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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION JOINTLY WITH  
THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION JOINTY  
WITH THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC  
SAFETY

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OCTOBER 25, 2023  
Start: 1:13 P.M.  
Recess: 6:36 P.M.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS-CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Rita Joseph,  
Chairperson of the Committee on  
Education

Kamillah Hanks,  
Chairperson of the Committee on  
Public Safety

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Alexa Avilès
- Carmen N. De La Rosa
- Eric Dinowitz
- Oswald Feliz
- James F. Gennaro
- Jennifer Gutiérrez
- Shahana K. Hanif
- Shekar Krishnan
- Linda Lee
- Farah N. Louis
- Julie Menin
- Mercedes Narcisse
- Lincoln Restler

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THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

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COUNCIL MEMBERS: (CONTINUED)

Pierina Ana Sanchez  
Lynn C. Schulman  
Althea V. Stevens  
Sandra Ung  
Erik Bottcher  
Diana Ayala  
Robert Holden  
Justin Brannan  
Tiffany Cabàn  
Joann Ariola  
Darlene Mealy  
Sandy Nurse

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THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

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

1  
2  
3 Mark Rampersant  
4 Security Director, DOE

5 Kevin Taylor  
6 Inspector, Commanding Officer, School Safety  
7 Division, NYPD

8 Robin Davson  
9 Executive Director, School Climate & Culture,  
10 DOE

11 Gillian Smith  
12 Executive Director, School Climate & Culture,  
13 DOE

14 Mary Shamon  
15 Director of Crisis, Division of Safety,  
16 Prevention & Partnership, DOE

17 Ryan Malcolm  
18 Deputy Inspector, NYPD

19 Venise Yohay  
20 NYPD

21 Heba Khalil  
22 Emgage

23 Aaron Barnette  
24 Deputy Executive Director, Division of Safety,  
25 Prevention & Partnership, DOE

Andy Shiwnarain  
Assistant Commissioner, NYPD

Josephine Torlone  
Director, School Safety, NYPD

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

1  
2  
3 Julian Farruggia  
4 Managing Attorney, Legislative Affairs, NYPD

5 Tracey Ryant  
6 Deputy Director, NYPD

7 Eiman Gad  
8 Girls for Gender Equity

9 Tina Zeng  
10 YaYa Student Leader

11 Elizabeth Wassif  
12 YaYa Student Leader

13 Hillary Ashraf  
14 DRUM Student

15 Esperanza Vasquez  
16 New Settlement PAC Parent Leader

17 Michaela Shuchman  
18 Legal Services New York City

19 Jerry Hypolite  
20 Partnership with Children

21 Sandeep Kandhari  
22 Center for Family Representation

23 Nelson Mar  
24 Bronx Legal Services

25 Jessica Balistreri  
New York Civil Liberties Union

Japneet Singh  
Khalsa Community

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

1  
2  
3 Chauncy Young  
4 New Settlement PAC Advocate

5 Rohini Singh  
6 Advocates for Children of New York

7 Theresa Frey  
8 YaYa Researcher

9 Andrea Ortiz  
10 DSC New York

11 Dawn Yuster  
12 Self

13 Ajifanta Marenah  
14 Muslim Community Network NY

15 Yyra Takat  
16 Bronx Science Student

17 Husein Yatabarry  
18 Muslim Community Network

19 Wali Ullah  
20 Muslim Community Network

21 Musfika Moshahid  
22 Muslim Community Network

23 Fatimah Thiam  
24 Muslim Community Network

25 Reverend Mark Fowler  
Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious  
Understanding

Paulette Healy  
Self

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

1  
2  
3 Reverend Chloe Breyer  
4 Interfaith Center of New York

5 Kulsoom Tapal  
6 CACF

7 Harwinder Singh  
8 Sikh Coalition

9 B. Gibbs  
10 Teachers Unite

11 Aneej Bhandari  
12 Teachers Unite

13 Brittany Kaiser  
14 Teachers Unite

15 Erin Reid  
16 Teachers Unite

17 Lupe Hernandez  
18 Public Advocates Office

19 Linda Livingston  
20 Suspension Representation Project

21 Melinda Andra  
22 Legal Aid Society

23 Kiran Kaur Gill  
24 Self

25 Reda Taleb  
Muslim Community Network, MCN

Cecilia Teuber  
Self

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

Anthony Springer  
Bronx Connect

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3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: This is a microphone check for  
4 the Committee on Education joint with the Committee  
5 on Public Safety, located in Council Chamber,  
6 recorded by Nasley on October 25, 2023.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon and welcome to  
8 the New York City Council Hearing of the Committee on  
9 Public Safety jointly with Education. At this time,  
10 can everybody please silence your cellphones. If you  
11 wish to testify, please go up to the Sergeant at Arms  
12 desk to fill out a testimony slip. At this point and  
13 going forward, no one is to approach the dais. I  
14 repeat, no one is to approach the dais. Thank you  
15 for your cooperation. Chairs, we are ready to begin.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Good afternoon and welcome  
17 to the joint Education and Public Safety Hearing.

18 [GAVEL] Good afternoon and welcome everyone to  
19 today's joint Education and Public Safety Committee  
20 Oversight Hearing, New Safety Initiatives in New York  
21 City Public Schools.

22 I'm Rita Joseph, Chair of the Education  
23 Committee. Thank you to everyone who is planning to  
24 testify today and we're very much looking forward to  
25 hearing your testimony.



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3 At today's hearing, we will also hear testimony  
4 on the following legislation: Introduction Number  
5 003 sponsored by Deputy Speaker Ayala; Resolution 473  
6 sponsored by Council Member Cabàn; Resolution 476  
7 sponsored by Council Member Hanif; Resolution 753  
8 also sponsored by Council Member Cabàn; and  
9 Resolution 534, which I sponsored. We will hear  
10 about this legislation shortly.

11 Before we get started, I'd like to take a moment  
12 to express our deepest condolences to the loss of  
13 Krystyna Naprawa, a Crossing Guard who was killed in  
14 the line of duty last week when she was run over by a  
15 truck at the busy Queens intersection where she had  
16 worked to safely cross children for 13 years.

17 Ms. Naprawa's death is a heartbreaking reminder  
18 that School Crossing Guards put their lives on the  
19 line every day to protect our children and that they  
20 are a critical part of school safety team that we  
21 will be discussing today.

22 Just over a year ago, Chancellor Banks announced  
23 a comprehensive safety plan that includes hiring  
24 about 850 new school safety agents, expanded active  
25 shooters training for Principals, a new messaging

3 system to alert families of emergencies and the use  
4 of violence interrupters to immediate conflict.

5 Additionally, the Chancellor announced plans to  
6 increase the numbers of social workers to provide  
7 access to a social worker or a school-based mental  
8 health clinic at every school. Provide restorative  
9 justice programs, support and expand community  
10 schools in collaboration with 70 supporting  
11 community-based organizations.

12 New York City public schools also launch Project  
13 Pivot, a new initiative that bring together CBOs with  
14 proven track records in youth support and violence  
15 interruption to provide school-based programming  
16 directly to students at 138 schools. More recently,  
17 in 2023, the PEP approved the \$43 million contract to  
18 equip schools with video equipment, buzzers monitored  
19 by School Safety Agents. The plan rollout of the  
20 door lock system was scheduled to begin with  
21 elementary schools last May and continued across  
22 school systems over the ensuring last month.

23 Last month, the Chancellor shared the door  
24 locking system has been installed in 744 elementary  
25 schools. At today's hearing, I'm looking forward to  
gaining an understanding of the landscape of school

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3 safety initiatives at New York City Public Schools  
4 and the relationships and coordination between them  
5 and New York City Police Department.

6 I'm also interested in learning how the  
7 Administration identify these practices as well as  
8 metrics it will use to determine effectiveness.

9 Lastly, I'm interested in understanding the  
10 Administration evolving priorities and approaches to  
11 school climate and safety and how student, faculty  
12 and staff are, if at all involved with these  
13 decisions.

14 Finally, we're looking forward to hearing  
15 testimony on Introduction 003, which is a bill to  
16 amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York  
17 in relations to police department's response to  
18 students in emotional crisis in public schools.

19 We will also hear testimony on four Resolutions.  
20 Resolution 473, calling on the New York State  
21 Legislature and the Governor to sign, which would  
22 protect youth during custodial police interrogation.  
23 Additionally, we will hear Resolution 476, calling on  
24 the New York City Department of Education to consult  
25 with faith-based organizations to develop and provide  
all grade levels with a curriculum that focuses on

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3 religious diversity; to provide professional  
4 development focused on religious diversities for  
5 teachers, staff, and administrators; to ensure  
6 accurate classification of hate crimes in annual  
7 school reports and immediate notification and full  
8 disclosure to parents of hate crime statistics; and  
9 to ensure that schools take actions to condemn  
10 bullying and harassment based on religious clothing,  
11 food requirements, and the need for prayer space and  
12 time year round.

13 In addition, we will Resolution 573, calling on  
14 the New York State Legislature to pass and the  
15 Governor to sign, to amend the education law in  
16 relation to including policies and procedures in  
17 school safety plans for responding to students having  
18 mental health crisis in order to reduce the instances  
19 where school resort to police intervention in mental  
20 health emergency.

21 Lastly, we will testimony on Number, on  
22 Resolution Number 534, calling on the State  
23 Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign, which  
24 would extend the hours of use for MetroCards in New  
25 York City and would prohibit the MTA from rules and

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3 regulation that penalizes a student for using a  
4 student MetroCard when it's not in session.

5 Thank you to the Committee staff, as well as my  
6 staff for all the work they've done on putting this  
7 hearing together. I will now turn it over to my Co-  
8 Chair Council Member Hanks for her opening statement.

9 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you Chair Joseph. Good  
10 afternoon, I'm Council Member Kamillah Hanks, Chair  
11 on the Committee of Public Safety and I welcome you  
12 all to today's Oversight Hearing, which will be held  
13 jointly with the Committee on Education.

14 First, I would also like to extend and take this  
15 opportunity, our deepest condolences to the School  
16 Crossing Guard Krystyna Naprawa on Friday, October  
17 20<sup>th</sup> in the 102<sup>nd</sup> Precinct in Queens. Our hearts go  
18 out to her friends and her family and colleagues  
19 during this difficult time. We also want to offer  
20 our condolences to her family and loved ones and want  
21 them to know that her service will always be  
22 cherished.

23 Today's topic is a matter of great importance to  
24 myself, this Council and the City as a whole. The  
25 safety of our children in New York City's public  
schools are extremely important to all of us. The

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3 NYPD School Safety Division, staffed by dedicated  
4 school safety officers, play a central role in the  
5 city's commitment to providing a safe and nurturing,  
6 learning environment to New York City Public School  
7 students.

8 Through detailed policies and procedures, agreed  
9 to by the NYPD and the Department of Education School  
10 Safety Agents, they're responsible for responding to  
11 emergencies within schools, preventing unauthorized  
12 access to school buildings and fostering a sense of  
13 security for students, staff and families. SSA,  
14 their presents in school buildings can enable  
15 students and families with necessary confidence in  
16 entrusting their children to our schools, which is  
17 essential in the functioning of our educational  
18 system.

19 At the same time, we want to prevent the  
20 overcriminalization of youth and the end of the  
21 school to prison pipeline that has disproportionately  
22 impacted students of color. There have been ongoing  
23 calls by advocates to remove school safety  
24 responsibilities from NYPD's portfolio.

25 At today's hearing, we will examine the role of  
NYPD school safety, their responsibilities, the

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1 challenges they face and the ongoing efforts to  
2 strike a balance between security and creating a  
3 positive learning environment for our city's youth.  
4 We will explore the policies, programs and  
5 initiatives that shape their work and the impact they  
6 have on the safety and educational experience of  
7 students.  
8

9 I would like to thank my colleague Council Member  
10 Joseph, Chair of the Committee on Education and our  
11 staff for their hard work in putting together this  
12 hearing.

13 I am particularly interested in discussing the  
14 NYPD's allocation of school safety resources, how  
15 SSAs are assigned to different schools and concerns  
16 regarding high rates of vacancies within NYPD school  
17 division. I am also very interested in hearing about  
18 the city's efforts to integrate violence prevention  
19 programming into our school curriculum, including the  
20 role of the city's Crisis Management System and how  
21 they play the role in Department of Education.

22 With that said, I look forward to engaging in a  
23 constructive conversation with stakeholders here  
24 today including the representatives from DOE, NYPD,  
25 parents, students, teachers and the members of the

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3 public. I thank you all for participating in this  
4 crucial and critical discussion. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Chair Hanks.

6 Before we swear in the Administration, we will also  
7 hear remarks from Deputy Speaker Ayala, sponsoring  
8 legislation that we are considering today. Deputy  
9 Speaker Ayala.

10 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Thank you. I'm really  
11 excited to finally be here. This piece of  
12 legislation has been one that we have been working on  
13 for quite a number of years for you know obvious  
14 reasons. It's Intro. 003 and it's a Local law that  
15 would amend the Administrative Code of the City of  
16 New York in relation to the Police Departments  
17 response to students in emotional crisis in public  
18 schools. This legislation was obviously driven out  
19 of a lot of statistics that point to a number of  
20 specifically Black and Brown young children, some as  
21 young as five years old being handcuffed within you  
22 know in schools in our communities. And as a parent,  
23 as a human being, you know that to me is outrageous  
24 that this is a practice that seems to be more common  
25 than originally thought.



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2 I have a parent in my district who has a son who  
3 has severe autism and every time that he has some  
4 sort of a - if he has a bad day and he has some sort  
5 of breakdown, uhm, the ambulance you know is always  
6 an alternative right? They'll call 911 and an  
7 ambulance will come but usually the NYPD will get  
8 there first. Even though his mother has begged and  
9 begged and begged that he not be handcuffed or  
10 restrained in any way because it adds you know to his  
11 emotional distress, that has often been the case.

12 And so, I have a real problem with introducing  
13 children, young children specifically Black and Brown  
14 children who are already witnessing so much of this  
15 in their own communities be subject to you know this  
16 type of restraint. I think that there are ways to  
17 address these issues and unless there's a threat, a  
18 real threat and I don't find flailing hands to be you  
19 know the threat that I'm describing. I'm talking  
20 about unless it's a gun or a knife, there's no reason  
21 why anyone's children should be subject to this.

22 And so, I look forward to really hearing from you  
23 all what your perspective on the matter is and ways  
24 that we can work collectively to correct this wrong  
25

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3 that has been imposed on our children for way too  
4 long. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Deputy Speaker.  
6 Next, we will hear from Council Member Hanif, sponsor  
7 of Resolution Number 476. Council Member Hanif.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you Chair Joseph.  
9 Good afternoon everyone. I'm Council Member Shahana  
10 Hanif and I represent the 39<sup>th</sup> Council District in  
11 Brooklyn. Thank you to Education Committee Chair  
12 Rita Joseph and Public Safety Committee Chair  
13 Kamillah Hanks for including Resolution 476 on the  
14 agenda for today's joint hearing.

15 I am proud to be the lead sponsor of Reso. 476,  
16 which calls on the Department of Education to consult  
17 with faith-based organizations to develop and provide  
18 all grade levels with a curriculum that focuses on  
19 religious diversity. I introduced this bill  
20 alongside Council Member Pierina Sanchez in February  
21 and since then, a number of members have joined  
22 sponsors bringing us to a total of 15.

23 Given the 10<sup>th</sup> political climate, this bill is  
24 more critical than ever. It has been devastating to  
25 see the rise of hate crimes in New York City over the  
past few weeks, especially those carried out against

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3 children. New Yorkers of all faiths deserve to feel  
4 safe in our communities, especially in our schools.  
5 We know we are not born hating. It is a learned  
6 behavior, so we must do everything we can to combat  
7 the spread of hate by proactively teaching our  
8 students about the beautiful religious diversity that  
9 makes New York City such a special place. I'm  
10 appreciative of the support and leadership from over  
11 60 organizations and community leaders that represent  
12 New Yorkers of many different religious backgrounds.  
13 I encourage all of my colleagues to sponsor this  
14 Resolution and call for it to be swiftly brought to  
15 the floor for a vote. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Council Member  
17 Hanif. Finally, we'll hear from Council Member  
18 Cabàn, sponsor of both Resolution Number 473 and  
19 Resolution 753. Go ahead Council Member Cabàn.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CABAN: Thank you very much. Good  
21 afternoon. My name is Council Member Tiffany Cabàn.  
22 I want to start by thanking Chairs Joseph and Hanks  
23 for holding this hearing. When young New Yorkers  
24 have mental health crisis, they need care not cops.  
25 Not only aren't police the most qualified to respond,  
interactions with the NYPD can result in a lifetime

1 of entanglement with the criminal legal system,  
2 particularly for the poor, Black, and Hispanic youth  
3 who disproportionately risk such entanglement. At  
4 present, young people can be arrested, taken for  
5 questioning, encouraged to waive their rights and  
6 interrogated using sophisticated tactics designed to  
7 draw out a confession, making youth more than three  
8 times as likely as adults to falsely confess.  
9

10 And I will say that as an almost decade long  
11 public defender, I saw this first hand. Let's  
12 protect students from that by providing the services  
13 and care that they need. Two of my Reso.'s are being  
14 heard today. One is Reso. 753, it urges the state to  
15 pass legislation that would use policies and  
16 procedures in school safety plans to truly help  
17 students having mental health crisis and  
18 significantly reducing the instance in which schools  
19 resort to police intervention and mental health  
20 emergencies.

21 Resolution 473 supports the right to remain  
22 silent Act, which will safeguard children's  
23 constitutional right to remain silent by prohibiting  
24 police interrogation of youth under 18 until they  
25 have consulted with an attorney. And I just want to

1 wrap by saying you know there is a scholar and I  
2 can't think of his name at the moment that talks  
3 about the school to prison pipeline and how we have  
4 said school to prison pipeline and how we have said,  
5 school to prison pipeline for so much but that in  
6 fact what it actually is a school to prison nexus.  
7 That the prison is already existing in our schools.  
8 And I think that like looking at it from that frame  
9 is really telling when we talk about the kind of  
10 environment that we want to build in our schools.  
11 I'm a member of an organization called Local  
12 Progress. I sit on the Public Safety Steering  
13 Committee and had the opportunity to go on a site  
14 visit with our CEC District President to the  
15 Milwaukee School District, who has removed the Police  
16 Department from their schools and integrated  
17 holistically a restorative justice practice, not to  
18 be confused with restorative justice programs but  
19 restorative practices in a really, really incredible  
20 successful way talking to the students that were  
21 participating. The administrators, the teachers, the  
22 superintendent community members and I think that  
23 there's a lot to be learned there. So, I'm really,  
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2 really eager for the information that comes out in  
3 today's hearing. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Council Member  
5 Cabàn. I'd like to remind everyone who wishes to  
6 testify in person today that you must fill out a  
7 witness slip which is located on the desks of the  
8 Sergeant at Arms near the entrance of this door.  
9 Please fill out the slip even if you already  
10 registered in advance that you'll be testifying in  
11 person today. If you wish to testify on Introduction  
12 003 or any of the Resolutions, please indicate on the  
13 witness slip whether you're here to testify in favor  
14 or in opposition to the legislation.

15 I also want to point out that we will not be  
16 voting on any legislation today to allow as many  
17 people as possible to testify. Testimonies will be  
18 limited to three minutes per person, whether you're  
19 testifying in person or on Zoom. I'm also going to  
20 ask my colleagues to limit their questions and  
21 comments to five minutes. Please note that witnesses  
22 who are here in person will testify before those who  
23 were signed into the Zoom webinar. I also want to  
24 acknowledge my other colleagues who are present  
25 Council Member Lee, Council Member Louis, Council

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2 Member Hanks, Council Member Dinowitz, Council Member  
3 Feliz, Council Member Bottcher, Deputy Speaker Ayala,  
4 Council Member Menin, Council Member Holden, Brennan,  
5 Gutiérrez, Cabàn, Ayala, De La Rosa, Sanchez,  
6 Stevens, Hanif, Narcisse, Krishnan and Ung. Thank  
7 you for joining us.

8 I will now turn it over to Committee Counsel  
9 Nadia Jean-Francois to administer the oath.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good afternoon. I will call  
11 on each of you individually for a response. Please  
12 raise your right hand. You can all raise your right  
13 hand. Thank you. Do you affirm to tell the truth,  
14 the whole truth and nothing but the truth before  
15 these Committees and to respond honestly to Council  
16 Member questions? For New York City Public Schools,  
17 Mark Rampersant? Robin Davson? Mary Shamon? Aaron  
18 Barnette, Gillian Smith?

19 PANEL: Yes.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: For NYPD, Andy Shiwnarain?

21 ANDY SHIWNARAIN: Yes.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Tracey Ryant?

23 TRACEY RYANT: Yes.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Julian Farruggia?

25 JULIAN FARRUGGIA: Yes.

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3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Kevin Taylor?

4 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Vineeth Yohey(SP?)? Ryan  
6 Malcolm?

7 RYAN MALCOLM: Yes.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Josephine Torlone?

9 JOSEPHINE TORLONE: Yes.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I also would like recognize  
12 Council Member Ariola.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: NYPD, you may begin your  
14 testimony first.

15 KEVIN TAYLOR: Thank you. Good afternoon Chair  
16 Hanks, Chair Joseph, and other Council, other members  
17 of the Council. I am Inspector Kevin Taylor, the  
18 Commanding Officer of School Safety Division of the  
19 City of New York Police Department. I am joined here  
20 today by Assistant Commissioner Andy Shiwnarain,  
21 Director Torlone from the School Safety Division, and  
22 Julian Farruggia the Managing Attorney of the  
23 Departments Legislative Affairs. As well as our  
24 partners from the New York City Public Schools.

25 On behalf of the Police Commissioner Edward  
Caban, I would like to thank you for this opportunity



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1  
2 to work. I would like to discuss the important work  
3 that's being done by our School Safety Agents,  
4 provide information and bring - provide information  
5 and initiatives being introduced into our schools  
6 this school year and comment on the bill that's being  
7 heard here today.

8 Our New York City public schools system is made  
9 up of over 1,800 schools that reside in over 1400  
10 physical buildings. The safety of each and every one  
11 of our school agents, one of our students and faculty  
12 member is necessary to provide the best environment  
13 for children to learn and succeed.

