are the actual structures  
12 that would keep young people safe.

13 This isn't a question of any individual  
14 school agents. Again, some are probably wonderful  
15 people, but we're talking about how a system of  
16 predominantly students of color is treated  
17 systematically here in the city of New York.

18 But as we heard, when we treat student  
19 safety as a question of policing, it's a model that  
20 already fails our communities. It's not something  
21 that we need to reproduce in our schools.

There is concern about long lines and  
taking school-based roles away from their primary  
responsibility to conduct these activities, but  
instead, I ask, why are we putting so much emphasis

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2 on how these schools can be doing the scanning  
3 better, rather than investing in the systems and the  
4 programs that will actually avoid these from being  
used in the first place?

5 And to my colleague's point, there  
6 already is a process to evaluate how these schools  
7 can move away from scanning if the opportunity  
8 persists. If there is a question that scanning is not  
9 serving the schools by creating an operational  
10 hindrance (TIMER), we should be examining whether  
they're useful in those buildings.

11 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

12 ANDREA ORTIZ: Hello, I'm Andrea with  
13 Dignity in Schools, New York. Public schools should  
14 be places where young people feel safe, supported,  
15 and able to learn. Yet, there are growing calls to  
16 expand school policing and surveillance in the name  
17 of safety, despite the clear evidence that these  
18 approaches undermine student well-being and create  
19 barriers to learning, particularly for Black, brown,  
immigrant, transgender, and gender non-conforming  
students and students with disabilities.

20 Research shows that Black students in New  
21 York City are suspended at a rate three to four times

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2           that of their white peers, and are more likely to  
3           experience discipline involving the criminal justice  
4           system. Furthermore, we are facing a youth mental  
5           health crisis where nearly half of students  
6           experience symptoms of depression, and up to a  
7           quarter experience anxiety.

8                         DSC New York urges the City to reject  
9           investment in school policing and instead fund  
10          proven, effective safety strategies.

11                        Specifically, we call on the City to  
12          freeze hiring for school police, eliminate vacancies,  
13          and reinvest approximately \$90 million in savings to  
14          restorative justice, mental health supports, and  
15          immigrant protections.

16                        We also urge the City to baseline \$6  
17          million in expiring restorative justice funding,  
18          while adding \$2 million for additional training, and  
19          \$3 million to be used for peer mediators in Circle  
20          Keepers; invest \$80 million to hire school climate  
21          coordinators, in 500 priority middle and high  
              schools; baseline \$5 million for the mental health  
              continuum, serving 50 high needs schools; protect  
              immigrant students and families by baselining \$4

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2 million for outreach and communications; and passing  
3 Intro 798 to eliminate the NYP gang database.

4           And finally, support Mayor Mamdani's veto  
5 of Intro 175-B to prevent expanded police presence  
6 around schools. Importantly, suspensions have been  
7 declining since before the pandemic and continue to  
8 decrease even amid reduced school police staffing in  
9 the mental health crisis.

10           In 2025, suspensions dropped 8% compared  
11 to the previous year, including a 22% decline in long  
12 term suspensions. This progress reflects the  
13 increased use of restorative practices, counseling,  
14 and community-based responses that keep students  
15 engaged in school.

16           In a study of implementation of  
17 restorative practices in Chicago high schools,  
18 researchers found 35% decline in school arrests, 50%  
19 reduction of out of school arrest (TIMER), and 18%  
20 decrease in out-of-school suspensions, and improved  
21 student-reported perceptions of school, uh...

(CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

ANDREA ORTIZ: perceptions of school  
climate. Thank you... (CROSS-TALK)

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2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you so much.

3 TAJH SUTTON: Good evening. My name is  
4 Tajh Sutton. The kids killed it. Dignity In Schools  
5 killed it. So I think what I want to do tonight is  
6 just root us in some history and context.

7 This is going to be the third City  
8 Council appearance I make, while I remind this City  
9 and the Council that policing is derived from slave  
10 patrols. And as I look around at the slave owners  
11 that we have on the wall, as though they should be  
12 celebrated, I'm reminded of the often-experienced  
13 cognitive dissonance that we have in this city when  
14 we are creating policy.

15 I want to talk about the fact that in the  
16 summer of 2020, after the murder of George Floyd, New  
17 York City Public School students made it very clear  
18 to this entire city that they wanted police removed  
19 from schools.