14 Our school safety promotes the protection of all  
15 students from violence, exposure to weapons,  
16 bullying, illegal weapons and contraband. This is  
17 the core mission of the School Safety Division. If a  
18 student experiences a constant sense of uncertainty  
19 while traveling at school or traveling to and from,  
20 then we have failed them even before the real work  
21 has begun. We are focused on providing students the  
22 freedom to learn and to reach their full potential in  
23 a safe environment and the partnership between the  
24 NYPD and the DOE is crucial to this goal.

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3 Our dedicated school safety agents are skilled  
4 professionals who represent the diversity of this  
5 city. In fact, about 73 percent of our school safety  
6 agents are women. Every day, they make the NYPD and  
7 the communities that they serve proud while  
8 continuing to do more with less. Just like every  
9 aspect of this department, we are down approximately  
10 1,000 school safety agents as compared to our pre-  
11 pandemic staffing levels. But each of our 3,930  
12 school safety agents remain committed to building the  
13 personal relationships with students and staff. We  
14 would not be experiencing the successes we have seen  
15 without the solid relationships our school safety  
16 agents have developed with principals,  
17 administrators, teachers, parents and of course our  
18 students.

19 One of the most challenging aspects of the School  
20 Safety Agent is handling a child in crisis. However,  
21 our school safety agents rise to this challenge to  
22 keep everyone involved safe. This is a tribute to  
23 the multiple levels of training our school safety  
24 agents receive. Initially, our school safety  
25 candidates must complete a 20-week training program  
at the Police Academy. During this time, they

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1 receive training and police science, behavioral  
2 science, physical education, and tactics. These  
3 programs are all focused on many diverse topics, such  
4 as bullying the LGBTQIA+ community, tactical  
5 communication, de-escalation. The Academy training  
6 including – it also includes a ten-day therapeutic  
7 crisis intervention in school training given by the  
8 New York City Public Schools.  
9

10 I am also now requiring each and every school  
11 safety agent to participate in the one day in service  
12 cost on first aid mental health. That will be taught  
13 by our department. This is all on top of the  
14 training that school safety agents receive throughout  
15 the year in areas such as mediation, response to  
16 active shooter situations and other emergency  
17 conditions.

18 In partnership with the Department of Education,  
19 the school safety has established a new pilot  
20 reporting platform for all public and charter schools  
21 here in New York City. The new NYPD skill safety tip  
22 line will allow students, parents, teacher staff and  
23 even the general public to report suspicious  
24 activity, potential threats against schools, school  
25 safety concerns and more. The tip line will also

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3 help support mental health concerns, bullying, cyber  
4 bullying, and self-harm concerns. The tip line will  
5 be managed by and monitored 24 hours a day, seven  
6 days a week by school safety personnel. There will  
7 be three ways to report information in regards to the  
8 new school safety tip line. You can call, you can  
9 text, you can use the safer watch app to report by  
10 selecting your school, then selecting the incident  
11 that takes type, that you would like to report.

12 We have all heard something. We have all heard  
13 the saying, "if you see something, say something."  
14 The Safer Watch app is our new pilot 360-degree  
15 approach to school safety that will also be used to  
16 notify parents about serious situations that are  
17 happening in school.

18 The pilot application currently is in five  
19 schools, which allows the administration to quickly  
20 alert school safety division of dangerous situations.  
21 Such as an active shooter of violence near or around  
22 the school, which also will trigger a hard lockdown,  
23 and that's our panic button as well. That's on all  
24 of our school safety agents cellphones.

25 We are now in the initial stages of a program  
which will require the front door of every public

1 school to be locked. This will involve installing  
2 cameras, two-way speakers at each entrance to allow  
3 school safety agents to assess who is seeking  
4 entrance into our schools and why. Our biggest  
5 achievement in technology for school safety and in  
6 the nation perhaps, is the state-of-the-art real time  
7 command center, located in school safety  
8 headquarters. The command center will be staffed  
9 with school safety to monitor the police, radio  
10 feeds, cameras, in areas around school buildings and  
11 are able to immediately alert patrol officers of  
12 serious incidents occurring outside or near school  
13 buildings.  
14

15 This is the first time a command center model has  
16 been made to school safety. Having eyes outside of  
17 the school has already proven to be a valuable tool.  
18 This is the first time that a model has been done  
19 like this for school safety solely.

20 One of the duties of a school safety agent is to  
21 confiscate contraband entering into our schools,  
22 including weapons. As a civilian member of the  
23 force, school safety does this bravely without  
24 carrying a weapon of their own. School safety cannot  
25 protect our students if they are in danger

1  
2 themselves. So, that is why we decide to collaborate  
3 with New York City Public Schools Administrators to  
4 equip our school safety agents with ballistic vests.  
5 Everyone involved agreed that this is the best way to  
6 protect our agents while contributing to a school  
7 environment that is comfortable and conducive to  
8 learning.

9 To further promote school safety of our students,  
10 the NYPD created the Youth Response Team YRT. YRT  
11 consists of school safety agents, specially selected  
12 NYPD uniformed officers that will safeguard students  
13 as they travel to and from school. This means there  
14 is a high feasibility of NYPD presence along major  
15 travel routes. The team is currently in three  
16 boroughs, Manhattan, the Bronx, and Brooklyn.  
17 However, many may be deployed anywhere depending on  
18 the intel received that day.

19 Next, I would like to discuss the bill that's  
20 being heard here today, Intro. Number 003. This bill  
21 would also establish a rigid procedure for responding  
22 to children in emotional crisis and limit the use of  
23 mechanical restraints and those scenarios. The bill  
24 would also require training on identifying and  
25 responding to children in emotional crisis and to

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3 report this training to the Council. The department  
4 has concerns regarding the strict nature of the bills  
5 language that would delay the NYPD's response to  
6 extreme serious emergency situations. We are all in  
7 agreement that students in crisis must be treated  
8 with the greatest sensitivity. This is why the  
9 department has implemented patrol guide procedure  
10 215-13, which governs how and when an agent, a police  
11 officer may or may not use restraints on a student.  
12 And patrol type procedure 215-17, which introduces a  
13 layer of checks and balances within the police  
14 department. The procedure dictates - this procedure  
15 dictates when we would make arrests inside the New  
16 York City public school buildings. To codify into  
17 law many of the same procedure that the department  
18 has already abide by will create unnecessary  
19 stringent restrictions on what already their very  
20 nature, time sensitive and potential dangerous  
21 situations. We do support the intent of the bill and  
22 look forward to having a dialogue about the best ways  
23 of achieving the bills goals.

24 In closing, the NYPD takes a responsibility of a  
25 safe learning environment for every school very  
seriously and looks forward to continuing our

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3 partnership with the DOE and to ensure that our  
4 mutual goal to keeping children safe met day in and  
5 day out.

6 I thank you for this opportunity to speak with  
7 you today and I am pleased to answer your questions  
8 and pass it over to my colleague. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Mark.

10 MARK RAMPERSANT: Good afternoon. Good afternoon  
11 Chair Joseph, Chair Hanks, and all the New York City  
12 Council Members on education and public safety here  
13 today. My name is Mark Rampersant and I am the Chief  
14 of Safety and Prevention Partnership for New York  
15 City Public Schools.

16 I am joined here today by my colleagues Robin  
17 Davison, Executive Director of School Climate and  
18 Culture, Gillian Smith, Executive Director of School  
19 Counseling Programs, Aaron Barnette, Deputy Executive  
20 Director of Safety and Prevention Partnerships and  
21 Mary Shamon, Director of Crisis.

22 I'm also joined here today as you see by our  
23 partners in the NYPD and School Safety Division who  
24 already shared testimony this afternoon. We thank  
25 you for the opportunity to discuss our ongoing  
efforts to ensure that our schools are safe and



1  
2 supportive environments for our young people. At New  
3 York City Public Schools, we are committed to  
4 ensuring complete safety where our students feel  
5 physically safe and benefit from the intentional  
6 presence of programs that center on emotional  
7 wellness in the form of trusting relationships equity  
8 affirmation on compassion, dignity and respect to  
9 achieve complete safety, we cannot do this alone.  
10 Through partnerships with other city agencies,  
11 community, and faith-based organizations, parents as  
12 partners and with our students, we strive to create  
13 secure and affirming environments in which teaching  
14 and learning can take place each day and students are  
15 valued and respected.

16 Last school year, Chancellor Banks announced a  
17 comprehensive plan to reimagine school culture and  
18 student safety. Students reach their greatest  
19 potential when they are both physically and  
20 emotionally safe. And building upon existing  
21 practices in schools, this comprehensive plan was  
22 developed to create a pathway towards success for all  
23 students. This plan includes both physical as well  
24 as emotional safety elements, such as enhanced  
25 training in emergency readiness for staff,

1 communication applications for schools, increased  
2 access to social workers, supports sustaining SCL and  
3 restorative practices. And the launching of a new  
4 initiative called Project Pivot.  
5

6 We continue to build upon these elements outlined  
7 in the plan and happy to elaborate on those items for  
8 you today. To ensure that our schools are prepared  
9 to address any emergency, we provide training  
10 opportunities for staff and students in emergency  
11 readiness, specifically our general response  
12 protocols to continue to build capacity of our school  
13 staff. In school year '22, '23, we enhanced our  
14 emergency readiness training in collaboration with  
15 the NYPD, augmenting our existing GRP. This enhanced  
16 training focused on responding to an active threat  
17 and introduced the concept of run, hide, fight. This  
18 concept was incorporated in the existing training  
19 schools receive annually.

20 In addition, the school year '22, '23 New York  
21 City Public Schools launched a real time push  
22 communication application referred to as Grade,  
23 Attendance, Messaging Application, which we know as  
24 GAMA. This application allows schools to communicate  
25 updates on incidents and activities with staff,

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1 students and families in multiple languages such as  
2 any school closing or the case of an emergency such  
3 as a lockdown shelter and/or an evacuation. Since  
4 the launch of GAMA messaging tool, as of October 12  
5 over 1,200 schools have used the messaging  
6 application.  
7

8 We are always exploring new and innovative ways  
9 to strengthen our safety and security procedures. In  
10 February, we expanded upon the comprehensive safety  
11 plan when we announced the Safer Access Door Locking  
12 Initiative, which will allow schools to use the up-  
13 to-date scalable door locking technology to lock the  
14 main entrance doors to the schools during the day  
15 except for morning entry and dismissal.

16 The front door will be outfitted with the new  
17 technology for first responders to access during an  
18 emergency. This technology will be installed in  
19 three phases with phase one which includes 744  
20 schools prioritizing elementary sites currently on  
21 the way. We anticipate that this full project will  
22 be complete by June 2025. All school staff will be  
23 trained in the functionality of this new technology  
24 and schools have been prioritized – I mean I’m sorry,  
25

1 provided with signage to be posted on the main  
2 entrance as well as a letter to share with families.  
3

4 We also worked with our partners in District 75  
5 to ensure that the system meets the needs of  
6 individuals with disabilities. Also, in February,  
7 Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks announced – I’m  
8 sorry, Chancellor Banks called for increased  
9 communications between our school leaders and NYPD  
10 precinct commanders and scheduled a meeting for  
11 principals to meet weekly with the Commanders of  
12 their respective precincts to discuss any safety  
13 concerns or community issues, upcoming events and  
14 opportunities for collaborations. Our principals  
15 continue to meet regularly with their local precinct  
16 commanders currently. This school year, our  
17 superintendents will be participating in a monthly  
18 meeting with NYPD Borough Commanders to discuss  
19 district-wide safety concerns, upcoming district  
20 events and other opportunities to collaborate with  
21 the borough commanders, strengthening our efforts to  
22 create an ecosystem of support.

23 In September of 2022, New York City Public  
24 Schools launched a new initiative called Project  
25 Pivot. This builds upon prior investment,

1 prioritizing students wellbeing, physical and  
2 emotional safety to address external incidents  
3 involving youth. At its core, Project Pivot is a  
4 true connection between school and community-based  
5 partners. Most of which have a shared understanding  
6 of the community's needs.  
7

8 To date, schools can select from approximately  
9 170 grassroots community-based partners that have an  
10 intimate knowledge of the communities they serve and  
11 have known presence in the neighborhoods. These  
12 community-based organizations engage students in  
13 positive activities during the school day, after  
14 school and/or Saturday hours to build relationships  
15 with positive influences and offer services including  
16 safety and violence prevention programs, mentoring,  
17 leadership, career readiness, attendance support and  
18 enrichment through arts and sports and etc..

19 This initiative commenced with 144 schools in  
20 school year 2022-2023 and expanded to 250 schools  
21 this school year. Schools have recently received  
22 funding for this school year and are either selecting  
23 their partners or have selected their partners and  
24 commenced the services.  
25

1  
2 We remain committed to enhancing social,  
3 emotional learning and restorative justice practices  
4 in schools. Elementary K-5 schools will continue to  
5 have ongoing professional development and access to  
6 digital resources, grade specific curriculum and  
7 activities designed for relationship building through  
8 the Harmony program.

9 We are building the capacity of our school staff,  
10 supporting grades K-5 to incorporate SCL into  
11 academic instruction. We are also strengthening RJ  
12 in schools geared towards disrupting and dismantling  
13 systematic practices detrimental to student growth  
14 and achievement.

15 Restorative justice practices allow schools to  
16 build and foster relationship, stronger relationships  
17 with students, teach strategies for self-management  
18 while building community and preventing conflict and  
19 violence in their school communities. Thanks to the  
20 continued advocacy of the Council, New York City  
21 public schools introduced RJ practices in 25 schools  
22 in 2016.

23 Today, we have expanded Restorative Practices in  
24 varying levels in over 900 schools citywide. Thanks  
25 again to the continued support and advocacy of the

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1 City Council, New York City public schools has been  
2 able to increase our allotment of school social  
3 workers and school counselors to over 5,000 to date.  
4 To allow us to ensure that schools at a minimum have  
5 access to a social worker, counselor, school-based  
6 mental health clinic or a community based mental  
7 health clinic providing on site. Ensuring a strong  
8 foundation of support for all of our students.  
9

10 Our Central Crisis Support Team, known as CCST,  
11 is centrally based and is comprised of licensed  
12 supervisors and social workers who provide immediate  
13 short-term support for school communities impacted by  
14 crisis, such as the death of a community member. A  
15 beloved student, fire, or community violence that may  
16 affect our schools directly.

17 Our CCST develops and facilitates professional  
18 learning for school based social workers with a focus  
19 on culturally relevant trauma informed practices, de-  
20 escalation, adverse childhood experiences as well as  
21 other topics with support – which supports social,  
22 emotional growth, recognizing that our school  
23 communities can benefit from additional supports. We  
24 are adding capacity by partnering with higher  
25 education institutions to build social work – sorry,

1  
2 to place social work interns in our schools to  
3 support students and families. In addition, we met  
4 with our higher education partners to review and  
5 align curriculum to ensure it targets the skills  
6 needed to be an effective social worker in a New York  
7 City Public School to date. To date, through 18  
8 partnerships such as with Fordham University, New  
9 York University, Columbia University, Hunter College  
10 and Stony Brook University. We have placed 203  
11 Social work interns in 29 of our 32 districts across  
12 the city.

13 To continue building capacity, we receive  
14 certification, state certification to continued  
15 education units. I'm sorry to offer continued  
16 education units. For social workers last year,  
17 requiring all social workers to maintain their  
18 license and additionally, I mean, additional  
19 strategies. Uhm, as a CEU provider, we are able  
20 through our CSST Supervisors to offer up to eight CEU  
21 courses during the academic year.

22 In 2019, New York City Public Schools and the  
23 NYPD revised its MOU, I mean their Memorandum of  
24 Understanding, governing police engagement in  
25 schools. Stressing our joint commitment to ensure



1  
2 that schools are safe and supportive environments for  
3 students.

4 The Office of Safety and Prevention partnerships  
5 work in lockstep with our partners in the NYPD and  
6 School Safety Division and together, we continue to  
7 establish safety protocols and procedures in schools  
8 to develop school safety and emergency readiness  
9 plans and training for school safety agents across  
10 various topics. School safety agents are intricate –  
11 I'm sorry. I'm sorry. They are integrated into our  
12 school communities from the first day.

13 During the Academy, new school safety agent  
14 recruits participate in a ten-day training led by  
15 facilitators from New York City Public Schools that  
16 cover an array of topics, including school  
17 governance, Chancellor's regulations, school climate  
18 bully and crisis de-escalation, youth mental health  
19 first aid, suicide awareness, child abuse, and  
20 supporting individuals with disabilities with a focus  
21 on students with autism. We are happy to share that  
22 this year in collaboration with the NYPD training  
23 unit, under the supervision of Chief Obe staff from  
24 New York City Public Schools Office of Special  
25 Education is facilitating a training on supporting

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1 individuals with disability with a focus on autism  
2 for new recruits in the NYPD Police Academy. As well  
3 as New York City Police Department Field Trainers.  
4

5 In addition, we are assisting in the development  
6 of a curriculum that the NYPD can turn key to senior  
7 NYPD Personnel. In an effort to equip schools with  
8 the tools to de-escalate student behavior, in line  
9 with the Chancellors regulation A411, which outlines  
10 the policy on responding to behavioral crisis and  
11 when to call 911 for emergency medical services.

12 We introduced therapeutic crisis interventions in  
13 schools during the spring of 2015. Since then, we  
14 have trained approximately 6,000 staff members in  
15 various roles including school administrators,  
16 teachers, counselors and other school staff. In  
17 collaboration with the NYPD School Safety Division,  
18 we have trained 350 level – 350 level three school  
19 safety agents and supervisors.

20 Since school year 2022-2023, key components of  
21 TCIS are embedded into the training provided to new  
22 NYPD school safety agent recruits in the academy. We  
23 have trained over 580 new recruits to date. In  
24 school year 2022-2023, the number of EMS transports  
25 for emotional, psychological conditions of a student

1 decreased by 2.2 percent when compared to the year  
2 prior. We are happy to see the numbers trending down  
3 but there is still much more work for us to do.

4 We are continuing to work with our school  
5 communities to ensure that students experiencing a  
6 behavioral crisis are addressed in a supportive  
7 manner where they are able to receive the help they  
8 need.

9 In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that  
10 safety is not only meeting the physical needs of our  
11 students but also the emotional wellbeing of students  
12 and we continue to work toward ensuring that our  
13 students are both physically and emotionally safe in  
14 schools.

15 As Chancellor Banks reminds us, it takes a  
16 village and with continued support from Council and  
17 our city agency partners, we strive to ensure that  
18 our students are supported both academically and  
19 social emotionally and are equipped with the tools  
20 necessary to reach their full potential.

21 Thank you today for the chance to testify on  
22 these important topics and answer any questions.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. First question  
24 for New York City Public Schools. Please provide  
25

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3 data on how many times SSA's were called upon in 2022  
4 and 2023 in this year and this school year to date to  
5 address incidents.

6 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yes, thank you for that  
7 question Chair Joseph. So, to date, we've had  
8 approximately six, well last school year, right? So,  
9 we're going to do a full school year. Last school  
10 year, SSA's responded to over 6,000 behavioral  
11 incidents in school.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And how many times were they  
13 uhm - they led to suspension? What kind of data do  
14 you have in terms of principal suspension,  
15 superintendent suspension? Also, by gender, by race  
16 and IEP status as well.

17 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yes, okay, so of that 6,000  
18 responses, over 5,800, I'm sorry 16,000 responses,  
19 over 5,800 resulted in a suspension and it is super  
20 imperative that I short of reiterate that the SSA's  
21 response to an incident and these incidents are in  
22 variant level, has no bearing on a suspension  
23 administered by the educator, right? The two are not  
24 sort of in sync in response because they're  
25 responding to incidents at various levels and our  
incidents range from one to five.

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3 And as it relates to – the next question I'm  
4 sorry was?

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How are they related by  
6 gender, race or IEP? Does the students have IEP's?  
7 Boys versus girls?

8 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, we definitely do have a  
9 breakdown of incidents overall. We will provide I  
10 apologize. We will provide that information to  
11 Council. I know it's pretty early to say that we  
12 will provide the information. As we break it down,  
13 it just requires us to use a different level of  
14 business rules in order to ascertain that information  
15 for you but we are committed to providing that  
16 information for you.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You know I will be providing  
18 a follow-up, as I always do to get these questions  
19 answered. Does SSA work directly with social workers  
20 and counselors at the schools directly?

21 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, when we say working  
22 directly with social workers and counselors,  
23 obviously the role of an SSA is much different than a  
24 school counselor and a social worker. So in working  
25 hand and hand, we talked about response to emotional  
crisis incidents.

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3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Correct.

4 MARK RAMPERSANT: When a school – for the first  
5 people too, respond to an emotional crisis, is the  
6 School Crisis Team. And when they respond, they  
7 employ all of the tools in their kit. The SSA's are  
8 the last people, last employees to respond to a  
9 crisis incident. So, when you say do they work with  
10 counselors? They work with counselors in that  
11 respect but obviously the roles of a counselor and  
12 SSA are much different but the entire school  
13 community is called upon when responding to a crisis.

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: But they don't work  
15 together, so if a child is having an emotional  
16 breakdown, they are not the first one to call.  
17 SSA's, they are in the schools from some experience  
18 I've had SSA's usually will be the first one to step  
19 in before they call a guidance counselor or social  
20 worker.

21 MARK RAMPERSANT: No so if a student –

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So, the protocol is wrong?

23 MARK RAMPERSANT: the protocol as outlined in the  
24 Chancellors regulations, if we have a child who is in  
25 crisis, the crisis team responds first, right? The  
26 crisis team responds first and employ all of their

1 training before getting a level where an SSA may be  
2 needed.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So, we might have to go back  
5 and do some retraining. How often do you retrain  
6 some of the SSA's?

7 MARK RAMPERSANT: Well, the SSA training I will  
8 leave to the school staff but as it relates to the  
9 training for the school safety agents, as shared in  
10 testimony, we train them in the academy and then when  
11 there are those opportunities where we have breaks,  
12 we do some in service training in conjunction with  
13 the NYPD.

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How often does that happen?

15 MARK RAMPERSANT: It's annual.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: It's annual.

17 MARK RAMPERSANT: It's rotating right but we are  
18 in every, every graduating class. Every time there's  
19 a new class of school safety agents coming in, we,  
20 New York City Public Schools are in for ten days to  
21 provide training on the varying topics.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How are your SSA's trained  
23 to deal with D75 population?

24 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, we bring in our specialists  
25 from District 75 to train school safety agents on

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3 working with our young people who have disabilities  
4 and there's an added focus for our young people with  
5 autism.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: That was a bill the Council  
7 passed and it was very important to us.

8 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yeah, very, super important and  
9 we appreciate you passing that bill.

10 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: That was Council Member  
11 Narcisse.

12 MARK RAMPERSANT: Council Member?

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Narcisse.

14 MARK RAMPERSANT: Narcisse. Thank you for that.  
15 And one of the things that we did build upon, we  
16 thought it important that we work with our school  
17 safety agents but we also thought it important that  
18 we work with police officers, right. And so, since  
19 your last hearing, we were able to work with Chief  
20 Obe and we've had two sessions so far with brand new  
21 police cadets in the police academy as well as police  
22 trainers to ensure that they understand working with  
23 our young people in disabilities as well as our  
24 students with autism.

25 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Earlier you spoke about  
being culturally relevant. Is you SSA's school that



1 speak the language that reflect the body at the  
2 school? Language?

3  
4 MARK RAMPERSANT: Repeat please.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Earlier in your testimony  
6 you said you do – you're culturally relevant. Are  
7 SSA's trained in language as well?

8 MARK RAMPERSANT: Uhm, I don't when you say  
9 language.

10 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Language, a language other  
11 than English.

12 MARK RAMPERSANT: Uhm, I don't know. We don't  
13 train –

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You'll get back to me on  
15 that?

16 MARK RAMPERSANT: Uh, yeah, we'll work with our  
17 partners in the NYPD regarding language.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How many social worker  
19 vacancy are at the New York City Public schools right  
20 now?

21 MARK RAMPERSANT: I'm going to turn to my  
22 colleague Gillian Smith to provide that information  
23 for you. Thank you for your question.

24

25

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3 GILLIAN SMITH: Good afternoon. As of October  
4 19<sup>th</sup>, we have 17 social worker vacancies and 14  
5 school counselor vacancies.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How many school counselors?

7 GILLIAN SMITH: 14.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And do you plan on filling  
9 those positions?

10 GILLIAN SMITH: Yes, those positions are all  
11 school based. So the principals are actively working  
12 to fill those positions.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Can you provide where?

14 GILLIAN SMITH: I can. I can send that to you  
15 after where the vacancies are. But also just wanted  
16 to add that the vacancies that you know are fluid.  
17 So, whether people get promoted or leave but we are  
18 working to fill them. But we'll get that to you.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: In February of this year,  
20 the DOE signed a new contract to lock the front  
21 entrance of their buildings. How many schools  
22 currently implemented a front door system?

23 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, as shared, uhm we are  
24 starting these projects in phases. 754, I'm sorry,  
25 744 schools that are targeted elementary schools for

1  
2 phase one. We're in about 150 or so schools in  
3 variant levels from start to full implementation.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And how many will be added  
5 in the 2023, 2024 school year?

6 MARK RAMPERSANT: 2023-2024 school year, we want  
7 to be able to have all of our - all 744 schools and  
8 started in phase two with a full completion with high  
9 schools included by summer uhm June of 2025.

10 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: What are the protocols?  
11 Recently there was a student who said uhm he was  
12 being beat up. He ran back into the school correct  
13 and the SSA had asked him to leave because it was in  
14 the middle of dismissal. I can always send that  
15 information over to you.

16 MARK RAMPERSANT: Well, I can tell you Chair  
17 Joseph, there is no place for any such activity  
18 should occur in our school. And what you're  
19 describing is a student who went back to the school,  
20 rang the bell, and was told to leave?

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: This was in a high school.

22 MARK RAMPERSANT: In a high school. Yeah, we,  
23 yeah, I don't know of any high schools that have had  
24 the system installed.

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3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: No, they don't have the  
4 system but I'm just giving you the protocol. If I'm  
5 running away from someone and I run into the school  
6 building, what is the protocol once I enter the  
7 building? Kevin Taylor, go ahead sir.

8 KEVIN TAYLOR: I'm sorry. Thank you. Uhm, our  
9 protocol is to make sure that our schools are a safe  
10 haven. Make no mistake about it. Our schools, I  
11 want our kids to come back. If they feel any kind of  
12 way of being in danger out there, they are to come  
13 back to the school and I'll look into that matter if  
14 that's the case.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And I will send over the  
16 information to you.

17 KEVIN TAYLOR: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Uhm, what are protocols if  
19 the front door is locked around people coming in  
20 late, students arriving late, parents coming for  
21 conferences or teachers stepping out for lunch or on  
22 their prep, moving their cars or whatever we usually  
23 do?

24 KEVIN TAYLOR: It's the same protocol that we  
25 have in regards to visiting, visitors. If someone  
steps out, they will be clearly identified. If it's

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1  
2 the case of where our agent knows who the person is,  
3 I want them to use common sense to make sure that  
4 that prevails as well. So, if the teacher walks out  
5 of the building, we know that hey, I'm familiar with  
6 Ms. Thompson. No, Ms. Thompson doesn't have to show  
7 ID to come right back inside the building.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, thank you. Council  
9 Member Hanks.

10 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you Chair Joseph. So,  
11 I'm going to jump right into it. Can I just start by  
12 doing a follow-up question? I don't know if Chair  
13 Joseph had asked this. When it comes to the programs  
14 that you mentioned in your opening statement, are  
15 these in all five boroughs?

16 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes. Specific programs like  
17 Project Pivot and Restorative?

18 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Yeah, Project Pivot but there  
19 is also social workers, we want to make sure that  
20 there is borough equity I think from Staten Island?

21 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

22 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: I always have to ask.

23 KEVIN TAYLOR: So, definitely Staten Island. We  
24 do have Project Pivot in Staten Island and  
25 Restorative is in all boroughs throughout the city,

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3 as well as our Social Work initiative is in 29 out of  
4 32 of our districts. We will definitely get you the  
5 districts that are not covered.

6 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you.

7 KEVIN TAYLOR: I'm sure Staten Island is covered.

8 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: It is.

9 KEVIN TAYLOR: It is covered, yup, there you go.

10 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: I also wanted to commend you.  
11 It was really exciting. I was the Co-Prime sponsor  
12 on Council Member Narcisse's bill with the autism and  
13 it was really wonderful to hear that it's been  
14 implemented and you're taking that very seriously, so  
15 I commend you.

16 My questioning will be to NYPD. Before I get  
17 started, you know it's not lost on me being from  
18 Staten Island. We've had a series of young people  
19 killing each other, ages 13 and 14 and I just wanted  
20 to say for the record that we understand the tough  
21 work that you do, especially school safety. Many of  
22 them are women and women of color who are in this  
23 profession. And so, we will have some tough  
24 questions but I wanted to just also commend you and  
25 thank you for all the hard work that you do but we  
can always be better. Yes. So, we're going to just

1  
2 start with the school safety overview so the public  
3 can understand. What are the specific responsibility  
4 of school safety agents in ensuring the safety of  
5 students and staff?

6 KEVIN TAYLOR: We want to make sure that our  
7 schools are safe, so their primary mission is to make  
8 sure our kids are safe within that school and around  
9 that school. So, we take that very seriously, that's  
10 where all the training comes into place but that's  
11 our primary mission to make sure kids are safe in  
12 school. Our kids are safe in New York City public  
13 schools.

14 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. What are the pros  
15 and cons of department authority of school safety  
16 agents being under the Department of Education versus  
17 the New York Police Department?

18 KEVIN TAYLOR: Bottomline, it's the New York City  
19 Police Department, the NYPD make no mistake about it,  
20 we're the best at keeping people safe and that's the  
21 reason why keeping it under the NYPD. Keeping  
22 schools under the NYPD is the best way to do.

23 UNIDENTIFIED: Just to follow-up also on what  
24 Inspector Taylor said.

25 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you.

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3 UNIDENTIFIED: While we are or our school safety  
4 is currently under the NYPD, we are working in  
5 lockstep with New York City Public Schools. As you  
6 heard in training, in our response within the schools  
7 and we confer constantly the dialogue is constantly  
8 open with them to discuss what the best way to handle  
9 situations are.

10 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you for that. Are  
11 there instances where a principal and the school  
12 safety agent disagree on a course of action? What  
13 happens in an event of a disagreement?

14 KEVIN TAYLOR: If it's something that's  
15 administrative, obviously it's going to go right back  
16 to public schools and let them handle it. If we're  
17 talking about something in criminal nature, then  
18 obviously the New York City Police Department will  
19 step in at that time.

20 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Okay I do have a follow up  
21 question with that. So, for the DOE, I was going to  
22 flip over here because it's in the same vein. What  
23 procedures and processes are included in the DOE's  
24 disciplinary code and how does the DOE aim to address  
25 student misconduct before it escalates in needing  
police intervention?



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3 MARK RAMPERSANT: First and foremost, for all of  
4 the cases where we have a student discipline incident  
5 that transpires, depending on the levels of the  
6 incident, we are adamant about having our school  
7 staff employ all of the resources that they have at  
8 their fingertips, right? Training in restorative  
9 justice. The whole process of de-escalation in the  
10 escalating incident before they raise to a level of  
11 needing the support of the NYPD or others. It is  
12 intentional that the changes that we made to the  
13 discipline code included all of these interventions  
14 that we wanted to administer before we get to a  
15 punitive measure, right? Utilizing the support of  
16 our guidance counselors, social workers. Utilizing a  
17 caring adult in the school who we can step in and  
18 talk to the young person that has a relationship,  
19 right?

20 The SSA's involvement or school staff calling an  
21 SSA outside of an incident that may cause sort of  
22 harm to the school community. It is not something  
23 that we want our staff to do. We want them to  
24 continue to focus on the utilization of the existing  
25 supports that we constantly train them on and utilize  
those first and foremost.

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3 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. When was the code  
4 last updated? The disciplinary uhm -

5 MARK RAMPERSANT: 2019.

6 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: 2019, okay thank you. So,  
7 back to NYPD, thank you very much. What specific  
8 measures are in place for gang prevention and  
9 intervention within schools?

10 KEVIN TAYLOR: We have different within the  
11 Police Department, we have different community  
12 outreach, community affairs units that will go out  
13 and let everyone know from students to teachers that  
14 asked us to come in and talk about different things  
15 going on in schools.

16 I just took over in July. Anything in outreach  
17 regards to kids, I want to make sure that we are out  
18 there touching them.

19 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: So, as a follow-up can you  
20 explain the roles and responsibility that crisis  
21 management system providers brought in the school  
22 environment and how do they contribute to enhancing  
23 school safety and the response to the crisis. I  
24 think it's a question for both sides.

25 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, yeah, I'm going to call  
Aaron Barnette up to talk to the work around the

1 Crisis Management Systems. These are folks that he  
2 works with directly and overseeing the Project Pivot  
3 initiative. These Crisis Management Systems right?  
4 You're talking about the CBOs in the communities that  
5 are providing the services.  
6

7 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: CMS.

8 MARK RAMPERSANT: That is Aaron Barnette to  
9 respond to the question. Working in lockstep with  
10 these organizations that represent the very  
11 communities that they serve. It is an added layer of  
12 support for our young people as they transition to  
13 and from school safely and these are people in the  
14 community who know the community well and Aaron, the  
15 relationship CMS.

16 AARON BARNETTE: Oh excuse me. Okay, good  
17 afternoon everyone. Yes, as Chief Rampersant  
18 mentioned, we work with a number of CMS organizations  
19 that provide safe passage support as well conflict  
20 mediation support at approximately 170 of our  
21 schools. They offer up to 15 hours per month in  
22 either or of those services. And so, we work closely  
23 with them to ensure that you know our students have  
24 the support that they need to ensure their safety to  
25 and from school, as well as mitigate some of those

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3 issues that do arise in schools that lead to the  
4 conflict that we often might see after school.

5 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you for that but I also  
6 do want NYPD to talk about is there any integration  
7 and partnership with the CMS along with the DOE?  
8 Because we need all of this work. Everyone to be  
9 speaking to one another. So, do you have any  
10 comments about the role that NYPD, any partnerships  
11 that you have with the current CMS? I know in Staten  
12 Island, all three agencies, all three of them work  
13 very closely together. So, can you just talk -

14 KEVIN TAYLOR: I mean I can tell you uh, just -  
15 I know that I've been told that Staten Island has a  
16 great hold on this and we can model that throughout  
17 the whole five boroughs.

18 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Good stuff, thank you.

19 KEVIN TAYLOR: Then we'll so such. Just give me  
20 time, I just got the job. I will make sure we make  
21 this place great 100 percent.

22 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Good, so we're going to get  
23 you nice and ready by asking all these questions that  
24 you'll get back to us with some really great answers.

25 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes, yes of course.

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3 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. So, I want to  
4 move over to the school safety budget. How many  
5 school safety agents are employed currently?

6 KEVIN TAYLOR: We have approximately 3,930.  
7 We're always looking to hire more.

8 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Okay, what is the annual  
9 budget allocated for school safety agents and their  
10 operations in schools?

11 KEVIN TAYLOR: I'm going to let the Assistant  
12 Commissioner answer that one.

13 ANDY SHIWNARAIN: The current budgeted authorized  
14 headcount is 4,231. The Fiscal 2024 budget for  
15 school safety is \$235 million, with OTPS our expenses  
16 to run the operations \$4.9 million.

17 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. Can you provide  
18 an overview of the current salary structure for  
19 school safety agents within NYPD School Safety  
20 Division?

21 ANDY SHIWNARAIN: I actually just have the  
22 revised salary that was recently approved under  
23 collective bargaining. The salary for a level one  
24 agent goes from \$834 to the new salary of \$36,955.  
25 The top pay is reduced from seven years down to five  
years. I don't have the break out of years two to

1  
2 five but it has been decreased from the top pay of  
3 seven years down to five.

4 MARK RAMPERSANT: With all the steps but bottom  
5 line, obviously we definitely know our agents  
6 definitely need more.

7 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: 100 percent. What  
8 opportunities for salary advancement or promotions  
9 exit for school safety agents?

10 ANDY SHIWNARAIN: So, the first line of promotion  
11 for a school safety agent is to become a level three.  
12 That's an internal promotion. Something that we've  
13 worked with DCAS to issue an exam for that particular  
14 level. That's still in the works. After a level  
15 three, that's a civil services exam for a supervisor  
16 of school security. That is our Triple S. After  
17 that level, it goes to Associate Supervisor of School  
18 Security Level one. Those are usually deemed the  
19 executive officers within a borough command and  
20 there's a promotional opportunity to a level two for  
21 various other roles such as the commanding officer of  
22 that borough command.

23 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you very much. I was  
24 listening to in regards to your opening statement,  
25 one question that I have is uhm according to the data

1 provided by NYPD, children as young as six years old  
2 have been handcuffed while experiencing a mental  
3 health crisis. How does the Department protocols  
4 address the use of handcuffs for children in crisis  
5 and how could this policy align with the handcuffing  
6 of such children? Can you talk a little bit about  
7 that?  
8

9 KEVIN TAYLOR: One second, I'm sorry.

10 Bottomline, from - alright, so we use minimum amount  
11 but bottom line, I just took over and I want to let  
12 you clearly understand that there is no good scenario  
13 where a six-year-old, five-year-old to be restrained.  
14 There has to be other ways out there to look at this  
15 but very clear that minimum amount is being used. We  
16 should be the last resort at any time to us to step  
17 in. NYPD is the last resort and should always be the  
18 last resort in regards to any child being restrained.

19 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much. We'll be  
20 looking at those reports closely to make sure that  
21 that is the case. So, Chair, may I ask two more  
22 questions? Is that okay?

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Sure and then pass it along  
24 to Speaker Ayala.

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3 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: These are in the realm of  
4 restorative justice. What about of funding does NYPD  
5 receive from DOE for restorative justice programming  
6 and please provide some funding amounts for the past  
7 school year, as well as this school year.

8 ANDY SHIWNARAIN: We actually do not receive  
9 funding for restorative justice.

10 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Pardon me, I apologize.  
11 Sorry, thank you for your answers. I will pass it  
12 back to Chair Joseph. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Chair Hanks.  
14 Deputy Speaker.

15 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: I think I have more  
16 question now than I started with but uhm, you know  
17 quite frankly, I want to tell you that you know I  
18 have four children and my first child was a doozy.  
19 He was a hot mess and I was a teenager trying to  
20 learn you know to take care of a child that had  
21 obvious you know emotional health issues and I  
22 remember one time; he was not behaving in the hallway  
23 and there was a police officer in my building for  
24 some reason and I remember telling him you need to  
25 behave the police is there. And that police officer  
looked at me and he said, "why did you do that?" And



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1 I said, "well, what did I do?" He said, "you should  
2 not use the police as a means of scaring your child  
3 because if God forbid that child gets lost in the  
4 street, I am the last person that he is going to ever  
5 went to come to."

7 And that really resonated with me. It did. To  
8 this day, my son is 33 years old and it's still  
9 engrained in my mind that that is not the way right?  
10 Uhm, but this is kind of like the same scenario where  
11 we're utilizing police officers to keep children in  
12 line, young children that maybe just be having a bad  
13 day. That maybe are going through things at home,  
14 that for whatever reason that day, they just were not  
15 feeling their best self. And it bothers me that as a  
16 city, we put in so many resources towards policing  
17 our way around these issues and then fight for every  
18 single dollar to put in preventive services to avoid  
19 these things from happening right, social emotional  
20 health is a really big deal and should be addressed  
21 by social workers. People that are trained to do  
22 this, right?

23 Uhm and so, I don't know if this is so much of an  
24 issue that I'm trying to figure out like what the  
25 source of the problem here. Is it that the DOE is

1  
2 violating and abusing their right to call 911 when  
3 they shouldn't be? Or the response once the NYPD or  
4 even the school safety agent addresses the child is a  
5 little bit too drastic for my taste. Because quite  
6 frankly my child, this hot mess of a child at home,  
7 was behaving inappropriately and he was all of the  
8 time and I restrained him, I would probably you know  
9 somebody would be calling ACS on me or I would be  
10 subject to some level of investigating, right?

11       And so, I expect that we can kind of -- where we  
12 can figure this out in a way that it better meets the  
13 needs of our children specifically. Because if we  
14 look around at the number of Black and Brown people  
15 that are leading these agencies, all of us, you  
16 included have a responsibility to fix this because it  
17 is our kids, Black and Brown kids that are getting  
18 arrested who are learning from the age of five that  
19 they're already on somebodies radar.

20       What message does that send to them? These are  
21 young boys primarily that are growing up in our  
22 system from the age of five in the age that they  
23 should feel the safest. And I have teenagers, I can  
24 tell you know, sometimes as elected officials, you  
25 know we take where you know everything is either

1 Black or White and there's a lot of gray. There is a  
2 lot of gray and I know that like my kids in high  
3 school, it was a completely different vibe. There  
4 was a lot of other things that were happening that  
5 could also have been addressed but I could see where  
6 there was a line that was crossed right, but whatever  
7 reason and I think that the type of way that we  
8 address that should be different but there's no  
9 justification in my mind. There's nothing that  
10 anybody can tell me that would be rationalized.  
11 Using restraints on a five-year-old, on a six-year-  
12 old, and then when I see the numbers, we are largely  
13 represented in that category. Why?

14  
15 These are our babies. These are kids that are  
16 already you know maybe suffering from you know things  
17 at home, food insecurity, housing insecurity,  
18 domestic violence, mental health issues, substance  
19 use. And then on top of it, they get to us and we  
20 add to that instead of trying to figure out a better  
21 alternative. So, there's absolutely no way and I  
22 know - I just really wanted to kind of get a sense  
23 from you about how, I mean you mentioned in your  
24 testimony that the bill would prevent you from  
25 addressing you know issues in a time sensitive way.

1 In situations that may be potentially dangerous.

2  
3 Could you elaborate on that, so that I have a better  
4 understanding of what you know, a scenario where that  
5 would be the case. Where you – and I would ask that  
6 the example be you know for the category of children  
7 and again, I'm here to advocate for all of the  
8 students but I'm primarily peeved at the idea of  
9 five- and six-year-olds. So, I need to understand  
10 what scenario would justify that and how I prevent  
11 that by passing this bill?

12 JULIAN FARRUGGIA: So, we agree with the spirit  
13 of this bill and in fact our patrol guide speaks to a  
14 structure that our school safety agents and officers  
15 must follow before responding to or when responding  
16 to a student in a school.

17 Putting an inflexible checklist into a law does  
18 not – it does not help the school safety agents or  
19 the officers to achieve the goals of keeping  
20 everybody in that school safe. While we do  
21 understand that restraints need to be used only in  
22 the most serious situations, they are instructed to  
23 confer with school administration. They are  
24 instructed to confer with the crisis intervention  
25 teams. Uhm, and when officers respond, they're also

1 instructed to confer with the school safety agents  
2 before going in and responding.  
3

4 But not every situation allows for an officer or  
5 a school safety agent to call a parent, to speak to  
6 the Administrator if there is a violent situation  
7 going on where faculty or other students or that  
8 student themselves is in a situation where they can be  
9 harmed, then an officer needs to have the flexibility  
10 and discretion and tools at their disposal to respond  
11 to that situation appropriately.

12 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Well, I believe the calls  
13 should be to a social worker not to 911 and I will  
14 you know continue to say that. And again, I know  
15 that there's a lot of nuance you know in this  
16 conversation. I recognize that as a parent of  
17 children that you know have gone through every stage.  
18 So, I do see that and I don't intend to be inflexible  
19 but if you're stating in your testimony that a lot of  
20 this already covered under your own policy guide and  
21 this would just be codifying it into law then I don't  
22 understand the objection.

23 KEVIN TAYLOR: The NYPD understand the gravity,  
24 the sensitivity of placing their child into  
25 restraints. So, it's not like it's being lost. We

1  
2 just make sure that looking at our patrol guide is  
3 something maybe we can look at again and take another  
4 first look at as well.

5 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Okay.