20 New York City Public School students, by  
21 and large, told you tonight that they want policing--  
it doesn't mean they don't want care, it doesn't mean  
they don't want support, it doesn't mean they don't  
want safety. But the data has been telling us for  
generations that policing does not provide that. And

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2           it's not lost on me, not only who is most impacted by  
3           school policing, but who is ringing the alarm bell,  
4           and what they mean when they say safety.

5                     I'm reminded of the 660 schools from the  
6           times of segregation, and instead of calling Black  
7           and brown children wild animals and, you know,  
8           delinquent and truants, now we use the language of  
              criminality.

9                     The Trumpian language of, you know,  
10          criminality. This man is calling our folks dog  
11          eaters, criminals, and rapists. And when we tell  
12          children that the only way they can be safe in school  
13          is to bring that entity into close proximity to them  
14          and to use that entity to police them when they want  
15          to defend their rights that we are steadily losing,  
              particularly in the communities most impacted by  
              policing.

16                    What are we doing? The young people who  
17          had to come after school, because we held a Public  
18          Safety and Education Hearing at 1:00 on a Wednesday,  
19          right? They were really clear. And so we need to  
20          center them (TIMER) and not any politician, think  
              tank, organization, or funder...

21                    CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

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2 TAJH SUTTON: who knows who policing will  
3 hurt the most... (CROSS-TALK)

4 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

5 TAJH SUTTON: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Imani, I was  
7 interested in your background. You're studying School  
8 Safety, and you're in...

9 IMANI WILSON: I'm a doctoral student.

10 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Doctoral student?  
11 Okay.

12 IMANI WILSON: Yes, and I attend NYU.

13 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay, so what I'm  
14 interested in is-- everything you said about the  
15 disparities and suspensions is true. And you heard  
16 the questions about it here that were drafted by the  
17 staff. All that's true.

18 I want to focus just on school safety as  
19 it relates to data, not to the exclusion of  
20 restorative justice, which, as you saw, we are trying  
21 to fight for that funding—mental health.

How do you reconcile, you know, the  
experiences which are very real of the studies we've  
done of the students that were here, with how popular  
School Safety Agents are among students, according to

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2 school survey data? How do you reconcile and balance  
3 those two thoughts at once?

4 IMANI WILSON: Yeah, I think that students  
5 are experiencing some sense of relationship to these  
6 adults because they're around them constantly. But I  
7 think the positioning of policing, in particular in  
8 that role, is one that is very dangerous. Because,  
9 often, even though students may be building these  
10 relationships with the people who often may come from  
11 their community, it's still rooted in this history of  
12 policing, which means that they're going to be, in  
13 some ways, detained or suspended.

14 So even though some students do have  
15 positive relationships with School Safety Officers,  
16 it doesn't mean that... (CROSS-TALK)

17 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I don't want to  
18 say... I don't mean to interrupt, but I just want  
19 to... (CROSS-TALK)

20 IMANI WILSON: (INAUDIBLE) is reflective  
21 of the data.

22 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Because you are a  
23 doctoral student, I want to talk about data. The  
24 school survey data says 83% of students, out of 3,555  
25 students, say that SSAs promote a safe and respectful

2 environment. So I am trying to reconcile the  
3 testimony here and the testimony of all of you here  
4 with what it seems the vast majority of our student  
body is saying.

5 So, if you can continue, but I just want  
6 to make sure that number is... (CROSS-TALK)

7 IMANI WILSON: Can you repeat the numbers?

8 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: 83%.

9 IMANI WILSON: 83%? And where is the data  
10 coming from?

11 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: School survey data,  
so it's coming from our (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

12 IMANI WILSON: School survey data  
13 conducted by?

14 UNIDENTIFIED: The DOE.

15 IMANI WILSON: The DOE?

16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: The DOE. The DOE  
17 conducts a survey every year. This is the most recent  
data.

18 IMANI WILSON: And I think it's just  
19 reflective of survey data in general. You can't  
20 generalize; you don't know who took the survey,  
21 whether it was every student, or even the specific  
questions they're asking. So, I would have to

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2           specifically look at that to see, like how they  
3           conducted the questions, and what questions they were  
4           asking in general as well.