6 KEVIN TAYLOR: But I don't think that we should  
7 put into law and restrict our officers to such,  
8 regards to emergency and wait for an emergency to  
9 happen.

10 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA:: Do you know what the  
11 percentage of the average age of students that are  
12 being restrained is?

13 KEVIN TAYLOR: Do we have that? I'm sorry, we'll  
14 get back to you if that's the case.

15 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Okay, can you also share  
16 what the average race of each child is? Because  
17 we've been doing a lot of work with this and I want  
18 to you know really shout out advocates for children  
19 who have been phenomenal throughout this process.  
20 And you know we've been having this conversation for  
21 several years now and it doesn't seem like the number  
22 of incidents has been reduced but rather, it seems  
23 like we continue to grow that population. And again,  
24 I'm going to just leave it as I expect more from this  
25 Administration because this Administration looks like

1  
2 us. And I expect that we know better and are looking  
3 to make situations that our kids have been subject  
4 to, that we were subject to growing up. Less of a  
5 burden for the next generation and we do not do that  
6 by policing our way around it. There's a place for  
7 the police. There is a place for school safety  
8 agents, wherever that may be, but we cannot continue  
9 to police children in this way, especially children  
10 that are in emotional distress. So, I will leave it  
11 at that but I hope to get that information back  
12 because I think that that will - you know that data  
13 is important.

14 KEVIN TAYLOR: Let me just jump in with this part  
15 too. You said it, it happens a lot and more times I  
16 want to put out there that restraints on children has  
17 actually gone down 29 percent since 2019. It's gone  
18 down, the restraints.

19 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: But the number of children  
20 -

21 KEVIN TAYLOR: I'm sorry.

22 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Even though, yeah, and so  
23 I can - I mean, we can go back and forth on the  
24 numbers but the percentage of young people  
25 specifically Black boys that are being restrained is

1 far greater than the percentage that they make up in  
2 a specific school building, and that's very telling.

3 KEVIN TAYLOR: We'll make sure to pull up the  
4 information and get you that.

5 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. I want to take a  
7 quick moment to acknowledge Council Member Nurse,  
8 Council Member Gennaro, Avilès, Restler, Mealy.  
9 Thank you. I just want to do a quick follow up.

10 Regarding to restraints, do you know of any best  
11 practices in other jurisdictions or other major  
12 cities using restraints on children?

13 KEVIN TAYLOR: I can't answer that. I can look  
14 into it but I can't answer that at this time.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, thank you. Council  
16 Member Cabàn.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÀN: Thank you. I'm going to  
18 ask as much as you can to be brief and direct with  
19 your answers because I got a lot of questions and not  
20 a lot of time. Would you commit to giving this  
21 Council copies of the Patrol Guide Sections related  
22 to responding to students in schools, particularly  
23 the ones that you mention in your testimony, Section  
24 215-17 and I think 215-15?  
25



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3 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes, 215-13, 215-17, I'll make  
4 sure that we get that provided to you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÀN: Great, thank you.

6 JULIAN FARRUGGIA: They're also publicly  
7 available online.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÀN: Okay, thank you. Uh, now  
9 I want to go back to something that Deputy Speaker  
10 Ayala pointed out. Trauma often manifests as  
11 learning difficulties and behavioral problems. And  
12 so, I think that one of the goals should be to get to  
13 get to the source of trauma and to be clear, when we  
14 have an entire ecosystem for safety, especially in  
15 our schools, violence interruption and prevention is  
16 part of that but it's not the same thing. They are  
17 part of the ecosystem but they're not synonymous with  
18 restorative practices.

19 Just like the restorative justice circles are  
20 part of the system but they're not synonymous with  
21 restorative practices, which are more expansive and  
22 that's what I want to ask you all about. From the  
23 education end, are you all familiar with the CBITs  
24 and DBT modalities?

25 Okay, so just for the record, that was a no. So,  
CBITs is cognitive behavioral intervention for trauma

1 in schools. It's something that's being used again I  
2 school districts across the country that have moved  
3 away from using school-based policing and it's a  
4 modality that's for reducing symptoms related to  
5 existing traumatic experiences and enhancing skills  
6 to handle future stresses. So, it's designed to be  
7 delivered by school mental health clinicians, not  
8 police.  
9

10 And then DBT, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, it's  
11 about accepting negative emotions, feeling them and  
12 then learning how to release them. Those are all  
13 restorative practices in the school that everybody  
14 has bought into from staff level to clinicians that  
15 really takes away and reduces the number of instances  
16 that escalate to the point of like a more serious  
17 intervention and really should be the holistic  
18 approach that we are leaning into. You know we've  
19 seen the statistics. Diversity amongst our SSA's  
20 isn't changing the outcomes. And so, what that tells  
21 me is that it's just a wrong job in the school and  
22 that what we require is job creation and expansion,  
23 especially for folks who are in those roles and well  
24 suited to have different tools, different training,  
25 different roles to provide safety in our school.

1  
2 So, I would encourage you all to look at some of  
3 these modalities like CBITs, like DBT and then I  
4 quickly want to move into a couple of questions in  
5 another area.

6 So, this is sort of about police, the police  
7 foundation. Some SSAs are being referred to as  
8 options SSAs. What does that mean exactly?

9 KEVIN TAYLOR: I've never heard of the term  
10 Option SSAs.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÀN: Nobodies heard of that  
12 term? Okay. Uhm, how is the DOE involved in Police  
13 Foundation wellness centers like the one inside of a  
14 high school? How was the DOE involved in police  
15 foundation wellness centers like the one inside of a  
16 high school?

17 KEVIN TAYLOR: Well, we collaborate all the time  
18 but you want to talk about that Chief?

19 MARK RAMPERSANT: If we're referring to a program  
20 in the law enforcement high school, is that what  
21 you're referring to?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÀN: No, uhm there's the police  
23 foundation right and the DOE does some partnership or  
24 collaboration with the police foundation, correct?

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3 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yes, there may be a direct  
4 relationship between the law enforcement high school  
5 in the NYPD.

6 KEVIN TAYLOR: I believe you're referring to the  
7 options program that's the collaboration between  
8 police officers, agents, DOE personnel and it's  
9 actually located in the Law Enforcement High School  
10 but that's something that the Chancellor and  
11 everything else -

12 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yeah, this is an initiative  
13 that the principal requested to work in collaboration  
14 with the NYPD since the name of the school is Law  
15 Enforcement High School, wanted a better relationship  
16 with the NYPD during a visit last school year the  
17 principal approached the then Police Commissioner and  
18 asked for a greater relationship between the two so  
19 they have continued those conversations and I believe  
20 that sort of brought this partnership to fruition.

21 KEVIN TAYLOR: It's an excellent program -

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CABAN: So, is it only in that one  
23 school or is it throughout the -

24 KEVIN TAYLOR: No, it's throughout the city.  
25 It's throughout the city in different parts but  
financial literacy. They have everything on that

1  
2 side from emotional intelligence, they reach out to  
3 the kids and have the kids participate in that.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÀN: And that's through the  
5 police foundation doing that?

6 KEVIN TAYLOR: That's in collaboration with the  
7 police foundation, yes.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÀN: Okay, may I just ask one  
9 more follow-up question? Thank you. The new SSA  
10 Recruitment Program rolling out that was in the news,  
11 I think it was an AM New York. The NYPD is going to  
12 be additionally recruiting students inside of their  
13 schools and how long has the DOE been involved in  
14 that?

15 KEVIN TAYLOR: From day one the DOE has been  
16 involved. We're in lockstep with them and we're  
17 looking to a hire young people, young people, young  
18 adults from the age of 18-20. We were looking to  
19 make sure that we don't have a pipeline from like you  
20 said, from high school to incarceration. We want to  
21 make sure we have a pipeline to us if that's possible  
22 and give young people a job. They will be assisting  
23 agents within our schools, our PS schools to assist  
24 our agents and go on to further their career.

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÀN: I thank you for the  
4 answers. I personally would welcome more pipelines  
5 to other careers outside of the NYPD but thank you.

6 KEVIN TAYLOR: That's what I got.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: That's what you got, okay  
8 great. Thank you so much. I want to piggyback off  
9 of an earlier question. What training and resources  
10 do NYPD officers receive to de-escalate situations  
11 involving students in emotional crisis?

12 KEVIN TAYLOR: I'm sorry, repeat that again.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: What training and resources  
14 do NYPD officers receive to de-escalate a situation  
15 involving students in emotional distress?

16 KEVIN TAYLOR: Well, the DOE actually offers a  
17 ten-day course within the police academy.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Ten days, they're not  
19 ongoing?

20 KEVIN TAYLOR: Obviously we do refreshers and  
21 things of that nature but I want to make sure that  
22 the ten day -

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Teachers are required to do  
24 PD. I think you guys should be doing PD constantly  
25 because times are changing, things are changing,  
children have changed.

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3 KEVIN TAYLOR: I agree 100 percent. I want to  
4 make sure that we get the best training that is  
5 available to us and I will make sure that our school  
6 safety agents are –

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: They should also be getting  
8 that training as well because they're interacting  
9 with young people every single day. So, that  
10 training is important.

11 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes, as well as our police  
12 officers and our agents in that. That's something we  
13 can definitely look into.

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: New York City Public Schools  
15 was going to answer. How many incidents of restraint  
16 using students – used on students in emotional crisis  
17 in public schools have there been since 2022 and 2023  
18 and this school year to date?

19 KEVIN TAYLOR: We have a decrease of 25 percent  
20 from 2019 – 2018-2019 to 2023 and the numbers are 304  
21 versus 228.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Why, what are the  
23 differences in the numbers?

24 KEVIN TAYLOR: I'm sorry?

25 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Why are we seeing an uptick?

KEVIN TAYLOR: No, we have a decrease.

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3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You have a decrease from  
4 this year? From this school year?

5 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: School was closed for a  
7 while, no?

8 KEVIN TAYLOR: Excuse me, from 2019-2022, there  
9 is a decrease.

10 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Right, there was no school.  
11 School was closed. How about now that schools are  
12 open from closure? Go ahead ma'am.

13 JULIAN FARRUGGIA: So, this - we're using the  
14 first pre-pandemic year versus 2022-2023. I mean,  
15 this school year is only a month and a half in but  
16 there has been a 25 percent decrease in the number of  
17 restraints used on a child in crisis from pre-  
18 pandemic year 1819 to full school year 2022-2023.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Quick question for you.  
20 Uhm, we talked about suicide earlier or SSA's know to  
21 tell students to call 988 in case they're in trouble?  
22 You all don't know what 988 is? Mark, you got to  
23 train them.

24 KEVIN TAYLOR: I'm sorry, 9 what?

25 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: The suicide prevention line  
for young people. This was a bill that was passed by



1 the Council. It's in every New York City school.

2 Thank you.

3  
4 MARY SHAMON: And yeah, so uhm part of it, we are  
5 doing uh training for the recruits and part of the  
6 training is talking about suicide prevention and  
7 intervention. We've reviewed the Chancellors  
8 regulations and also do professional development  
9 around it.

10 So, yes, there are conversations. They do  
11 receive resources. That's one piece and then the  
12 other piece is for our DOE, because of the bill that  
13 was passed, every single school in New York City has  
14 to have a suicide prevention poster. That poster is  
15 posted in all of our schools. Every school has a  
16 suicide prevention liaison. That poster also has  
17 988. We had annual trainings for the suicide  
18 prevention liaison that part of that responsibility  
19 for that liaison is to turn the training to the whole  
20 school community by October 31<sup>st</sup>.

21 We also have a suicide prevention and  
22 intervention plan that is in our consolidated plan.  
23 While the consolidated plan is a living, breathing  
24 live document it can be updated at any time. It has  
25 to be reviewed and checked off by the principal and

1  
2 the superintendents team by October 31<sup>st</sup> of every  
3 year. So, yes, that's out there and working with our  
4 school mental health partners.

5 GILLIAN SMITH: And if I can add to all of that  
6 was pedagogical. Cognitive behavior therapy is  
7 therapeutic and not pedagogical and so our mental  
8 health providers, they can do that based on student  
9 need and it's not for every student everywhere and so  
10 it's definitely clinical which is the difference.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you for stating that  
12 on the record. Council Member Stevens.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Good afternoon. So, I  
14 have a couple of questions and just before I get  
15 started, I just wanted to point out there was  
16 something said from DOE side where they were saying  
17 that the Crisis Management team is always the first  
18 to intervene in all those things but the reality is  
19 if we were doing restorative justice correctly in our  
20 schools, anyone in the school building as an adult  
21 will be able to intervene because that is how that  
22 practice works. So, I just wanted to point out  
23 already, we're already failing because we're not  
24 doing it correctly.

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3 Number two, I have a question because one of the  
4 things I always like to point out is that the  
5 principal pretty much set the tone of how school  
6 safety is interacting with students and what that  
7 looks like and all those things and working in school  
8 for a number of years, I would see when principals  
9 and teachers would use school safety as behavior  
10 management. So, a student got on my nerves, I'm  
11 calling in school safety, they're coming in and get  
12 them out and it's escalating and now it's a whole  
13 incident. What are you guys doing to prevent that  
14 and what is the repercussions for principals and  
15 teachers that are using SSAs as school uhm, as  
16 behavior management? Because that's the conversation  
17 that no one ever wants to talk about. But it's a  
18 real thing and it's happening and how are you guys  
19 evaluating that?

20 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yeah, so that's super  
21 unfortunate and if there are cases where you know  
22 directly where principals are -

23 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: It happens all the time.  
24 We have to stop pretending like it is not happening.

25 MARK RAMPERSANT: Again, if there are particular  
cases where you know at school where this is



1  
2 all the principals and the teachers who are using the  
3 management because I've seen with my own eyes and it  
4 happens and this is part of the problem because they  
5 come in and now an incident because a student was  
6 having a bad day because maybe they don't want to  
7 take off their hat. Because I've been there and  
8 that's one of the bigger issues. They don't want to  
9 take off their hat or they have a scarf on and the  
10 teacher tells them to take it off. You know what?  
11 I'm going to call school safety and now it's an  
12 incident, they're being thrown on the floor. They're  
13 being arrested.

14 So, if we don't talk about that piece of the  
15 problem, and don't start addressing that, all the  
16 other stuff kind of goes out the window. And so, I  
17 just wanted to also uhm point that piece out.

18 The other thing is, I keep hearing about Project  
19 Pivot but I am still unclear about the program is.  
20 Uhm so before we even talk about what it is, what is  
21 the evaluation process and how do we know that is  
22 actually being successfully implemented and what are  
23 the criteria's and goals around it? Because every  
24 time I have a question, I get Project Pivot and it  
25 has to stop. We got to do this guys.

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3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: We got to do this, so we  
4 don't get in trouble.

5 AARON BARNETTE: Okay, Project Pivot is -

6 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: I just need to know the  
7 indications of success and what the evaluation is.

8 AARON BARNETTE: Okay, well the indicators of  
9 success and the milestones that we're tracking are  
10 increased attendance, we want decreased behavioral  
11 incidences with the students that are involved, and  
12 we're also looking for academic gains for the  
13 students that are involved. At every Project Pivot  
14 school, we are looking to enroll between 30 and 50  
15 students for direct support in one of seven areas.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: So, with 30 students out  
17 of some of these schools that have maybe like 500  
18 students, you're only going to be working with 30  
19 students and those are the milestones? So, I think  
20 that we need to really be thinking about how we are  
21 redirecting this money because that doesn't make  
22 sense to me. That just seems like, that is - I'm  
23 sorry, like that sounds crazy. It's like there's a  
24 lot of money going into this and this is one the  
25 reasons why I keep saying I ask about Project Pivot  
every single time. And even with those indications

1 of success, and you just said 30 students at each of  
2 these schools, that doesn't sound like success to me.

3 So, would love to talk off the record about it.

4 We can talk more about it but I think that we need to  
5 be thinking a little bit bigger and thinking about  
6 how to build that out a little bit more.

7  
8 MARK RAMPERSANT: Well, just for clarity, it's a  
9 minimum of 30 students, up to 50 and the students  
10 that we are looking to engage in Project Pivot are  
11 often the ones who are overlooked for programmatic  
12 opportunities. These are the students that have  
13 displayed challenges during their time at their  
14 respective schools.

15 And so Project Pivot is designed to engage  
16 specific students at every school. The allocations  
17 that we gave to every school is enough to secure two  
18 partners to again address the needs of this specific  
19 group. It really is design to support all of the  
20 students in the school.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: If we don't have  
22 programs in school that doesn't address every  
23 student, it's already a problem for me because every  
24 student needs to have programming and so, I'm sorry,  
25 I have one more question. I'm sorry, I'm sorry,

1  
2 sorry, sorry, sorry. And that's why I'm going fast,  
3 because I'm trying to get them all out, the  
4 questions.

5 And so, this is to NYPD because I heard you talk  
6 about YRT, which is uhm the Youth Officers and don't  
7 get me started on that because I always hate Youth  
8 Officers in the sense of like we have social workers  
9 and guidance counselors doing that stuff. So, that's  
10 not your all fault, that's my thing. I don't like it  
11 but why aren't you guys working with CMS sites to do  
12 that? And because I heard you said you had NYPD  
13 School Safety. Those are the two groups that were  
14 going to be out there during like dismissals and  
15 doing all that stuff. Because then when we're  
16 thinking about Project Pivot, why is that not part of  
17 that process and plan and how are we using crisis  
18 management to do all those things because I think  
19 part of is we should be preventing crimes, right?  
20 And so, that's not what you guys are going to be  
21 doing and so, if you're the only ones out there, how  
22 are we doing the preventative work? Because I'm not  
23 saying you shouldn't be out there but how are we  
24 doing the preventative work and if we're not using  
25 these folks on this side who is doing the Project



1 Pivot, the Crisis Management stuff, it seems very  
2 disjointed.  
3

4 KEVIN TAYLOR: I'm in charge to make sure that  
5 all our kids are safe to and from school and within  
6 that school. So, the Youth Response Team, we can't be  
7 everywhere but are deployed into those major, major  
8 area hubs to keep the kids safe.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: But wouldn't it make  
10 sense for us to work with the CMS sites who should be  
11 everywhere?

12 KEVIN TAYLOR: I'm welcome to work with anyone  
13 that wants to work with us.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: But this is the  
15 Administration. You all should be working together,  
16 no?

17 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes, yes.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: So, then that's what we  
19 should be doing. That's the route she should be  
20 going to.

21 KEVIN TAYLOR: So, some of the areas that we  
22 cover, they're not covering and vice versa, just so  
23 we can spread ourself out.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Part of the problem. I  
25 just want to say, if we have all these programs, I

1 think we need to be thinking about how are we  
2 collaborating? CMS folks are the incredible  
3 messengers. They're the folks in the community.  
4 They should be the people that the young people know  
5 who will be most familiar with. Like, so they should  
6 be there too so when those incidents happen, they can  
7 also intervene. So, saying like oh so we can spread  
8 it out, if we were actually working smart and working  
9 collaboratively, it would make your life and job  
10 easier because if I see a person I know I'm having a  
11 fight, I'm not going to go to you all because once  
12 again, the Deputy Speaker already said it, we've  
13 criminalized police officers so they are not part of  
14 the answer. They're part of the problem because kids  
15 don't want to talk to them.  
16

17 So, how are we integrating CMS into this work  
18 because that's part of the piece that's missing.

19 KEVIN TAYLOR: Well, that's one of the things  
20 too. We want to change that image as well to make  
21 sure that people do, kids, young people do want to  
22 come to the police department and hang out with us  
23 and be friends. And I want my officers and agents to  
24 know the kids by name because that's exactly how I  
25 grew up.

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1  
2 I grew up in St. Mary Houses over in the South  
3 Bronx and make no mistake about it, I knew the  
4 officer by name. I felt comfortable to and from.  
5 That's the reason why I'm sitting here today is  
6 because there was an officer that made me and my mom  
7 and our three sisters feel comfortable and feel safe.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: So, then the NYPD needs  
9 to do the real work and stop doing superficial stuff  
10 like doing basketball games. Like, actually do the  
11 real work and think about the trauma that it's  
12 causing these communities that make people feel  
13 unsafe and don't want to come to you.

14 So, if you really want that to happen, then we  
15 need to actually start having conversations about  
16 doing the real work and the healing in the community.

17 KEVIN TAYLOR: I am welcome to have any  
18 conversation with us.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Thank you. Absolutely,  
20 I'm here. Every know, sign me up.

21 KEVIN TAYLOR: I appreciate you. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Council Member  
23 Stevens. I just want to really do a little back up  
24 on Project Pivot. It was expended this year from 144  
25 to 200 schools. What are the data metrics used to

1  
2 determine the success of this program that led to the  
3 expansion and how is Project Pivot different than  
4 what is currently being offered as part of community  
5 schools which have data to support that success?

6 AARON BARNETTE: Okay uh so for year one of  
7 Project Pivot, schools were identified based upon a  
8 number of safety factors. We look that level four  
9 and five infractions, weapons confiscated, acts of  
10 group violence. We also looked at some social  
11 determinants, students that are over aged, under  
12 credited, students in temporary housing. We really  
13 wanted to lean in the high school space on campuses  
14 in an effort to unite the culture on those campuses  
15 that often have multiple schools.

16 So, that really comprised of 144. As we  
17 expanded, we wanted to align our expansion with City  
18 Halls Gun Violence Task Force Prevention Plan, which  
19 really focuses on six precinct areas. And so, we  
20 really leaned in on the elementary and middle school  
21 space during year two and really looked to expand in  
22 those particular areas.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And is there any partnership  
24 as Council Member Stevens was saying with community  
25

1 schools that have been doing that work and has data  
2 to drive that kind of work?

3  
4 AARON BARNETTE: Yeah, well, there are a number  
5 of community schools that are also part of Project  
6 Pivot but I think the major difference with Project  
7 Pivot and community schools, is Project Pivot really  
8 looks to engage those grassroots community-based  
9 organizations, many of which are located in the  
10 neighborhoods that our program sites exist. And so,  
11 I think with that shared lived experience that these  
12 vendors can provide for the students, I think that's  
13 what really makes Project Pivot a little bit  
14 different than community school support.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay but some of these CBOs  
16 are a grassroot. They are in the community, they  
17 know, so how are we not partnering up with them and  
18 some of these services overlap?