5                         CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay.

6                         IMANI WILSON: So, if I-- I will look at  
7           that, and I can get back to you.

8                         CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: All right. Yeah, I  
9           would love to have that conversation because the data  
10          is overwhelming. It's a sample size of 3,555. So that  
11          is a really important conversation to have.

12                         Isa?

13                         ISA ABRAHAM: Yes, thank you. I just  
14          wanted to add on to Imani's point about looking at  
15          Black and brown students being disproportionately  
16          affected by the policing system in the schools.

17                         So, when you're giving that data point,  
18          it's really important to look at the percentage of  
19          those students who were surveyed who are Black and  
20          brown students or who were impacted by the system as  
21          well.

                          And so by and large, if you look at this  
big number overall, okay, all these communities are  
saying maybe it points to people having, like she  
said, good relationships with these people, but the

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2           data needs to be shown on the other end of who is  
3           taking these surveys, right?

4                       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yes, so among Black  
5           students, 81% have the--according to the survey, have  
6           favorable... I want to read the thing right, they  
7           "believe School Safety Agents promote a safe and  
8           respectful environment". That's broken down...

8                       Yes, Ms. Sutton?

9                       TAJH SUTTON: I just wanted to share that  
10          I think any data that is gathered by an entity,  
11          right? It kind of has to be taken with a grain of  
12          salt. And I say that because, as a public school  
13          parent in this city, my child was promised and  
14          received a pizza party when I participated in the  
15          school survey. So a parent who is working and being  
16          asked by the school, you know, the parent  
17          coordinator, right? Like, "Hey, fill this out so the  
18          babies can have a pizza party." Are they filling that  
19          form out with fidelity? Are they taking it seriously?  
20          Are they reading the questions carefully? And, also,  
21          are they answering honestly?

19                      As a school board member for seven years,  
20          I know that there are often dynamics within the  
21          Department of Education in which parents do not feel

2 comfortable telling the truth. So I would just advise  
3 you to take that data with a grain of salt. And also,  
4 maybe put more emphasis on the lived experiences of  
5 young people, which is also data. And I think that is  
6 part of the way we can kind of reconcile that.

7 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah, that was the  
8 question. Reconciling the lived experiences and the  
9 stories with the data. I am referring to the student  
10 data, not the parent data. And the students take it  
11 independently on a computer. So they are the ones  
12 answering the questions. And with a sample size that  
13 large, I tend to think that the data is sort of  
14 overwhelming. Not to discount the lived experiences  
15 and what's going on in individual schools, but to say  
16 that overall, we also have to look at this data to  
17 have these conversations.

18 Chair Feliz?

19 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Yeah, thank you so  
20 much, Chair Dinowitz.

21 I would also add, respectfully, and by  
the way, I really appreciate all of you, your  
testimony, and also the really important work that  
you do. I hope one day we won't need any School  
Safety Agents, because we have no school

2 safety-related challenges in the school and in the  
3 surrounding community.

4 But just curious, what would you say to  
5 someone who would argue-- And by the way, that is a  
6 top priority, all of us, making sure that we're  
7 bringing funding to invest in opportunity, sports  
8 programs during the summer, afterschool programs,  
9 anything that could keep children involved and active  
in a positive way.

10 What would you say to someone, though,  
11 who would argue that these two things aren't mutually  
12 exclusive? That we can and should invest in an  
13 opportunity. But that, in some cases, and obviously  
14 we hate it, but in some cases, it might be justified  
15 to have, for example, metal detectors due to the fact  
16 that there's been a lot of, let's say, gun violence.

17 I represent the Bronx. I hate hearing  
18 about the stories of gun violence around the schools  
19 and et cetera.

20 What would you say to someone who says  
21 exactly that we can invest in opportunity programs?  
But also, in some cases, we might need it, because we  
don't want those safety challenges potentially  
entering the schools, making people feel unsafe,

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2           making them anxious at all hours in the school,  
3           making them not even want to go to the school due to  
4           the fact that they're afraid of those safety issues  
              entering the school?

5                         So again, the point is, the argument  
6           would be, that these two things are not mutually  
7           exclusive, that we can invest everything needed an  
8           opportunity, but also have some systems to prevent  
9           safety problems from entering the school so that  
10          people, those safety programs that we have inside the  
11          school, people can enjoy them without having to, you  
12          know, think that something can pop up from a second  
              to the next.