19 AARON BARNETTE: No, again, so Project Pivot is  
20 designed for every school to engage the community-  
21 based organization of their choice. There are some  
22 community schools that are part of the Project Pivot  
23 initiative. And so, it is totally left up to the  
24 school what partner they would wish to engage. We  
25 serve as thought partners with the schools but we do

1  
2 not make the selection for them. We certainly  
3 welcome the schools to engage the CBO that is the  
4 best fit for their students and their school  
5 community.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, alright, I'm going to  
7 come back. Uhm, do you believe quality afterschool  
8 program play a role in keeping our students safe? If  
9 so, are these programs at risk if schools aren't held  
10 harmless for this mid-year adjustment period?

11 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, I absolutely believe that  
12 afterschool programs are important. They are the  
13 fabric of our school communities, right? After  
14 school programs allow for our young people to have a  
15 place to go after school, right? For those who in  
16 some cases go alone or stay on the street. I 100  
17 percent agree. It's important to have after-school  
18 programs and they've been beneficial in helping to  
19 reduce safety and violent incidents occurring in the  
20 neighborhoods where young people reside.

21 As it relates to budgetary constraints or talks  
22 about, I mean, I am not the person for that, so I  
23 appreciate you sliding that in there but yeah.

24 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I have a question. 911  
25 calls were made this year due to students

1  
2 experiencing mental health correct? Episodes in  
3 school. How often do you call or use mental health  
4 continuum that the Council pay for and invest in a  
5 lot of money using the three agencies, H+H, DOMH, and  
6 New York City Public Schools. How often is that  
7 service used versus calling 911 when a child is  
8 having emotional distress?

9 MARK RAMPERSANT: I'm going to ask Mary Shamon to  
10 answer that question. She is our Director of Crisis.

11 MARY SHAMON: So, the 911 call for -

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How many did you get this  
13 year from schools?

14 MARY SHAMON: We don't -

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: NYPD, can you answer that?

16 MARY SHAMON: We don't have that information,  
17 sorry.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: But you work hand and hand.

19 KEVIN TAYLOR: We'll get back to you with the  
20 numbers on our side.

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I will be writing for  
22 numbers as well. Go ahead man, whoever is going to  
23 answer my question. How is mental health continuum?  
24 This is something the Council; we fought hard and  
25 heavy to make sure that's in the school buildings.

1  
2 VENISE YOHAY: So, Office of School and Mental  
3 Health, excuse me, I apologize. So, the Office of  
4 School and Mental Health has partnered with New York  
5 City DOE, New York City Public Schools as well as  
6 uhm, HMM Health Mental Hygiene and they have used the  
7 model where they even incorporate mental systems into  
8 school with CBO partnerships that allow us to provide  
9 equitable access and sustainable services, three  
10 tiers, right? To avoid the 911 calls.

11 So, universal, selective and targeted. So,  
12 currently we've worked hard to have quality mental  
13 health services and programs available in our school.  
14 331 schools have access to mental health clinics,  
15 serving over 170,000 students, 333 schools have  
16 access to mental health service, via school-based  
17 health centers, primary care clinics serving 150,000  
18 students.

19 We partner with New York Office of Mental Health  
20 to establish 100 additional school based mental  
21 health clinics.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How long does a student have  
23 to wait to see a professional?

24 GILLIAN SMITH: Well, if they're housed so that's  
25 the benefit of what you provided us right. So, if



1  
2 once they're housed within the school, we walk them  
3 over, we get permission from the parents and they can  
4 be seen right on the school site. The other piece is  
5 that these clinics also have; uhm I'm forgetting what  
6 they're called but they're called it's crisis sites  
7 where students can also go to right away even if  
8 they're not in school. If it's happening after  
9 school while they're at home because they are a  
10 satellite site, so that students can go there.

11 The continuum is in select schools. It's in 52  
12 schools with CBO presence on site, so that's the  
13 continuum.

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Is that borough-wide because  
15 my colleague would ask, is this borough-wide  
16 including Staten Island?

17 GILLIAN SMITH: I'm going to lean on the uh, huh  
18 yes ma'am.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I'm asking for her.

20 ANDY SHIWARAIN: The NYPD was called 2,840 times.

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Hmm, hmm.

22 ANDY SHIWARAIN: For this school year. For 2022-  
23 2023.

24 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Can you repeat that for my  
25 colleague please, for Chair Hanks?

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3 ANDY SHIWARAIN: That's 2,840 for School Year  
4 2022-2023 School Year. That's correct, citywide.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Have you seen increases in  
6 hate driven bullying in schools since the start of  
7 the latest middle east conflict? What steps are  
8 being taken to make sure staff and students are being  
9 safe – are safe?

10 ANDY SHIWARAIN: We'll have to get back to you on  
11 that.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Oh wow, okay. Alright,  
13 Council Member Gutiérrez. Oh, I have another quick  
14 question. Can you talk to us about the bullet proof  
15 vests for the SSA agents?

16 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes, yes, long overdue.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You sounded a long over –

18 KEVIN TAYLOR: Long overdue to keep our people  
19 safe yes. They have school safety equipped with the  
20 light vest that they can wear to protect themselves as  
21 a 362. It can actually stop a knife as well as a  
22 round.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And how much did that cost?

24 KEVIN TAYLOR: I'll ask the Assistant  
25 Commissioner, he's the money guy.

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3 ANDY SHIWNARAIN: Funding in the amount of \$2.8  
4 million was provided to equip all safety agents with  
5 a vest.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How many safety agents have  
7 been shot or stabbed? So that — so we can make that  
8 type of investment. Go ahead.

9 KEVIN TAYLOR: Investment in regards to having  
10 our people safe?

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: No.

12 KEVIN TAYLOR: There's not enough money.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: It's an investment right?  
14 Don't turn it on us, it's an investment so we're  
15 asking.

16 KEVIN TAYLOR: I'll give you the injured part,  
17 how many people have been injured. Thank God we had  
18 no one that's been shot.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So, how much are you  
20 spending — the locking door systems, how much are you  
21 spending?

22 KEVIN TAYLOR: We'll pivot to our New York City  
23 Public School System to answer that question.

24 MARK RAMPERSANT: \$43 million.

25 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: \$43 million. A little  
louder for on the record.

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1 MARK RAMPERSANT: \$43 million.

2  
3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Metal detectors? Why  
4 everybody looked surprised?

5 KEVIN TAYLOR: We'll get back to you on the metal  
6 detectors.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You'll be getting a letter  
8 as well. I will be sending a follow up letter.  
9 After every hearing you get a follow-up and I expect  
10 the questions to be answered, so I can answer them on  
11 the record.

12 KEVIN TAYLOR: 100 percent.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Security cameras?

14 MARK RAMPERSANT: Security cameras are part of a  
15 capital project, which is a five-year capital  
16 project. I think the last capital is about \$200  
17 million for a five-year capital project. We'll get  
18 you the specifics on how much of that capital project  
19 funding was spent on IPBDS. Alright, because it's a  
20 variety of different things but we'll get you  
21 specifics as it relates to the IPBDS system in  
22 schools.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Training and overtime for  
24 SSAs in school?

25

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1  
2 KEVIN TAYLOR: Are you asking for how much it  
3 costs?

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes, that's the same line of  
5 question sir.

6 ANDY SHIWNARAIN: The overtime budget for this  
7 year's \$40 million in overtime.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And training?

9 ANDY SHIWNARAIN: Training is also incorporated  
10 within that.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Within that?

12 ANDY SHIWNARAIN: Within that salary and budget.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Chair Hanks has a question  
14 for you.

15 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. Uhm, just a  
16 follow up. When you were talking about the number of  
17 911 calls for in over 2000. Do you have any  
18 reporting on what schools that they're - not so much  
19 what schools they're coming from but is it middle  
20 school? Is it high school? Do we have the breakdown  
21 of what type of calls you know uhm the demographic?  
22 Do we have any of that information readily available?  
23 I would love to have that if you don't. That would  
24 be my follow up.

25 KEVIN TAYLOR: One second, let me check.

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3 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Sure.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you Chair. Uhm,  
5 I am going to ask a couple questions related to both  
6 testimonies, so hoping that you all can expand.

7 So, my first set of questions is for Inspector  
8 Taylor. Uhm, can you speak a little bit more on the  
9 Safer Watch app? I know from your testimony; this is  
10 something that's just now being piloted in five  
11 schools correct?

12 Is this an app that is used only on phones? And  
13 can you expand a little bit on the ability for people  
14 outside of the school to utilize this app?

15 KEVIN TAYLOR: The most people and the more  
16 people that use the app will keep our people safe.  
17 Uhm, it's a pilot program. We have it in Stuyvesant,  
18 Hillcrest, Bronx Science, Brookly Tech and PS78 in  
19 Staten Island, all five boroughs.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thanks for mentioning.

21 KEVIN TAYLOR: Uhm, with that being said, it's on  
22 all of our school safety agents cellphones. So, it's  
23 a panic button as well. So, if that's the case, it's  
24 a 360 where if there was a major incident in that  
25 school, time sensitive I have the chance to go to  
Parkland and visit that crime scene there where New

1  
2 York City, we can't afford to get it wrong. We have  
3 to be right 100 percent in regards to any kind of  
4 active shooter, anything that takes place in New York  
5 City.

6 So, that app is one of those things that time is  
7 on our side in regards to that and if we can get that  
8 information out quickly as possible.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Sure and so, and  
10 students inside the building are also encouraged to  
11 use this app if the need?

12 KEVIN TAYLOR: The administration as well as  
13 students. Anyone can use that app in regards to that  
14 and once they're established within the school  
15 system.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: So, but you know there  
17 are many schools that ban cellphones, so that's why  
18 is the app only accessible through a cellphone app.  
19 Is it something that is in their laptops?

20 KEVIN TAYLOR: I mean, we realize our young  
21 people keep their cellphones in their hands. It's  
22 one of things that, uhm you can download this and  
23 actually use it from that point on.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: I don't think I'm  
25 going to say policy, you're just like banking on

1  
2 they're going to sneak it in anyway. No, seriously  
3 what is the in those instances where students have  
4 that cellphone ban. It does happen. It happens in  
5 schools in my district right and we're seeing that  
6 more and more nationally where they're not allowed to  
7 bring it in their schools. You know they hand - they  
8 submit their cellphones so I'm only asking because  
9 I've seen this Administration move forward with a  
10 number of like these new apps and there's a lot of  
11 holes missing and we have a concern for the  
12 availability and accessibility of these apps. So,  
13 that's why I'm asking, is the expectation that it's  
14 primarily for your school safety agents, you can say  
15 yes or no and can you expand a little bit more on  
16 people outside of the school having access to this  
17 app?

18 KEVIN TAYLOR: Okay for right now, we rolled it  
19 out, 100 percent through all of our school safety  
20 agents. The expansion to have it, with everyone to  
21 have it yes. The more people that have it will keep  
22 people safe. That's the short answer to the  
23 question.

24

25



1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: But you say that just  
3 because they can push a button. It's like a quick  
4 thing?

5 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes, you have to hold it down and  
6 let people know that there's a problem going on  
7 inside the school. So, let's say if you're away from  
8 the school, you can't press the button. You can  
9 press the button you can just only give information  
10 out like a tip. You can actually give information in  
11 regards to the tip and that tip could lead to oh,  
12 John is the one that keeps calling me, fire drills,  
13 where the fire department is responding and we get  
14 those constant calls where it's a fake call and it's  
15 around school time. It's around test time. They  
16 actually put in a fake call saying that hey, they  
17 have something going on. So, a young person can  
18 actually use that information, look at that tip, use  
19 as a tip line or actually use it if it's inside the  
20 school in that school, hit that panic button and have  
21 emergency response.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: And who is on the  
23 other side of this?

24 KEVIN TAYLOR: NYPD.  
25

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: In the school or the  
4 central -

5 KEVIN TAYLOR: So, when you hit that button, it's  
6 going to go to our command center.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: To the command center?

8 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: This is the one in  
10 Queens?

11 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Uhm and then  
13 the ability for people outside of this school to use  
14 this app?

15 KEVIN TAYLOR: When you say the ability to people  
16 outside of the school?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: So, I thought I read  
18 and I understood in your testimony -

19 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes, I mean obviously, I would  
20 like if we could move it out to anyone and everyone  
21 as possible.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: I'm not suggesting  
23 that you do. I have concerns with people that are  
24 not in the school building trying to police and  
25 trying to like raise concerns.

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3 KEVIN TAYLOR: So, by the way, they can't do it  
4 from outside the school. You have to be part of that  
5 school community to hit the alarm to let people show  
6 up. Bottomline, if you're outside that school, it  
7 just becomes into an actual tip. So, information  
8 gives us a tip.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: And your school safety  
10 agent using this app on their phone that is provided  
11 by the PD with its own internet?

12 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay because you know  
14 if they have to depend on school internet to use it,  
15 I'm concerned.

16 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes and kids can report bullying  
17 and things of that nature and anything that comes up.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, I want to fast  
19 forward to just like towards the end of your  
20 testimony, the Youth Respond Team, this collaboration  
21 – sorry, can I can ask one more question. Taking  
22 forever to answer. Uhm, this collaboration with the  
23 Youth Response Team and PD to travel with students to  
24 and from school.

25 KEVIN TAYLOR: When you say travel – we're not –

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1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: You said it, it's in  
3 your testimony. You tell me what you mean by it.  
4 I'm curious. What is this? Is this a chaperone? I  
5 don't know what this is.

6 KEVIN TAYLOR: This is to make sure our kids are  
7 safe. So, if you have a kid that's going to and from  
8 school, we're going to make sure that they are safe.  
9 So, if that's going towards the local Bodega that's  
10 by the pizza shop, we want to make sure that the kids  
11 get to school safely and that's along the corridors.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Sure.

13 KEVIN TAYLOR: Say again?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: I said sure, but these  
15 are not school safety agents, right? These are  
16 selected -

17 KEVIN TAYLOR: These are school safety agents and  
18 police officers mixed together.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

20 KEVIN TAYLOR: It's the first time it's being  
21 done.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, so more police  
23 officers.

24  
25

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3 KEVIN TAYLOR: So, it's not just police officers  
4 without any school safety agents and there is a  
5 supervisor with them at all times.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay and the idea is  
7 for this collaborative chaperone -

8 KEVIN TAYLOR: It's to make sure that there are  
9 no incidents where we catch any fire arms, shooting  
10 and things of that nature in that area and to make  
11 sure kids feel safe going to and from school.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: And this has rolled  
13 out already?

14 KEVIN TAYLOR: It's already rolled out.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: And how are you  
16 testing the success or efficacy of this program?

17 KEVIN TAYLOR: Uhm, anything that takes place in  
18 that area, we're looking at the data to make sure  
19 where they're being deployed to, we're not taking any  
20 incidents in regards to firearms.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: And but this is not  
22 happening in every school district?

23 KEVIN TAYLOR: This is throughout the city but do  
24 we have our units in every location, no.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, it says here you  
have it in three boroughs. Okay, I will submit more

1  
2 questions. If I can, just one more question to DOE  
3 because I have to uplift Council Member Stevens and  
4 Chair Joseph on this like Project Pivot solution to  
5 all problems because I'm still unclear where the  
6 distinction is between Project Pivot and community  
7 schools. What sounds to me is that Project Pivot  
8 partnering schools have the ability to choose the  
9 nonprofit, whereas community school partners have to  
10 submit an RFP and that's selected by the agent.

11 That's really where I hear the distinction, which  
12 then my question would be, why not just allow  
13 community schools to do that process and select their  
14 own community group because again, they are  
15 grassroots. They are doing this work and I was not  
16 clear in your response to Chair Joseph on the data  
17 available to prove the success of this program. How  
18 is Project Pivot specifically – how is the data from  
19 Project Pivot in the last year proving that this  
20 program is improving attendance for example? And  
21 that's my last question.

22 AARON BARNETTE: Okay, so to answer the first  
23 question. So, just to be clear, there are three  
24 tiers of supportive programming that we implement in  
25 schools. Project Pivot is a tier three support which

1 is intended for a group of students, small that needs  
2 intensive, more intensive supports. You have tier  
3 one supports which are really more foundational for  
4 the entire school community and tier two is a little  
5 bit more focused whereas I mentioned tier three, is  
6 more targeted towards to support a particular group  
7 of students. And so that really is the difference  
8 between Project Pivot Programming as well as  
9 community schools. And so, I don't want to be -  
10 overlook the fact that there are community schools  
11 that are also part of Project Pivot.  
12

13 To answer your second question, in terms of the  
14 impact, overall in all schools across New York City,  
15 attendance was up, suspensions were down and so, when  
16 we looked at Project Pivot schools, we saw a similar  
17 pattern that again, at those particular schools, what  
18 we were able to provide funding so that schools could  
19 bring in supportive services for their students.  
20 Also, we saw an increase in attendance as well as a  
21 decrease in some of those behavioral incidences that  
22 do unfortunately arise.

23 Now, let's also keep in mind that Project Pivot  
24 is in its infancy. We've only been in existence  
25 since last January and so, that runway between

1  
2 January and June, although we were happy at the  
3 impact that we saw, we are looking for even further  
4 gains this year being that we are able to provide a  
5 full year of programming for the students at those  
6 respective schools.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: So, but attendance is  
8 up citywide, is it possible that it would have gone  
9 up in these schools had Project Pivot not even  
10 existed, if that is the general trend?

11 AARON BARNETTE: I mean theoretically, I mean you  
12 could certainly say that Project Pivot by itself is  
13 not the only answer. It is a part of the answer and  
14 so, a collaboration of all of the services that we  
15 provide our schools, I think really makes the  
16 difference and Project Pivot as I mentioned, it  
17 really focuses on those tier three students that need  
18 the more intensive supports.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So, where is this data?  
20 Where does this data live? See, when I was an  
21 educator, data jobs, my instruction as a Council  
22 Member jobs my policy. So, where is your data to  
23 support that attendance is up, suspensions are down?  
24 Where's your data to support that?



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3 AARON BARNETTE: We certainly can provide that  
4 data for you. I unfortunately don't have the data.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Mr. Mark Rampersant?

6 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yes ma'am.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Here we go. I sent the  
8 homework and the homework is not done. Ms. Joseph  
9 sent the homework and the homework is not done. The  
10 data was supposed to be provided to us, so now I'm  
11 going to have to wait. So, next time you come to my  
12 hearing, please come prepared. Thank you. Council  
13 Member Restler.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so much Chair  
15 Joseph and Chair Hanks for convening this critical  
16 hearing. I want to just echo the sentiments from  
17 Council Member Stevens and Gutiérrez but I'm going to  
18 focus my comments today and questions today on some  
19 local issues in our district rather than citywide  
20 policy. Although I do have some serious concerns on  
21 citywide policy. Uhm, so I just - it's good to see  
22 familiar faces on the dais. Thank you for the work  
23 that you're doing.

24 Mark, we've had a number of conversations  
25 happening over six months and you've been clear that  
you've been concerned about safety conditions in

1  
2 downtown Brooklyn where we have nine different high  
3 schools in a very tight geographic area. You know 13  
4 months ago Unique Smith was shot and killed in  
5 McLaughlin Park on Tillary Street. We had another  
6 very serious stabbing incident last year right there  
7 as well. We have far too many fights break out, far  
8 too many issues among students between schools.  
9 We've been trying to piece together a plan with alite  
10 learners with a SMS provider who can help provide  
11 safe passage for students across the downtown  
12 Brooklyn community and also help with some conflict  
13 mediation issues. Can you just speak to your  
14 commitment to that plan and to our efforts to try to  
15 bring in an outside provider to help mitigate the  
16 violent issues and I think the safety concerns that  
17 students feel in downtown Brooklyn.

18 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, Council Member first of  
19 all, I appreciate your advocacy for the schools in  
20 the downtown Brooklyn area, right? We continue to  
21 advocate for all schools. You are 100 percent  
22 correct in all of the data that you just provided  
23 regarding incidents of young people who are engaging  
24 in serious at-risk behavior, thus taking the lives of  
25 other young people. Far too often, I'm on the phone

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1  
2 with yourself and other members talking about these  
3 senseless, this senseless level of violence that is  
4 being administered throughout our city and we are  
5 definitely concerned and becoming increasingly  
6 concerned. As it relates to a commitment to provide  
7 to one individual vendor, I will not do that on the  
8 record or off. What I will commit to is continuing  
9 to work with Council to find a solution that best  
10 fits that downtown Brooklyn area and all of the  
11 respective areas that have seen an uptick in  
12 incidents outside of school.

13 I will also commit to working with our other  
14 external partners, right? Because it is a community  
15 responsibility for us to keep young people safe.  
16 What you were referring to is while young people are  
17 transitioning through the downtown Brooklyn area,  
18 violence is commencing right? And while the  
19 Department of New York City Public Schools is  
20 responsible for the in-school right and they are  
21 responsible for community relations, it takes a full  
22 community in order to keep our young people safe. So  
23 I am committed to working with you and the community

24 -

25

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1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Look, I don't have any  
3 agenda for a specific rider to be clear. What I care  
4 about is the leadership of the DOE. So, let me  
5 actually take it back for a second. For the last  
6 year since the tragedy involving Unique Smith, we've  
7 been convening principals, students. We had Director  
8 - help me out here. I tried.

9 MARK RAMPERSANT: Torlone.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you and many other  
11 leaders meet with our young people across the  
12 diversity of the downtown Brooklyn school community  
13 and try to develop solutions together. Because we  
14 can't just do this campus by campus, school by  
15 school. And so, what I'm looking for is a leadership  
16 from DOE to commit to help bringing the schools  
17 together to help collecting and pulling resources so  
18 that we can make an investment that can actually make  
19 a difference for safe passage across downtown  
20 Brooklyn. Not just at the street corner on Adams but  
21 across the community and I'm not asking for you to  
22 commit to a provider. That's not the point of my  
23 statement. My ask is for you to commit to continue  
24 to bring the schools together and to encourage them  
25 to pull resources so that we can collectively work on

1  
2 solutions that don't just rely on the PD. We have  
3 two sectors of 84<sup>th</sup> Precinct Officers stationed in  
4 downtown Brooklyn for multiple hours every single  
5 school day. I don't think that's making our kids  
6 feel safe and I don't think that that's the best  
7 solution for – and I don't think it's the best use of  
8 the time for the A4. I'd much rather be engaging  
9 with CMS provider who is building relationships with  
10 our young people and helping to ensure safe passage  
11 for them.

12 I just am looking for the commitment that you're  
13 going to continue to help make sure that each of the  
14 schools are engaged and that we're committing and  
15 sharing and pulling resources together to try and  
16 ensure the safety of our young people.

17 MARK RAMPERSANT: We're 100 percent sharing that  
18 commitment, right? The safety of our young people  
19 are our top priority. Absolutely, we will continue  
20 to commit to. We do continue to commit to working  
21 with the schools in the downtown Brooklyn area to  
22 come up with a solution that ensures safety and  
23 security for all of the students transitioning  
24 through downtown Brooklyn.

25

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I think that we have an  
4 emerging model in downtown Brooklyn that is exciting  
5 and I'm hopeful with your help and with Aaron's help  
6 and others that we can get it implemented in the  
7 weeks ahead, not months and that it's something that  
8 will make a difference in how safe our young people  
9 feel in the community and it's something that  
10 potentially is worthy of replication. And so, I hope  
11 that we're able to make this happen and that it's a  
12 real success.

13 MARK RAMPERSANT: We're committed.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Appreciate it.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Council Member Holden.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you Chairs and  
17 thank you all for your testimony. Inspector Taylor,  
18 the Safer Watch app. You testified that it's in five  
19 schools the app so far and how is that working and  
20 when are you going to roll it out completely  
21 systemwide?

22 KEVIN TAYLOR: So, the pilot program has been  
23 very successful. We look to roll it out real soon.  
24 I don't have a timetable for you yet but definitely  
25 look forward to having it out to citywide so everyone  
can benefit from having the safe school.

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Can you give us an update  
4 on what it does and so forth and how it's going? How  
5 is the pilot program working?

6 KEVIN TAYLOR: So, the - having a panic button at  
7 your tip of your hands. Giving it to our school  
8 safety agents. Giving that extra layer of confidence  
9 just in case something happens that they have that  
10 information to put out to the world, so it's no  
11 delay. Key word is a delay. We want to make sure  
12 the Police Department wants to make sure there is no  
13 delay in getting emergency critical information out.

14 In regards to expanding it to the students and  
15 faculty and all, that availability is there already.  
16 It's who chooses to join that community. But we're  
17 in partnership with the DOE, excuse me, the Public  
18 Schools. They see this as a benefit as well.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: So, it's successful so  
20 far?

21 KEVIN TAYLOR: It's been very successful.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Any improvements, any  
23 suggestions on tweaking the app?

24 KEVIN TAYLOR: I would say there's no suggestion  
25 in regards to tweaking the app. I went to Florida  
Parkland and seeing it in real time, how they utilize

1  
2 this technology and we have to embrace this  
3 technology within New York City. That truly is a  
4 game changer, a game changer for us here in New York  
5 City even if it's only in that pilot program at this  
6 time.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Yup. You know I'm a big  
8 supporter of our safety agents. Our school safety  
9 agents do a magnificent job in my district.

10 KEVIN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. I appreciate  
11 that.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: They know the students  
13 names. They're actually like family and I was amazed  
14 at that and that's what I've been noticing for the  
15 last six years since I've been in the Council. And  
16 that's what changed over the time when my kids went  
17 to school. My kids are fully grown. They have  
18 families. I have grandchildren but there's a  
19 difference now that I'm seeing with the school safety  
20 agents and I need more of them though. Many of my  
21 schools, we only have one and it's a larger school.

22 So, what I would like is obviously, at least two  
23 in every school. Are we going to get to that point  
24 at some point, you know at some?



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3 KEVIN TAYLOR: I truly believe that we will get  
4 to the point that we're going to have two safety  
5 agents in all of our schools at minimum. I want to  
6 keep that as our minimum of having two.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Do you know when though?  
8 Can you predict when? Because I've been trying, you  
9 know I have a number of schools with one and then you  
10 know somebody, a teacher has to come or an aide has  
11 to come to the door.

12 KEVIN TAYLOR: And I clearly get this. When I  
13 say security, I don't think the DOE or the public  
14 school system should have to put someone down to  
15 cover us. I think we should have our agents there;  
16 those entries and I believe that our program can  
17 answer that in regards to having young people that  
18 are 18 to 20 years of age in this program getting  
19 young people to take the NYPD as their career, their  
20 career path and having that, can you think about  
21 that? Having a young person at 18 years of age  
22 graduate with a high school diploma or GED and get  
23 offered a job at 35. I would love to see it at 45 or  
24 better. I'll work on that too, try to get our money  
25 up for our agents.

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Yeah, I just want to  
4 touch on it because I'm running out of time.

5 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yeah, got it.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: \$36,000 to start. I  
7 think it's \$36- and change?

8 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: That is the lowest in the  
10 nation. You know that?

11 KEVIN TAYLOR: I clearly get it.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: It is. It's by far the  
13 lowest in the nation and as we all know here. New  
14 York City is not an inexpensive place to live. So,  
15 we're really not doing justice to the people that  
16 have a lot of responsibilities.

17 School Safety Agent, you have tremendous, you  
18 have our children's lives in your hands and  
19 responsibility. Paying them \$36,000 is an insult.

20 KEVIN TAYLOR: I truly get that. I would love to  
21 make sure that we can have that kind of conversation  
22 and make sure there was a minimum of bringing that  
23 salary up. I believe that New York City NYPD as a  
24 whole for our division, investing in technology but  
25 more so in our personnel.

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Can I ask one more quick  
4 question? I want to ask exchange on the Suicide  
5 Prevention. If I could uh yeah, thanks. Uhm, I just  
6 want to get educated as to – because I think it was  
7 mentioned that there's some mental health clinics and  
8 we have a few hundred in the schools and uhm, you  
9 said that I think one person testified that the  
10 student has to go to the parent to get seen. They  
11 just can't walk into a mental health facility?

12 So, let's say in the way of suicide prevention,  
13 let's say a student is troubled and is thinking that  
14 there's no way that they could go on. What do they  
15 do? And they don't want to go to the parent let's  
16 say. They don't want to talk to the parent.

17 MARY SHAMON: Yeah, thank you for that question  
18 but in our Chancellor's regulations 8755 around  
19 suicide prevention and intervention, all  
20 confidentiality goes out the window. So, we have to  
21 contact the parent or guardian. We have to make that  
22 connection.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Right, I understand but  
24 let's say a teenager; it's a high school and the  
25 teenager is being bullied and they want to talk to

1  
2 someone, someone at the school. They don't want to  
3 talk to the parent.

4 MARY SHAMON: Oh, yeah, yeah.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Yeah, that's what I'm  
6 asking. What happens? Tell me what happens.

7 MARY SHAMON: Yeah, so they, teachers and now  
8 teachers and also school counselors and social  
9 workers and school based mental health providers,  
10 they can provide support to students.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: So, they can walk right  
12 into -

13 MARY SHAMON: 100 percent.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay, so but let's talk -  
15 one quick question about outreach. So, does a  
16 counselor go to each school? You know each class  
17 let's say. I don't know if they still have homeroom.  
18 Do they still have homeroom in the high schools?

19 MARY SHAMON: Sometimes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay, sometimes. Like, I  
21 would love it if a counselor goes in periodically  
22 during the academic year that could talk about that.  
23 That there is a way that we could you know, if you  
24 feel hopeless, things are hopeless, please come talk  
25 to us. Do they send that message out?

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3 MARY SHAMON: Yeah, thank you for that. Yeah,  
4 absolutely and so much of the Suicide Prevention  
5 Awareness and Intervention relies on our SCL work.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Right.

7 MARY SHAMON: It's talking about coping skills.  
8 It's talking about relationship building and your  
9 awareness to yourself right? So, yeah, we're having  
10 constant conversations around that and we're amping  
11 up the way we support students in our school  
12 communities around suicide prevention and  
13 intervention.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Because the postage that  
15 you mentioned, I don't know - I'd like to see one.

16 MARY SHAMON: Okay.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: You know if I can get a  
18 copy, a few copies. Thank you.

19 MARY SHAMON: Yeah.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thanks so much Chair.  
21 Thanks for the extra time.

22 MARY SHAMON: Yeah, thank you.

23 GILLIAN SMITH: And if I can just clarify the  
24 testimony, did not and I'm sorry that you  
25 misunderstood. Didn't say that the student had to go  
to the parent. If our students are being seen at our

1  
2 mental health clinics, we do have to get  
3 authorization from the parents.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Right, I get that, yeah.  
5 Yeah, thank you so much. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Council Member Avilés.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÈS: Thank you Chairs. I'd  
8 like to know; I'd like to start with DOE. Uhm, do  
9 you know what the starting salary for PARAs are?

10 MARK RAMPERSANT: No, unfortunately I do not know  
11 the starting salary for PARA but we can get -

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÈS: Do you know what the  
13 starting salary for school social workers or  
14 counselors are or youth service workers that work  
15 with young people intensively?

16 MARK RAMPERSANT: School counselors?

17 GILLIAN SMITH: We can get the base salary for  
18 you but their salaries are also informed by their  
19 number of credits they have and also by some of the  
20 experiences they have but we can definitely get the  
21 salary for you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÈS: Right or parent  
23 coordinators. What I'm suggesting here is that if  
24 we're going to talk about pay equity and we're going  
25 to talk about safety in schools, we need to look at

1  
2 all the workers that actually work with students  
3 every single day to keep them truly safe and  
4 learning. That is what the school environment is  
5 for. We would need to start in the building first  
6 with those if we want to look at safety for real.  
7 But let's go to the uhm, I understand that the  
8 Chancellors regs A1412 are in the process of being  
9 amended and this is a regulation around school -  
10 security in schools.

11 My understanding is that what the amendments that  
12 are being proposed potentially are looking to  
13 circumvent parents and students rights and providing  
14 guidance to principals to contact general counsel  
15 first as opposed to parents, is that correct?

16 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, the regulation, we're  
17 definitely not looking to circumvent any young  
18 person's right. I mean, the primary obligation for  
19 our school administrators is to ensure full safety of  
20 our young people in schools, right? And we are not  
21 looking to violate their rights in any way. The  
22 question around contacting counsel was around the  
23 question on whether or not a crime was committed,  
24 alright and that's where the clarity is, right?

25

1  
2 In every case where we're meeting - any time  
3 there's an incident involving a student, school staff  
4 is required to notify the parent. That's not going  
5 to change.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÈS: So, in the instance where  
7 there's a crime committed?

8 MARK RAMPERSANT: The principal doesn't know  
9 crime versus incident, right? They are focused on  
10 incidents. Where we're talking about a crime being  
11 committed, the NYPD may respond to the school and  
12 principals are always told to reach out to legal  
13 counsel whenever there's that respective interaction.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÈS: In every circumstance, a  
15 parent will be contacted first?

16 MARK RAMPERSANT: Anytime there's an incident  
17 involving a student, parent contact is required.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÈS: And are students informed  
19 of their rights in this process?

20 MARK RAMPERSANT: We do in the discipline code;  
21 we have a section with students overall bill of  
22 rights. When you talk about a respective incident  
23 where the NYPD is called, the school staff is there  
24 as loco parentis right? And their job is to make  
25 sure that in that time, the parent is contacted. So,



1  
2 in terms of informing the student directly, right,  
3 that is just one of the steps that the school must  
4 follow.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÈS: Okay, great because  
6 anything that would in fact circumvent that, we would  
7 be deeply opposed to and very concerned. In all  
8 circumstance, parents should and must be contacted.  
9 All students must be give their rights in clear terms  
10 to understand what they're dealing with, so that they  
11 in fact are aware.

12 So, we look forward to seeing that that is in  
13 fact the case. In terms of Project Pivot, just very  
14 quickly, there's a huge increase obviously in the  
15 number of schools. I know you thought you were going  
16 away. Come back. Uhm, can you tell us how much  
17 money was given to each school and how that was  
18 determined?

19 GILLIAN SMITH: May I share with you the social  
20 worker starting salary is \$66,000.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÈS: And how many - oh, okay,  
22 let's - we're going to go back to that.

23 AARON BARNETTE: Yes, the cost that was allocated  
24 for every school, every school received \$56,000.  
25 \$49,000 was allocated to engage either one or

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3 multiple community partners of their choice. \$5,000  
4 was allocated to pay a staff member to serve as the  
5 school coordinator and \$2,000 was allocated to each  
6 school for an outing, educational outing or incentive  
7 for those students that are participating.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÈS: The \$56,000 is the top  
9 line number and –

10 AARON BARNETTE: Yes.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÈS: It broke down in that way  
12 for each school.

13 AARON BARNETTE: Every school got the same  
14 allocation, yes.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÈS: Got it. Uhm in terms of  
16 – let's go back to the salary question. I was just  
17 confirmed PARA's, PARA's start at \$25,927. I'm glad  
18 to hear that social workers are starting –

19 UNIDENTIFIED: I don't know that that number is  
20 accurate.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÈS: I can't hear you. Oh  
22 yeah, oh for sure and they are doing all kind of work  
23 in schools. Uhm, it's important to understand that  
24 when we're talking about this and we're talking about  
25 safety, PARA pay equity is just as important as all  
the other, right? All the pieces of the puzzle. And

1  
2 so, I just wanted to point that out. Uhm, I lost my  
3 train of thought here but uhm, I'm glad to – well how  
4 many social workers do we have in the New York City  
5 schools right now?

6 GILLIAN SMITH: We currently have 1,951 as  
7 reported to the City Council Report in February of  
8 2023.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÈS: And is any portion of  
10 this funding going to evaporate? Did any portion of  
11 that funds, this 1951 guidance counselors will  
12 evaporate with the federal money?

13 MARK RAMPERSANT: Are you referring to federal  
14 stimulus?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÈS: Yes.

16 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yeah, it is unfortunate that we  
17 are definitely facing some serious fiscal times ahead  
18 of us. As it relates to uhm what programs in what  
19 areas we're cutting, that's still in conversation  
20 right now. As we know and we've been sort of  
21 planning for in our minds, we are facing this fiscal  
22 cliff and of next year, we are really going to have  
23 to buckle down and have real serious conversations  
24 around where the supports will come from and what  
25 programs we'll see the greatest impact as a result of

1  
2 this but I can tell you, as an entire city, we really  
3 have to sort of gear up for what's coming our way.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÈS: Yeah, for sure I mean I  
5 think when we look at 1,900 social workers, 4,000  
6 school safety officers with a commitment of  
7 continuing to add more and we talk about wanting to  
8 keep students safe and on track, there is something  
9 clearly wrong with that equation.

10 We seem to be able to find money to invest in  
11 vests when there have been no incidences, yet we  
12 cannot find money for resource – for excuse me, for  
13 social workers and for the intensive youth workers  
14 that young people have been telling us at nauseum  
15 over and over again, that they need, that they need  
16 to be safe to address the issues that they are  
17 confronting. There is a problem here with our  
18 analysis where we continue to invest in things that  
19 do not work and ignore the very young people. We are  
20 saying we are here to protect. I don't understand it  
21 and we absolutely must do better.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. I'm going to  
23 dive into my favorite program, Restorative Justice.  
24 As part of the 2024 Adopted Budget, the Council  
25 requested a report from the DOE on Restorative

1 Justice programming as part of the terms and  
2 conditions. Council Finance, I just got the report  
3 about a couple of hours ago and we are reviewing it.  
4 Is it the staffing shortage part of the reason the  
5 agency couldn't produce the report on time? If not,  
6 what is the cause? It was due September 30<sup>th</sup>. I  
7 just got it a couple of hours ago and it was due  
8 September 30, 2023. Today's October 25, 2023.

9  
10 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, we definitely apologize for  
11 the shortfall in that respect. We offer no excuse as  
12 to why the report was not submitted to you in this  
13 time. I could spend time blaming budget people and  
14 so forth but will not do that. I simply apologize to  
15 the Chair and ask for mercy. No, forgive us in that  
16 respect.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Timeout, yes.

18 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yeah.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Uhm, so the budget for  
20 Restorative Justice was \$17.96 million for 2022-2023  
21 School Year, right? How much of the funding was the  
22 federal stimulus and how much of that was city  
23 funding?

24 ROBIN DAVSON: So, federal stimulus funding for  
25 \$7.9 million - oh, I'm so sorry. Good afternoon

1 Council. It is a pleasure to be in community with  
2 you all. I just dove right in.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: No problem.

5 ROBIN DAVSON: Thank you so much for your  
6 continued advocacy for Restorative Practices. So, to  
7 answer your question, out of the \$13.7 million, \$5.7  
8 was tax levy and \$7.9 was stimulus.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Considering this program was  
10 expanded to fund largely through federal dollars,  
11 which are due to expire soon, how does the New York  
12 City public schools plan to continue to provide the  
13 current level of services, build on the momentum gain  
14 from the Restorative Justice Program?

15 ROBIN DAVSON: So, as Chief Rampersant stated, we  
16 are facing cuts and unfortunately uhm, Restorative  
17 Justice as you can see is in line, possibly in line  
18 for the cuts as conversations are happening. But we  
19 - how the funding is going to continue is through  
20 your continued advocacy.

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So, I literally have to  
22 dance for my own super, okay. Yeah because it works,  
23 right so why is it always the programs that work that  
24 are always on the chopping blocks? So, those are the  
25 programs that make kids want to come to school. We

1 talk about enrollment. We talk about we're not  
2 seeing students. These are the programs; those are  
3 the safety net. Coming into this Council, we  
4 provided for students that want to come to school.  
5 Those hard rich students you talk about, these are  
6 the programs that are helping these children. So, I  
7 don't understand why I can't even wrap my head around  
8 it.  
9

10 MARK RAMPERSANT: Just really as a point of  
11 clarity, there is no plan to cut Restorative.  
12 There's no plan or commitment from this  
13 Administration to cut Restorative or a plan yet to  
14 cut any of these respective programs. We agree with  
15 you wholeheartedly. These are the programs that work  
16 for our kids. These are the programs that make a  
17 difference. These are the programs that we stand  
18 before and say to you, we need more in order to do  
19 better for our young people. So, we agree with you  
20 110 percent. There are definitely going to be some  
21 hard conversations, not for this agency but all  
22 agencies as a whole and the fact of the matter – the  
23 fact of the matter, my team says I always say fact of  
24 the matter is that there are going to be some  
25 programs cut, some resources to the city cut. We are

1 not the decision makers in that respect. We  
2 definitely appreciate a seat the table while we talk  
3 about what are the agencies priorities and where we  
4 see the greatest internal support to continue at  
5 least if not all but some portion of these programs  
6 in schools. We agree with you 100 percent that these  
7 are the working programs and we need to continue to  
8 move them forward.  
9

10 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And I'm also seeing that out  
11 of all this funding, you have \$4 million that are  
12 unspent. What is the plan for the unspent funding?

13 ROBIN DAVSON: So, the unspent funding \$4  
14 million?

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yup, \$4 million was left  
16 unspent.

17 ROBIN DAVSON: For Restorative Practices?

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes ma'am.

19 ROBIN DAVSON: There was a SAM allocated to  
20 schools in February of last year in which schools  
21 received - I'm so sorry.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: That's okay.

23 ROBIN DAVSON: The SAM was issued in February  
24 where schools had four months to utilize the funding.  
25 The utilization rate was 45 percent as school utilize



1  
2 \$1.6 million out of the \$2.8 million stimulus funds  
3 allocated. So, there was one point, based on our  
4 records, there was \$1.5 million unspent.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yup, \$4 million. You can  
6 get back to me. That's a good question. You can get  
7 back to me on how you plan on spending the \$4  
8 million.

9 ROBIN DAVSON: Yeah, I apologize Council.

10 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: That's okay.

11 ROBIN DAVSON: But based on the SAM and based on  
12 our funding source, the remaining was \$1.5 million.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You sure?

14 ROBIN DAVSON: And we can definitely double check  
15 that.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Please.

17 ROBIN DAVSON: We will absolutely.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay. So, uhm, so what have  
19 been the impact of the Restorative Justice  
20 programming on the school community? And that's what  
21 I was talking about earlier how the impacts.

22 ROBIN DAVSON: So, I'm happy to share the impact  
23 with you and of course because of your continued  
24 advocacy around the work for Restorative Practices,  
25 2018 to 2019 compared to 2023 as mentioned, we want

1  
2 to compare two full school years. The analysis  
3 schools that implemented restorative practices with  
4 high fidelity being they have imbedded practices  
5 within their schools, saw a 3.9 percent decrease in  
6 level four and five infractions as opposed to  
7 citywide in 1.7. So, there was clear impact there.

8       Additionally, schools that have instituted  
9 restorative practices saw a greater decline in  
10 suspensions than citywide restorative practice  
11 schools, 17.8 percent decrease versus 13.4 percent  
12 decrease citywide.

13       So, we are extremely proud of that data. Also,  
14 we saw some quick wins with the rates of suspensions.  
15 The suspension rates remain the same citywide while  
16 schools who have embedded restorative practices saw a  
17 slight decrease, 0.7 percent decrease. So, it's a  
18 small decrease but we want to still celebrate those  
19 wins. And Chair Joseph, you know as an educator in  
20 addition to those quantitative data, it's important  
21 to lift the qualitative data. So, after we've  
22 implemented programs in schools and after our  
23 providers provide restorative justice professional  
24 development, we survey teachers, we survey staff  
25 members and we even survey students and the results

1 were when they have completed restorative practices  
2 training, that the community was strengthened, bonds  
3 were strengthened. It increased community engagement  
4 where more families, more students in relations just  
5 began to build collectively across school  
6 communities. Additionally, equitable practices on  
7 how student voices are heard was living in school  
8 communities that have deeply embedded restorative  
9 practices. And culture and climate in those school  
10 communities have also grown through restorative  
11 practice training and services be implemented in  
12 those schools.  
13

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So, your terms and condition  
15 report, the report does not indicate what level of  
16 participation by students in each program in school  
17 or how many students were in the program as requested  
18 in the terms and condition. Do you have that data?

19 ROBIN DAVSON: So, we currently serve over 900  
20 schools. This school year to date and we service  
21 from elementary school to grade 12 specifically  
22 focusing on middle schools and high schools.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And you're going to get that  
24 data to me right?