13                        ANDREA ORTIZ: I don't know if you have  
14          heard, but we're under a budget deficit. So the  
15          biggest problem that we have is that it is a zero-sum  
16          game. If you decide to continue to invest the \$400  
17          million in school policing, that's \$400 million that  
18          does not go into the safety initiatives that we're  
19          talking about.

20                        While none of us here would tell you that  
21          there would be a system that we would change from one  
              day to the next without a meaningful transition,  
              without meaningful resourcing and programming, we all



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2 TAJH SUTTON: Can I also just share that  
3 like, violence interruption programs work, and that  
4 many of the community members who are also impacted  
5 by the system of policing, go out in their  
6 communities and get guns off the street, intervene in  
7 seriously violent interactions, and remove weapons  
from, like, family situations.

8 So the work that we assume and believe  
9 the police do is already being done by private  
10 citizens for free. And I just want us to imagine  
11 like, I know your City Council, like freedom dream  
12 with me for two seconds, if that funding was actually  
13 going into programming and individuals, who not only  
14 impacted by the things you're saying we should worry  
15 about and we're all on one accord about, but also  
16 already have the solutions, right? Without \$90  
17 million, without \$400 million, that is being wasted  
18 on infrastructure that so many babies just told you  
19 makes them not even want to go to school, which is  
20 also a part of the problem, right?

21 The trauma comes directly from the way  
policing is carried out, and is also part of the  
reason our children have the mental health issues  
that lead to the conflict. This is also the cause of

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2           much of the dysregulation that we then pretend, you  
3           know, we don't know where it's coming from.

4                        So I want us to also be thinking about  
5           what already exists and can be funded, as opposed to  
6           this system that the data, the anecdotal evidence,  
7           everything tells us, right, not only doesn't work but  
8           actually harms the children we say we want to keep  
              safe.

9                        CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: All right. Thank  
10           you so much for your testimony.

11                       I am going to call the next panel:  
12           Vladimir Tlali, Brian Latarnick (phonetic), and Kevin  
              Coemer.

13                       Vlad, good to see you again. You may  
14           begin.

15                       VLADIMIR TLALI: Good afternoon. Thank  
16           you, Chair Dinowitz, Chair Feliz, and Members of the  
17           Education and Public Safety Committee. My name is  
18           Vlad Tlali, and I'm the Senior Policy Strategist at  
19           the New York Immigration Coalition.

20                       Today, I want to highlight urgent safety  
21           issues for English language learners and immigrant  
              students in New York City public schools.

3 In the 24-25 school year, more than one  
4 in six students in New York City Public Schools were  
5 identified as English language learners. These  
6 students are not only a significant part of our  
7 school system, but also central to the future of New  
8 York City as a next generation of leaders and  
9 workers.

10 Yet, this hearing comes at a time when  
11 many immigrant families are increasingly afraid to  
12 send their children to school. Schools are meant to  
13 be high-trust spaces, but the fear of immigration  
14 enforcement is driving enrollment loss and  
15 absenteeism. Citywide enrollment has declined by  
16 about 2%, while schools serving the highest numbers  
17 of newly arrived students have seen losses up to 11%,  
18 and in some cases, much higher.

19 Families are keeping children home out of  
20 fear and of encountering immigration enforcement on  
21 the way to school, during the school day, or in the  
22 afterschool activities. Even enforcement actions  
23 outside the school grounds create a chilling effect  
24 across entire communities.

25 For English language learners, even short  
26 absences disrupt critical language and academic

2 development. But this impact also goes beyond  
3 academics. Students are experiencing anxiety,  
4 instability, and increased responsibilities at home  
5 in the aftermath of raids.

6 At the same time, schools and community  
7 partners report confusion about how to respond when  
8 immigration enforcement activity occurs near our  
9 students.

10 This moment requires stronger protections  
11 from our City. We urge the Council to issue  
12 legislation requiring New York City Public Schools to  
13 issue expanded guidance on interactions with  
14 non-local law enforcement. Current guidance focuses  
15 on inside school buildings but must also cover school  
16 perimeters, arrival and dismissal, transportation,  
17 off-campus activities and field trips, and clear  
18 shelter-in-place procedures.

19 The Council should also require  
20 comprehensive training so every adult in every school  
21 knows how to respond. This includes principals,  
staff, School Safety Officers, and contracted  
partners, with training conducted regularly and built  
into onboarding.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

3 KEVIN CONAN: How are you doing?

4 Hello, I'd like to introduce myself. My  
5 name is Kevin Conan, I am a candidate for Assembly in  
6 Astoria District 36, and I'd like to discuss the  
7 issues you've brought up today. I

8 I'm here today because the conversation  
9 about School Safety Agents, crossing guards, and the  
10 safety of our children has drifted far away from the  
11 reality that families, educators, and first  
12 responders live with every single day.

13 I want to begin with the Saint Demetrios  
14 Greek-American School of Astoria, a school that  
15 represents not only academic excellence, but also the  
16 heart of a community. Parents tell me the same thing.  
17 Parents across Astoria and Long Island City tell me  
18 their children are afraid. They have mass shootings,  
19 and you know, all of these weapons that they were  
20 describing, 680 knives, two guns, these detectors,  
21 they're not manned by School Safety Agents. We're  
talking about a million students here and 3,500  
School Safety Agents.

They're not paid enough. That's why you  
can't retain them. And I think the families do not

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2           see them as expendable. Teachers do not see them as  
3           expendable, and the children definitely don't either.

4                     The City should be hiring, not firing. We  
5           should be expanding the ranks of the people who  
6           protect our kids, not shrinking them.

7                     And I want to speak directly from the  
8           perspective of someone who spent their career in the  
9           FDNY. I'm a retired Lieutenant. I spent 19 years  
10          there. I served on 9/11. Rigs can't get through the  
11          traffic. They have bike lanes going up that are  
12          blocking access to get to schools, for kids who are  
13          in trouble, hurt, or whatever other problems they're  
14          having.

15                    This is why it is so troubling that the  
16          City continues to move forward with street redesigns,  
17          including the proposed 31st Street bike lane,  
18          despite court decisions stating that the project  
19          created inaccessibility (TIMER) and delayed emergency  
20          response times; public safety is not an option.

21                    CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. Thank  
                      you for your testimony.

                      KEVIN CONAN: Okay, thank you for allowing  
                      me to speak.

21

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2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Of course, of  
3 course.

4 I want to thank this panel for their  
5 testimony. Let's check if Eva Gray, Amy Wagner, Sadie  
6 Nayer, or (INAUDIBLE) Ramirez are here. They haven't  
7 testified. If they would like to come and testify,  
8 please do.

8 UNIDENTIFIED: (INAUDIBLE)

9 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay.

10 Before moving to Zoom testimony, did I  
11 miss anyone in the room who has registered to  
12 testify?

13 Okay, this concludes the in-person  
14 portion of our public testimony. We will now move to  
15 remote testimony. If you are testifying remotely,  
16 please listen for your name to be called. Once your  
17 name is called, a member of our staff will unmute  
18 you. You may then start your testimony once the  
19 Sergeant at Arms sets the clock and cues to begin.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

19 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Oh, Marlene Rossi.

20 MARLENE ROSSI: Hi, good evening.

21 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Hi, we hear you.

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2 MARLENE ROSSI: All right. Good afternoon,  
3 Chair Members of the Council. My name is Marlene  
4 Rossi, and I am a parent leader and education  
5 advocate representing families in East Elmhurst.

6 I am here today because two children in  
7 our district have lost their lives near school  
8 buildings. These tragedies are devastating, and they  
9 are preventable. In our community, we currently have  
10 a grandparent volunteering every morning to help  
11 children cross the street safely. We should not be  
relying on volunteers to do the work that should be  
paid-trained City responsibilities.

12 At the same time, we are told that there  
13 is a shortage of crossing guards because no one is  
14 applying. But I applied, and I never received a call  
back.

15 It was only after I contacted Kathy  
16 Hochul that I received a call back from the 115th  
17 Precinct, and it was not to speak about a position in  
18 East Elmhurst where the need exists. So this is not  
19 just a shortage; it is a breakdown in hiring and  
placement.

20 We have also done walkthroughs in our  
21 neighborhoods with NYPD Community Affairs, elected

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2 officials, the Department of Transportation, District  
3 30 Community Education Council, principals, and  
4 parents. We identified safety risks and exactly where  
5 crossing guards are needed. Yet, the response  
6 continues to come back as "no one is applying". This  
7 is not the full truth.