25

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3 ROBIN DAVSON: The number of students, yes. The  
4 students are in the schools that we service in over  
5 900 schools but I'm happy to get the breakdown of  
6 students.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I need a breakdown. Thank  
8 you.

9 ROBIN DAVSON: Of all students, correct. Thank  
10 you.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And this is boroughwide  
12 right? Citywide?

13 ROBIN DAVSON: Correct, all five boroughs  
14 including Staten Island.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, I got you.

16 ROBIN DAVSON: Including Staten Island. We are  
17 across all five boroughs.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: That borough feel unloved.  
19 I got to always make sure I'm uplifting them.

20 ROBIN DAVSON: We're bringing the love to Staten  
21 Island for sure.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Uhm, in the report it  
23 indicates that 559 schools has direct services and  
24 300 have indirect services in the Fiscal of 2023.  
25 The Fiscal 2024 model showed DOE planned to provide  
direct services in 364 schools and indirect services

1  
2 in 604. Why fewer schools are getting direct  
3 restorative justice services?

4 ROBIN DAVSON: So, this year, we are providing  
5 direct services correct to 364 and direct to 604  
6 schools. We - so last year, we have shifted the  
7 model. Last year, we had one person servicing over  
8 40 to 50 schools. So, this year to be more  
9 intentional about the work that we're doing in our  
10 school communities. We have one restorative justice  
11 coordinator who will be servicing 25 schools. In  
12 addition to that, this year, we have uhm allocated  
13 funds to hire 180 school based restorative justice  
14 coordinators in school. So, those are staff members  
15 that currently work there in addition to partnering  
16 up with staff members within schools. We are also  
17 expanding our youth services.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Is there a plan to phase out  
19 Restorative Justice in favor of Project Pivot? We've  
20 heard reports from advocates that coordinated  
21 positions will be absorbed into Project Pivot. Could  
22 somebody clear that up for me on the record?

23 MARK RAMPERSANT: On the record, there is no plan  
24 to phase out restorative justice in uhm to phase in  
25 Project Pivot. The two programs do something

1  
2 entirely different for schools. I will let the team  
3 explain the differences in the program. We are not a  
4 one or I mean, one or the other. We are inclusive of  
5 different programs providing supports to our schools.  
6 All of our schools have different needs but we agree  
7 that our schools have needs, right? And there is no  
8 real cookie cutter solution to meet our various  
9 students' needs from around the city. So, there is  
10 no commitment to or a plan to phase out restorative  
11 in place of Project Pivot.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Also, on one of the things I  
13 wanted to touch base. We know there's a citywide  
14 hiring freeze but does it only apply to city funded  
15 positions that are exact and yet advocates have heard  
16 that their freeze on hiring funding for restorative  
17 justice even though New York City Public Schools had  
18 federally funded and hiring New Yorks - and funded  
19 these programs?

20 ROBIN DAVSON: I'm sorry Council, can you repeat  
21 the question? I apologize.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: It's okay. We understand  
23 there's a citywide hiring freeze right? We know  
24 there's a hiring freeze correct.

25 ROBIN DAVSON: Yes, we know that.

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3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: But does it apply only to  
4 city funded positions and are you guys exempt from –  
5 involved in the public safety? Are you exempt? If  
6 not, that advocates have heard that there is a freeze  
7 on the hiring funding for restorative justice, even  
8 though New York City Public Schools had federal  
9 funding allocated to make available for restorative  
10 justice this year.

11 Why is there a freeze on funding and hiring when  
12 New York City Public Schools has federal funding to  
13 use for restorative justice?

14 ROBIN DAVSON: Yes, federal stimulus funding is  
15 expiring and we want to be responsible knowing that.  
16 Those dollars will not be available next year to  
17 cover headcount. That's why having a commitment to  
18 sustainable funding other than stimulus funding is  
19 extremely important to us and important to especially  
20 my restorative practice team, so that these critical  
21 hires can remain. So, we look to get continued  
22 partnership, as you've always been partners with us  
23 in advocating for restorative justice practices.

24 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Because my New York City  
25 kids, that's what they ask for. They don't want as  
much as we love our schools, school safety agents but

1  
2 they want alternatives to school safety agents or  
3 some of them don't want school safety agents in their  
4 buildings at all and that's the call I've always  
5 gotten. Of course I've always asked, show me the  
6 model. So me and model, we can have a plan.  
7 Milwaukee has a model from what I understood. LA has  
8 reduced it. So, those are the things that my  
9 students, when I listen to young advocates, those are  
10 the things they say and I advocate for them.

11 KEVIN TAYLOR: No, I got that. One of the things  
12 that I was privileged to have seen out right was the  
13 Police Commissioner and the Chancellor, the previous  
14 Police Commissioner and the Chancellor where they had  
15 formed with young people and young people, they was  
16 asked, should we take NYPD School Safety out of the  
17 schools and the answer was no. They wanted to make  
18 sure that they are safe, so that's where we differ  
19 at.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yeah because that's  
21 something we hear a lot with young people. They want  
22 to see a guidance counselor. They want to see a  
23 social worker before they walk into the building and  
24 one of the things I always wanted to ask, in terms of  
25



1  
2 okay, school safety is in the building now. They're  
3 still there.

4 KEVIN TAYLOR: 25 years. This is going to be our  
5 25-year anniversary.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: 25 years in schools. Is  
7 there any way we can, I walked into a school building  
8 and everybody was dressed in blue anyway. We can  
9 soften the look sometime?

10 KEVIN TAYLOR: That's something we can look into  
11 but traditionally, having a person of authority looks  
12 and it's actually a deterrent as well for the bad  
13 people.

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: But it also reduces anxiety.  
15 It also reduces anxiety and I visited a school with a  
16 Chancellor and that's what the young people were  
17 saying. When we go through the metal detectors, it's  
18 one thing and when we see the SSA in those hardcore  
19 uniform as if I'm going uh- as if I'm going to walk  
20 into a police precinct. It sends a whole other level  
21 of psyche on their minds.

22 KEVIN TAYLOR: I think our young people know  
23 those men and women in those uniforms. As I said our  
24 73 percent of them are women that look like us and  
25 had that relationship with them. Bottomline, I

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3 guarantee they really overall want to see those  
4 people in that school. When I was growing up, we had  
5 good safety agents in our school, Morris High School  
6 and just seeing them in that school made a difference  
7 and it does all the time. The safety, the safety of  
8 our kids is at the center.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Always, always at the  
10 center.

11 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: If Restorative Justice is  
13 facing a fiscal cliff, how is DOE planning on hiring  
14 more coordinators this year and how will the work  
15 continue for the 200 coordinators that are already  
16 hired?

17 ROBIN DAVSON: So, we're committed to continuing  
18 to do the work with restorative practices, but as  
19 Chief Rampersant said, there have been cuts and  
20 decisions are currently being made about those  
21 priorities.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You wanted to add on? No,  
23 okay. Chair Hanks, go ahead.

24 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you Chair Joseph. I  
25 just want to echo the sentiments of some of my  
colleagues who you know again, this is not easy work.

1  
2 You know I'm a mom and I had great relationships with  
3 my school safety agents and you know I understand the  
4 value that you know you bring to a school and you're  
5 often being a parent giving them deodorant or things  
6 that they need. You know talking to them. You know  
7 these kids know how to turn up you know and so, it's  
8 not lost on me. The significance of the school  
9 safety agents. My question is - my question is  
10 really going to be about the vacancies but just for  
11 clarity, you know minimum wage is \$335, you know.  
12 That is - it's significant that if you're getting  
13 paid a couple of dollars over minimum wage that you  
14 know that is often not sustainable. So, many of  
15 these folks do this work because they love it. And  
16 so, we just want to acknowledge that.

17 KEVIN TAYLOR: You have to have the passion for  
18 it, you know. Everyone can't do this.

19 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: That is very true. As a  
20 mother, I would attest to that. I would.

21 KEVIN TAYLOR: I would say some people don't even  
22 want to be with their children for one, two hours a  
23 day.

24 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Yeah, that's not me.  
25

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3 KEVIN TAYLOR: And these people are with our  
4 agents are dedicated and spending more than eight  
5 hours with the students.

6 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Yeah and so, you know you  
7 have to say that for the record. You have to  
8 acknowledge that and you have to acknowledge our  
9 teachers and our educational institutions because you  
10 know it's not easy now days. We had a 13-year-old  
11 die at the hands of a 14-year-old and this is the  
12 world we're living in right now, which is why it's  
13 very important for me to kind of drill down on the  
14 911 calls where they're coming from because it's  
15 going to inform what we do as far as our CMS. And  
16 those things are incredibly important that we have  
17 that data and you know this is why we have these  
18 hearing so we can get a better understanding of  
19 what's needed and uhm -

20 So, my question is, can you provide an update on  
21 the current number of school safety agent vacancies  
22 with an NYPD School Safety Division?

23 KEVIN TAYLOR: 301. Three Hundred and one.

24 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Wow. What factors have  
25 contributed to the recent increase in school safety  
agent vacancies in New York City Public Schools?

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3 KEVIN TAYLOR: I think anyone that knows in  
4 regards to the money, that plays a major role for our  
5 people staying with us or moving on. I think there's  
6 a real need to really answer that question and what  
7 we can do to really bring money into this so they can  
8 actually have a living.

9 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Is there a number that you  
10 have in mind that is going to be presented to the  
11 Council at Budget hearings or?

12 KEVIN TAYLOR: I know my counsel is probably  
13 saying, don't answer that question.

14 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: I saw her kick you. I saw  
15 it.

16 KEVIN TAYLOR: Did you see the little nod that  
17 she gave me? Bottomline is you can't put a dollar  
18 price on that.

19 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: You actually can but it's  
20 okay, we won't today.

21 KEVIN TAYLOR: I'll take it.

22 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Okay. So, for NYPD, what is  
23 the allocation of School Safety Agents throughout the  
24 city? That's the first one and what is that number  
25 borough by borough, school by school? We're really  
kind of trying to get to is the deployment figures

1  
2 and how NYPD decides where to deploy School Safety  
3 Agents. Is there a process?

4 KEVIN TAYLOR: I'm going to have my Director;  
5 Deputy Director answer that question. She's been  
6 waiting for me to answer one of these questions.  
7 She's ready. Got it. This is Director Tracey Ryant.

8 TRACEY RYANT: Good afternoon. I can speak on  
9 the deployment borough by borough. So, uhm, we have  
10 3930 currently. We have 286 in Manhattan South, 290  
11 agents in Manhattan North, 338 in the Bronx West, 351  
12 in the Bronx East, 608 in Brooklyn South, 561 in  
13 Brooklyn North, 493 in Queens South, 377 in Queens  
14 North, 186 in Staten Island and then we have 220  
15 agents -

16 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: [INAUDIBLE 02:51:26].

17 TRACEY RYANT: Sorry.

18 KEVIN TAYLOR: I saw that face with Staten  
19 Island. Don't worry.

20 TRACEY TAYLOR: 220 agents which are divided up  
21 between the YRT. The 33 new recruits that we have.  
22 The recruit trainers, our Special Services Unit and  
23 our Operations Staff and 220 that's left. They are  
24 either out on some type of long-term leave, whether  
25 it's paid, unpaid, or terminal leave.

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3 KEVIN TAYLOR: Thank you Tracey.

4 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much for that.

5 So, uhm how are those numbers – how do we come up  
6 with those numbers? So, of course I'm going to ask  
7 us to – Staten Island gets 186 and I mean is that  
8 population? Is it –

9 KEVIN TAYLOR: It's going to go – I mean there's  
10 definitely different formulas that we use but  
11 depending on the school, how many people are in the  
12 school, how many young people are in to that school.  
13 That's going to weigh a factor. Where our agents  
14 live. If I could take an agent, where we say a bulk  
15 of agents that live in the Bronx that apply, sending  
16 them to Staten Island. They'll probably work there  
17 for a week and then be gone because of the most – the  
18 majority of them are spending – the majority of our  
19 agents spend their money coming to work. They use  
20 mass transportation and that takes away from that  
21 \$36,000, \$35,000 we were just talking about. So,  
22 keeping them within that geographical area is crucial  
23 to us too.

24 So, what we have done is to actually do something  
25 in regards to something that's never been done before  
is to really recruit within. So, let's say, instead

1 of waiting for their standard NYPD recruit, which are  
2 our partners to do recruitment for us, who better  
3 else can sell this career path is our own agents.  
4 So, we put agents in Staten Island that live and come  
5 from Staten Island to recruit within, so we can get  
6 more people from Staten Island and other parts of the  
7 boroughs.  
8

9 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. So, I have an  
10 additional question and that will be my final  
11 question. Thank you Chair for allowing me to do so.  
12 So, the salary is that based on full-time when school  
13 hours are – do they work 9 to 5.

14 KEVIN TAYLOR: It's a full-time job. So, it's  
15 not like school crossing guards. This is full time.  
16 So, it's \$36,000 as a full-time job.

17 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Alright, thank you all so  
18 much for entertaining our questions, answering them  
19 to your best ability. I really appreciate it. Thank  
20 you so much. Chair this is a great hearing.

21 KEVIN TAYLOR: Thank you. Thank you very much.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Chair Hanks. Uhm,  
23 A412 amendments. We understand that the DOE recently  
24 proposed significant amendments to the Chancellor's  
25 Regulation A412 on security in schools that clarify



1 instances where principals should not involve SSAs  
2 and the NYPD and provide guidance on policing and  
3 questioning, and arrests for students. We have heard  
4 that you intend to do feedback session regarding  
5 these amendments. What is the plan to engage  
6 community about the significant change and get their  
7 feedbacks.

9 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, we definitely publicize.  
10 We posted the recommended changes and asked for  
11 feedback in that respect, as we do with all of  
12 Chancellor's regulations. I want to say this is like  
13 a 45-day posting giving the public an opportunity to  
14 comment on those respective changes. One of the  
15 things that we did do is we pulled down the vote and  
16 we extended the period before we go back to vote but  
17 uhm, next month November, so that we engage not only  
18 the community but other stakeholders to give their  
19 input as it relates to the respective changes.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: What is the outreach plan?

21 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, we're going to work with  
22 our parent facing division to reach out to parent  
23 partners, work with our CECs and work with our PEP to  
24 get additional folks to participate in those  
25 respective sessions.

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3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Will you send translator  
4 letters home with students about feedback sessions?

5 MARK RAMPERSANT: What we do is uhm about the  
6 feedback sessions?

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Translated letters into the  
8 many languages that the New York City students speak?

9 MARK RAMPERSANT: On the feedback sessions?

10 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes, oh language access,  
11 will that be available? The Council pays for  
12 language access in New York City public schools, so  
13 we expect all the pieces of information going home to  
14 be translated in all the languages that the students  
15 speak in New York City.

16 MARK RAMPERSANT: As we do with all of our  
17 correspondence to our families, we will ensure that  
18 they're receiving correspondence in the languages in  
19 which they speak.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Can you send the  
21 Council the description of these feedback session  
22 within the next two weeks for us to distribute to our  
23 constituents? Will that be an ongoing conversation  
24 with the Council Members as well to make sure we're  
25 also doing our part to support that conversation?

MARK RAMPERSANT: We can absolutely do that.

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3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And what is the plan to  
4 train staff on these new protocol requirements to  
5 make sure they are followed?

6 MARK RAMPERSANT: 100 percent. We'll definitely  
7 identify the appropriate staff members in schools,  
8 then turn key that training to the overall school  
9 community to ensure that all of the respective terms  
10 and conditions in these regulations are in fact  
11 followed in the year too.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How will staff be held  
13 accountable if they are over relying on NYPD and SSAs  
14 to address school based non-criminal incidents.

15 MARK RAMPERSANT: Such as the case in all of our  
16 schools, we have an instructional leader who is the  
17 principal who will hold those staff members  
18 accountable if in fact we find that that is the case.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. NYPD testified  
20 that School Safety division will be absorbing 50  
21 police officers deploy at the Youth Response Team  
22 coupled with SSA. How the New York City Public  
23 School a part of that decision and how are these  
24 teams interacting with young people.

25 KEVIN TAYLOR: Of course with our partners in  
public schools talk and have these conversations on

1  
2 how we're going to deploy. Uhm, this conversation  
3 has been going on from the highest level of our  
4 departments. Both our agencies to make sure that we  
5 provide the best safety for our young people.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: What is the interaction with  
7 a young person? Do they know that persons role?

8 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes, so since it's fairly new that  
9 we role this out since almost last school year, uhm,  
10 the officers - the Chief of Department has been great  
11 on making sure that we're getting the police officers  
12 within school safety as well as DOE. Making sure  
13 that uhm, we are introduced to all the parent - oh  
14 not parent excuse me, the principals and the  
15 stakeholders at local schools and things of that  
16 nature and making the schools available.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And parent coordinators too  
18 right?

19 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes, of course because we wanted  
20 to be by them. This is all about having, shaping  
21 what the school and what the kids want. It's really  
22 about what the students and the young people want and  
23 we're listening to them.

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3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Did you bring young people  
4 to the table when you were making that decision?  
5 Were they part of the conversation?

6 KEVIN TAYLOR: Of course and one of the things  
7 that came out of that was a camp. I don't want to  
8 say camp, I want to say a summer enrichment program  
9 through the summer and it was with 300 and some kids  
10 from Brooklyn, Manhattan and the Bronx. We'd like to  
11 expand that this year coming up next summer to make  
12 sure that our young people are why our Officers and  
13 Agents are intermingling with young people because  
14 this is not all about making arrests here. This is  
15 about actually engaging with young people.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: The NYPD has doubled the  
17 number of YCO officers. How was the New York City  
18 Public School a part of that decision? How did you  
19 guys come about?

20 KEVIN TAYLOR: From day one, from day one, our  
21 Mayor from the Chancellor as well as the Police  
22 Commissioner have been involved in these  
23 conversations and making sure that we increase and we  
24 - obviously it's nothing better than the New York  
25 City Police Department wants to make sure that our  
young people are safe.

1  
2 So, having more YCOs dedicated to youth, the  
3 young people, it was nothing, never uh we've all be  
4 lockstep with that from day one.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I may have some young people  
6 that disagree with that. We've heard from some  
7 teachers that they have experienced a noticeable  
8 increase in police presence with very little guidance  
9 from New York City Public Schools. Uhm, what  
10 information have teachers and other staff members  
11 receive explaining the role of YCOs? And how is New  
12 York City Public Schools deciding where they are  
13 deployed? You look puzzled.

14 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, New York City Public  
15 Schools definitely do not have an input in where YCOs  
16 are deployed. They are employees of the New York  
17 City Police Department. As it relates to teachers,  
18 hearing more presence of police personnel in school,  
19 I would definitely like to know more about where  
20 those schools are and think around whether or not  
21 there were specific incidents that occurred in that  
22 school that required the attention of more police  
23 officers in that respective school. But as it  
24 relates to the deployment of NYPD staff, we don't  
25 play a role in that.

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3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: NYPD, how do you decide  
4 where you need to deploy YCOs?

5 KEVIN TAYLOR: Our YCOs are done at a local base  
6 regards to the local precinct commander. A local  
7 precinct commander is going to make the decision  
8 along with his personnel and figure out what the  
9 trends are within that area. What young people are  
10 asking for. Community affairs is involved in that to  
11 make sure that we're addressing the young people's  
12 needs within that local based areas, that means the  
13 precinct -

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And what does New York City  
15 Public Schools - do you monitor the impact and  
16 increase of police presence? Do you monitor that?

17 KEVIN TAYLOR: Say again I'm sorry.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Do you monitor the increase  
19 in police presence around the schools?

20 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes, I want to make sure that  
21 since I'm in charge of the School Safety Division  
22 that we don't over police. There's such a thing as  
23 to make sure that we don't over police. With that  
24 being said, uhm we do want our people to feel safe,  
25 our young people. So, reporting a police presence  
and a major police presence, there are certain areas

1  
2 I think one of your colleagues actually talked about  
3 how there's sometimes school rivalry between the two.  
4 While we want to make sure we're preventive, not  
5 reactive. So, bottom line is we're going to be  
6 proactive to make sure we do have our police officers  
7 in places, as well as our agents in those locations  
8 to make sure we can address any need that may arise.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: What data was used to  
10 determine doubling the numbers of the YCOs?

11 KEVIN TAYLOR: That came from the Chief of  
12 Departments Office. Uhm, in regards to talking to  
13 each one of the borough commanders as well as the  
14 local precinct commanders, they saw a need with the  
15 Chief of Patrol to increase that.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Are they trained in de-  
17 escalation and restorative justice as well?

18 KEVIN TAYLOR: I can't to Restorative Justice but  
19 I can say that they are getting something in regards  
20 to -

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Are they involved in Project  
22 Pivot? YCOs?

23 AARON BARNETTE: Not at the moment.

24 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Will they be?

25 AARON BARNETTE: Yes, that is the intention.



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3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And you will let the  
4 Education Chair know that when it happens, correct?

5 AARON BARNETTE: Yes, yes we will.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Because I don't want to have  
7 to have a hearing.

8 KEVIN TAYLOR: The Police Department is willing  
9 to work with anyone and everyone.

10 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I'm sure you are just to  
11 protect the kids, okay.

12 KEVIN TAYLOR: Love the kids.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Alright. [03:02:28-  
14 3:02:56]. We wanted to talk quickly and I should be  
15 wrapping up. How has the recent change in radio  
16 frequency improve response time to schools when  
17 incidents happen?

18 KEVIN TAYLOR: I would definitely say it has  
19 increased to make sure that our people are fully  
20 alert and I say that because time is sensitive.  
21 Crucial information has to be put out, so having that  
22 direct information to the New York City Police  
23 Department to respond is priceless. So, it's a win-  
24 win for everyone. For the people and our  
25 counterparts over in the New York City Public Schools

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3 as well as our agents and the young people that are  
4 in such schools.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: But then you reversed it and  
6 sent it back to DOE frequency. What was the logic  
7 behind that?

8 KEVIN TAYLOR: That was the last Police  
9 Commissioner that made a decision in the sense of  
10 uhm, when we say reversed, we just limited how many  
11 people were actually on that frequency.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: That has access to it?