7                   We also have a placement problem. In East  
8 Elmhurst, crossing guard posts have not kept up with  
9 how our schools have changed. A private school that  
10 was taken over by the New York City Public Schools 10  
11 years ago has its main entrance on a different side  
12 now. Yet the crossing guard post was never moved. At  
13 another school, children get to school on public bus  
14 routes that stop alongside Astoria Boulevard, a very  
15 busy street, yet there are no crossing guards where  
16 the children get off the bus. So even when the  
17 crossing guards exist, they are not always placed  
18 where the children are. We need a responsive hiring  
19 process (INAUDIBLE) (TIMER)

                  SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

                  MARLENE ROSSI: (INAUDIBLE)

19                   CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you for your  
20 testimony. I appreciate you shedding light on a  
21 different type of communication breakdown that we

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2           didn't hear about in previous testimony. So, thank  
3           you for that.

4                     Tanisha Grant?

5                     SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

6                     (NO RESPONSE)

7                     CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Is Tanisha here?

8                     Okay, Chauncy Young?

9                     SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin, Chauncy.

10                    CHAUNCY YOUNG: Sorry, Council Member, I'm  
                      leaving an event at Manhattan University that you  
                      probably are aware of. Our annual conference.

11                    So, evening all, Chauncey Young, he/him/  
12                    his Director of New Settlement Parent Action  
13                    Committee. I appreciate this conference today, and  
14                    you know, the conversation.

15                    From the Parent Action Committee's  
16                    perspective, we would like to always highlight the  
17                    need for bringing on additional social workers and  
18                    counselors.

19                    This is a resource question, so we want  
20                    to think about where those resources are best spent.  
21                    We had a situation in the district, District 9 middle  
                      school, between two students. That was the stabbing.  
                      An additional School Safety Officer would not have

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2           addressed that situation or stopped that situation,  
3           but having an additional counselor, where that school  
4           has over 500 students and has a single counselor,  
5           would be extremely beneficial. We are always  
6           advocating for restorative justice. And we need to  
7           look at additional supports.

8                         The Parent Action Committee does support  
9           the bills for having, you know, an understanding of  
10          where we have School Safety Agents, as well as where  
11          we have school crossing guards, and keeping track of  
12          that information. And we would 100% support also  
13          having information about where our restorative  
14          justice programs are happening in schools. And  
15          additionally, where we have metal detectors in our  
16          schools, just for public information. I think that's  
17          always very helpful for our community.

18                        So I appreciate this opportunity to  
19          speak, and I appreciate the conversations today.

20                        CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thanks for your  
21          testimony. Thank you, Chauncy.

                          And for those who aren't aware, Manhattan  
University is in my district. That's why I would know  
what's going on there.

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2 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you. Thank you  
3 so much. I just want to thank everyone who joined us  
4 today. I want to thank all of my colleagues, the New  
5 York City Police Department, and the Department of  
6 Education. It has been great co-chairing this with  
7 you, Chair Dinowitz. I also want to thank Council  
8 Member Phil Wong for, as always, staying until the  
9 very end—and again, everyone who testified today. I  
10 really appreciate the conversations we had, and I  
11 look forward to working on the many issues that we  
12 talked about today. I will pass it back to Co-Chair  
13 Dinowitz.

14 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you, Co-Chair  
15 Feliz. That feels good to say, Co-Chair Feliz.

16 Co-Chair Feliz, thank you for chairing  
17 this hearing with me, and to Council Member Wong and  
18 all of the staff, for their work during and leading  
19 up to this hearing.

20 We were talking about a really serious  
21 issue here, which is the safety of our students. And  
it's very clear, whether it starts inside the school  
or outside the school, we have a long way to go. We  
have a long way to go with our School Safety  
Agents-making sure we have enough of them and that

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2           they're supported and that the communication between  
3           the schools and, DOE and NYPD is there, you know,  
4           Restorative Justice, Project PIVOT, the supports that  
5           our students need inside the school for the social-  
6           emotional support, uh, needs to be there, because all  
7           of these are in service of our students and a safer  
              future.

8                                So I want to once again thank my  
9           colleagues for their work, everyone who testified,  
10          and the entire city of New York. And with that, this  
            hearing is adjourned. [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is no interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date June 8, 2026