13 KEVIN TAYLOR: Yes, so we're evaluating that as  
14 we go.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, what is the protocol  
16 for School Safety Agents to request immediate  
17 assistance from Patrol Officers during emergencies.  
18 How does that work?

19 KEVIN TAYLOR: They will call for assistance.  
20 There's a certain radio code that we would use and  
21 that would actually prompt local police precinct  
22 personnel as well as anyone around that area or our  
23 Youth Response Team or our School Safety Division  
24 personnel.

25 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I have a question, when a  
student is uhm restrained or something happens to the

1 student, what is the protocol in allowing that  
2 student to reenter back into the classroom? How is  
3 that set up?  
4

5 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, elaborate a little bit.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: For example if students with  
7 a suspension or they left the school for something  
8 that they did, how do you have them reenter back into  
9 the school? What's the protocol in place for that?

10 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, the protocol, I'll let my  
11 colleague talk about the suspension protocol but as  
12 it relates to a young person who they may have been  
13 involved in an incident, in police involved, it may  
14 be school related or not school related, that young  
15 person has an opportunity to talk to a social worker  
16 or guidance counselor about that experience. Talk  
17 about the potential trauma that it may have caused  
18 and work with our existing systems to sort of provide  
19 care to make this young person feel better supported.  
20 Wrap around services that may be needed. External  
21 supports that may be needed. That is the work that  
22 our schools are required to do to ensure that young  
23 people have a good school experience.  
24  
25

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3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And if that child decides  
4 not to come back to the school, what are the  
5 protocols set in place for that child?

6 MARK RAMPERSANT: Definite outreach, right. So,  
7 definite outreach by the school, right? And that's  
8 continued outreach by the school, right before we  
9 involved external agency partners, including and that  
10 outreach includes a home visit to find out what is  
11 the reason why a young person is not re-engaging back  
12 into the school community. That's just not sort of  
13 left out there for young people to just be absent in  
14 that space. We want to ensure that every action is  
15 taken to reengage this young person back into the  
16 school community. Even if that means back to the  
17 school community or another school community because  
18 they may not feel comfortable in that space.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Especially after incidents.  
20 How many times have you had to do a home visit?

21 MARK RAMPERSANT: I mean that's individual school  
22 based. I mean we could definitely reach out to  
23 schools. Our superintendents now have attendance  
24 staff attending some folks on staff who do outreach  
25 for various reasons. Whether it means that a student  
may have moved out of the country but didn't make

1 notification to the schools and we are marking this  
2 young person not present, that's a part of the  
3 responsibility of that staff. But we can definitely  
4 get you some numbers that speak to the amount of  
5 times the home visits were conducted.  
6

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: The last time the Chancellor  
8 was here and I did suggest to him that I think  
9 attendance, teachers and social workers should work  
10 hand and hand. I may not be coming to school not  
11 because I don't want to, maybe there's a social issue  
12 as to -

13 And I had recommended - I had hoped that you guys  
14 would implement that because they go hand and hand.  
15 I'm not coming to school, it could be housing  
16 insecurity, food insecurity. There could be so many  
17 reasons as to why I'm not coming in, so I think they  
18 should go hand and hand and working in bringing - Do  
19 you have any data to share on statistics of the  
20 frequency of police interactions with students in  
21 emotional crisis in public schools over the past few  
22 years?

23 KEVIN TAYLOR: I'll have our Director answer  
24 that, Tracey Ryant.  
25

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3 TRACEY RYANT: So, uhm, our child in crisis  
4 interventions this school year through October 15<sup>th</sup>  
5 decreased by 27.5 percent when comparing the same  
6 time period in the 2021-2022 school year. It was 248  
7 versus 342. Uhm, child in crisis interventions  
8 decrease 19.9 percent from school year 2022-2023  
9 versus the 2018-2019 school year. We had 2,840 in  
10 2022-2023 versus the 3,547 in 2018-2019.

11 KEVIN TAYLOR: Thank you Tracey.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Well, thank you  
13 and I'll be sending out the questions and make sure I  
14 get the answers to the questions and there will be  
15 more questions that I want to ask when I reach out.

16 MARK RAMPERSANT: Okay, thank you very much.

17 KEVIN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. Appreciate  
18 you.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much Chair and  
21 thank you to New York City Public Schools and NYPD  
22 for testifying today and answering Council Member  
23 questions. We will now turn to public testimony. We  
24 will be limiting public testimony today to three  
25 minutes each. For in-person panelists, please come  
up to the table once your name has been called.

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3 For virtual panelists, once your name is called,  
4 a member of our staff will unmute you and the  
5 Sergeant at Arms will set the time and give you the  
6 go ahead to begin. Please wait for the Sergeant to  
7 announce that you may begin before delivering your  
8 testimony. Our first in-person panelists Eiman Gad,  
9 Elizabeth Wassif, Hillary Ashraf, Chauncy Young,  
10 Esperanza Vasquez. Please make your way to the front  
11 desk. [03:09:31]-[03:12:25].

12 Eiman Gale, you may begin your testimony.

13 EIMAN GAD: Gotcha. Good afternoon Chair Joseph  
14 and the members and staff of the Committee on  
15 Education and Public Safety. My name is Eiman Gad  
16 and I am the Policy Coordinator at Girls for Gender  
17 Equity.

18 GGE is a Brooklyn based organization that works  
19 intergenerationally through a Black feminist lens to  
20 center the leadership of Black girls and gender  
21 expensive young people of color and reshaping culture  
22 and policy through advocacy, youth centered  
23 programming and narrative shift to achieve gender and  
24 racial justice. We are offering testimony today in  
25 support of Restorative Justice programs and  
redirecting funding from school policing and policing

1  
2 infrastructure into supportive staff in healing  
3 centered programs for students.

4       The Mayor is planning to cut \$22 billion from our  
5 schools due to a citywide financial crisis. Instead  
6 of investing in what is the most important to improve  
7 students education and experiences in schools, he's  
8 increasingly granting the NYPD access into young  
9 people's lives by approving a military style  
10 recruitment initiative targeting students at schools.  
11 Mental health and career counseling services are  
12 placed in the hands of school cops and unannounced  
13 scanning of students across the city is being ramped  
14 up.

15       We are urging the City Council to use its power  
16 to put a stop to NYPD initiatives that seek to police  
17 and surveil young people, and instead shift money to  
18 school communities and the restorative staff  
19 resources and programs that support students to learn  
20 and thrive. This makes school safer for everyone,  
21 especially for Black girls and transgender and gender  
22 expansive young people who are continuously and  
23 uniquely criminalized and pushed out of schools for  
24 their gender and self-expression.



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3 This governing body can no longer succumb to  
4 pressure from the NYPD and school police union to  
5 direct school funds into hiring school cops.  
6 Granting the NYPD greater access to young people's  
7 lives and activities, both at schools and in their  
8 neighborhoods does nothing to improve the quality of  
9 students education, nor does it set them up for a  
10 successful future. The NYPD has been given  
11 permission and funding to open so-called wellness  
12 centers in schools and communities, putting school  
13 cops in charge of career counseling, mental health  
14 and enrichment activities for young people. This is  
15 happening as the mayor gears to cut over \$2 billion  
16 in resources and staffing from schools. Resources  
17 that belong to train staff who are equipped to  
18 support students holistically without further  
19 criminalization.

20 Students should be able to access the restorative  
21 and healing support that they need and schools should  
22 have robust options for how they do their healing  
23 centered work. We believe in staffing schools with  
24 full-time, school-based restorative justice  
25 coordinators who are able to be part of the school  
community for the long term. We make this demand

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1 based on our collective decades and of experience as  
2 advocates and youth workers. School buildings should  
3 be well resourced, especially with empathetic adults  
4 who are committed to the safety and wellbeing of  
5 young people. Restorative justice practices for one,  
6 facilitate youth adult collaboration in cultivating  
7 safe, healing centered schools. Because City Council  
8 leadership listen to the outcries of students,  
9 parents and school staff, restorative justice funding  
10 was protected this past year but it's actual fate  
11 today is uncertain.

12  
13 Council must make sure that the city is directing  
14 public funds directly towards school budgets and  
15 sustainable long-term practices for restorative  
16 justice and peace keeping. Council must be there  
17 every step of the way to hold the Chancellor  
18 accountable to giving the schools the funds that they  
19 were promised. Thank you for the opportunity to  
20 speak.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
22 Elizabeth Wassif.

23 ELIZABETH WASSIF: Hello Council. My name is  
24 Elizabeth. I'm a student from South Brooklyn and an  
25 advocate of the YaYa Network. I value my education

1 and the opportunity to explore, grow and learn in a  
2 safe environment but for me this meant transferring  
3 from a heavily policed school with metal detectors to  
4 a new high school. The lack of resources and assets  
5 available in my zip code unfortunately infringed my  
6 ability to attend a school that would accommodate my  
7 needs. A commute up to an hour and 45 minutes to  
8 school in an effort to avoid any interactions with  
9 school safety agents. Schools is not the grounds for  
10 police yet it was mentioned earlier that there are  
11 491 in South Brooklyn. Primarily trained in law  
12 enforcement, they foster anxiety and security and  
13 discouragement among the students. Their presence  
14 contributes to the disproportionate criminalization  
15 of Black and Brown students, further perpetuating the  
16 disparities in our education system. Our schools  
17 should be communities that encourage learning with  
18 unwavering support from teachers, counselors and  
19 peers.  
20

21 On Monday, I witnessed direct police intervention  
22 at school. It was scary. I learned that  
23 transferring to a new school was not going to limit  
24 my interactions with the police because the DOE is  
25 overly reliant on the overly criminalizing NYPD.

1  
2 You'll be safe in here, I heard my teacher repeat to  
3 my classmates, waving them into her room amidst the  
4 chaos, suggesting the classroom was safer than the  
5 hallway. There was a student conflict and I was in  
6 lockdown for more than 30 minutes. I had to be  
7 escorted to the bathroom. It is alarming that an  
8 area in my school was considered unsafe. It is  
9 alarming that I needed an adult to walk me to the  
10 bathroom like I was a toddler in a public park.

11 When I walked across the hallway to use the  
12 bathroom, I saw about eight cops lined up beside  
13 school faculty and I was scared. The same adults  
14 trained to engage with criminals were addressing a  
15 teenage conflict. How are they going to do that?

16 Ultimately, I had early dismissal and my school  
17 didn't honor my values of learning, growing and  
18 exploration. Police pose a violation to my  
19 education. In fact, I missed out on an opportunity  
20 to work at school to because of the early dismissal.

21 Intro. Number 003 is a meaningful step toward  
22 reducing police impact in school by eliminating use  
23 of the strength on students in emotional crisis.  
24 However, to foster an environment with safe, healing  
25 and learning, we need police free schools.

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3 I strongly advocate for the implementation of  
4 restorative justice, peer mediation, and healing  
5 practices, as the initial response to conflicts  
6 within all of our schools. We need to prioritize  
7 approaches that nurture our students and foster a  
8 safe environment conducive to learning by  
9 redirecting our funding from the NYPD to restorative  
10 justice practices and mental health counseling.  
11 Thank you for your time.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your  
13 testimony. Hillary Ashraf.

14 HILLARY ASHRAF: Good evening. My name is  
15 Hillary Ashraf. I am a student at Midwood High  
16 School, and a member of DRUM, Desis Rising Up and  
17 Moving. I am also a member of the Dignity In Schools  
18 Campaign, a coalition of over 20 New York City based  
19 organizations consisting of students, parents,  
20 educators and advocates who work to create a system  
21 of school discipline and safety that is based on  
22 mutual respect and problem-solving to end the school  
23 to prison pipeline.

24 DRUM is made up of working class South Asian and  
25 Indo Caribbean immigrants. Quality education is at  
the center of our peoples demands. We believe that

1 school can only provide quality education when  
2 students feel safe enough to explore and express  
3 their creativity with support. Restorative justice  
4 programs are tried and true practices that provide  
5 these supportive spaces for students to overcome the  
6 obstacles that they face in school or at home. We  
7 want the city to fund RJ programs and provide  
8 meaningful cultural shifts needed to build community  
9 and address harm as it occurs. We want schools to  
10 receive the funding directly to be able to use as  
11 they see fit to train and hire supportive staff, and  
12 for this spending to come directly from the  
13 divestment of policing in our schools.

14 We also want to share our conditional support for  
15 Intro Number 003. We support limiting the use of  
16 restraint against students in emotional crisis while  
17 demanding that no additional funds are allocated for  
18 the training of NYPD. DSC-NY members have been clear  
19 that police should not be interacting with young  
20 people, especially young people in crisis.  
21 Additionally, this bill mandates clinical and support  
22 staff to aid young people in crisis without  
23 significant funding to support this mandate, and that  
24 financial accountability needs to be addressed.  
25

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3 Funds should be invested in DOE positions that  
4 support our young people without criminalizing them.  
5 As a young person, I really wish City Council would  
6 truly listen to our voices. We are the ones that  
7 know what we really need. Thank you.

8 I also have an important question. Why is the  
9 Mayor building robot cops when NYPD employees and  
10 schools aren't being paid enough.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your  
12 testimony. Chancy Young.

13 CHANCY YOUNG: I thought it was going to be my  
14 parent leader Esperanza going first but I'm happy to  
15 go first.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You can switch the order if  
17 you'd like.

18 CHANCY YOUNG: Yeah, let's switch. Esperanza.

19 TRANSLATOR: And I will be translating for her  
20 because we didn't manage to get one.

21 ESPERANZA VASQUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
22 [03:21:36]- [03:22:06].

23 TRANSLATOR: I'm going to do the translation at  
24 the end. ESPERANZA VASQUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
25 [03:22:12]- [03:25:00].

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TRANSLATOR: I will now translate since there was no interpreter. Uhm, excuse me one second. My name is Esperanza Vasquez and I am a mother of two children and I have been a parent leader with the New Settlement Parent Action Committee, known as PAC since 2001. Although I was born in Mexico, both of my children were born in the Bronx and went to school in District 9. My oldest son is currently in college and my youngest recently graduated from High School on the New Settlement Community Campus. New Settlement Parent Action Committee is a parent-led organization that has been working with parents and our schools in the Bronx since 1996.

Our Guiding Principle for PAC is that Every Child Deserves a Quality Education. PAC is here representing the Healing-Centered Schools Campaign, the Dignity in Schools Coalition, and New Yorkers for Racially Justice Public Schools among others. As an organization of immigrant, and Black and Latinx families, we ask that New York State do more for our schools and our families and invest in healing and supporting our students and not unjustly punishing and suspending students in crisis. This is why parents and students, families who have experience



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3 real harm from the public education system are  
4 currently here. We need to stop deploying police in  
5 our schools and using metal detectors. We need to  
6 employ more school counselors and social workers to  
7 support students social, emotional Health. We need  
8 to stop suspending students over 20 days and up to a  
9 year robbing them of educational support. We have  
10 been advocating for nearly ten years. New York pay  
11 attention! We need to use restorative justice  
12 techniques and stop treating our children like  
13 criminals. We need Solutions not Suspensions. We  
14 need dignity in schools. Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much and Chancy  
16 Young.

17 CHANCY YOUNG: Good afternoon. Thank you so much  
18 for having us here today. I was listening to this  
19 panel and the questions about restorative justice  
20 because as Esperanza was sharing for the New  
21 Settlement Parent Action Committee, restorative  
22 justice is something we've been advocating for  
23 decades. Ten years ago, when I'm sure it was eight  
24 years ago, nine years ago now when restorative  
25 justice was first funded here in City Council, you  
know PAC leaders were here advocating for that

1 funding for it. When we heard a year ago that  
2 restorative justice was being cut, we advocated  
3 collectively with City Council to fight for that and  
4 the most frustrating thing to hear them present to us  
5 today and say that they're not cutting restorative  
6 justice when they've frozen restorative justice  
7 hiring and they haven't frozen other positions within  
8 the Department of Education.  
9

10 We know right now they're supposed to be under  
11 the plan. There are supposed to be four to six  
12 restorative justice coordinators in each borough.  
13 We're currently at two with Manhattan at one  
14 restorative justice coordinator. They have told  
15 those restorative justice coordinators in meetings  
16 that this is the last year of restorative justice  
17 because we meet with them because we've advocated for  
18 them for years. So, they've shared with us that  
19 they've said this is the last year of the restorative  
20 justice program and that it is going to be moved to  
21 Project Pivot.

22 So, what they said to us here was not what  
23 they've been saying to their own employees that are  
24 in that very program. Also should be noted that over  
25 the time that they have not hired restorative – the

1  
2 RJ coordinators throughout the borough, the Project  
3 Pivot program has hired staff after staff, after  
4 staff and I think what City Council needs to look at  
5 is, is the money that's being spent for our RJ  
6 Program, is it going into RJ or is it going into  
7 Project Pivot? Because it feels like it's going into  
8 Project Pivot.

9       This is the first time we heard today and we  
10 would have loved follow-up and I think it would be  
11 great to feel from City Council is 186 restorative  
12 justice coordinators in the school, which actually  
13 was a model that Dignity in Schools suggested a long  
14 time ago. We would love school-based restorative  
15 justice coordinators but we would like to understand  
16 how that's being rolled out and where is that going?

17       So, I think there's more questions than answers  
18 but I just wanted to share that with our testimony.  
19 I think it's very important that we continue to have  
20 a dialogue, Dignity in Schools, City Council. We put  
21 this that they are supposed to share a report with  
22 us. They are obviously not taking that very  
23 seriously.

24       And the last thing is just to share that we have  
25 one of our members Husein Yatabarry from whose now

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3 with the Manhattan uh, with the Muslim Community  
4 Network and just to say that you know just as we  
5 support our culture responsive education in schools,  
6 we also support religious diversity in schools and we  
7 support Resolution 476. So, and we thank them for  
8 waiting patiently to testify.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Well thank you. I have two  
10 questions for the students. How do you report any  
11 issues with SSA School Administrators? And do you  
12 find that administrators are helpful in addressing  
13 these issues when you do bring them up?

14 ELIZABETH WASSIF: I personally don't resort to  
15 SSAs when I have conflict at school. That's not  
16 something I'm custom to because I'm not accustomed to  
17 reaching out to the people who make me feel unsafe  
18 for safety.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: No, for school  
20 administrator, not to report to the SSA but do you  
21 address the principal and say, "hey this was my  
22 experience with an SSA agent."

23 ELIZABETH WASSIF: I see. Uhm, typically I do  
24 not. Typically the conversation I have with friends  
25 like talking about our experiences because it seems a  
lot more relatable and unfortunately, teachers do not

1  
2 go through the same things that or principals or the  
3 higher ups do not go through the same things that  
4 students go through. For example, they do not go  
5 through metal detectors, so how could they understand  
6 the anxiety we feel while going through that? And  
7 so, I feel it feels invalidating to talk to them,  
8 although it might be the solution, in my experience,  
9 talking to them has been to appease me, not  
10 necessarily to support me.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Well, it's a new school.  
12 You said you transferred to a new school, so maybe  
13 you might want to give the Administrators a shot.

14 ELIZABETH WASSIF: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much to our  
17 panelists. We're going to move onto our second in-  
18 person panel. Sandeep Kandhari, Jerry Hypolite,  
19 Michaela Shuchman, Nelson Mar, and Japneet Singh.  
20 Please make your way to the front table. Sandeep  
21 Kandhari, you can begin your testimony.

22 SANDEEP KANDHARI: Good afternoon. My name is  
23 Sandeep Kandhari. I am the Director of the Youth  
24 Defense Practice with the Center for Family  
25 Representation. I have been representing young

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3 people in court for 17 years across all five boroughs  
4 of New York City. I'm also a parent of two young  
5 children in the public school, so I take school  
6 safety very seriously. I'd also like to thank the  
7 Committee of Public Safety and Education and  
8 specifically Chair Joseph for holding these hearings.  
9 I wanted to address the comment that Council Member  
10 Ayala actually mentioned about her son was a hot  
11 mess. People in my field, we represent the hot  
12 messes and after they get arrested from school, we're  
13 the ones who have to work with them and trying to get  
14 them feeling safe and reintegrated into school and  
15 I'm going to be talking mainly about Intro. 003 and  
16 the Resolution about the right to remain silent bill.  
17 But first I wanted to tell you all a story.

18 We had a client recently, a 16-year-old young man  
19 struggling with addiction. He has an IEP for  
20 schizoaffective disorder and the school recently  
21 confiscated a vape pen from him. And when he had the  
22 pen confiscated, he had a very strong emotional  
23 reaction and the school asked him to leave and he  
24 refused and then they called school safety agents and  
25 the school safety agents eventually called 911  
because he wasn't leaving. Eventually they said,

1  
2 "you're trespassing and they handcuffed him and  
3 brought him to the precinct as police want to do.  
4 That is their job. Was that right response in this  
5 situation? These kinds of situations arise every  
6 day. Children are in this kind of distress every  
7 day. Since the pandemic, with the level of education  
8 laws and the gaps in services, especially kids with  
9 special needs have been facing, we know our kids are  
10 falling further behind. We have tens of thousands of  
11 students who are no longer even engaged in school.  
12 So, our job is to create an environment where they  
13 want to go and where they feel safe.

14 How is a person going to feel after they're  
15 handcuffed, embarrassed and criminalized in school?  
16 They're not going to want to go back and we're  
17 working so hard every day to get our clients to go  
18 back to school. What does the judge tell them every  
19 day? You need to go to school.

20 Well, if the school is a place where you have  
21 metal detectors, new fancy locks, more cameras and  
22 more police apparatus, that's not a place where my  
23 clients feel safe. For years, my clients have been  
24 complaining that the school is a place with school  
25 safety agents especially where they don't feel safe.

1  
2 They feel that they're being surveilled. And so, I  
3 commend the City Council for proposing this bill but  
4 it doesn't go far enough. We need to get police out  
5 of our schools. We need to focus on ideas that work,  
6 like restorative justice, peer mentoring, more family  
7 engagement and more mental health support.

8 And briefly, I'd like to just talk about the  
9 right to remain silent bill. Children should never  
10 be victims of their class or race. If a parent has  
11 money and their child is being interrogated, they got  
12 a fancy private lawyer with them at the precinct.  
13 That shouldn't be the case. Regardless of how much  
14 money you have, you should be protected by our  
15 government. And so, I ask that this very important  
16 bill that supports all children who are so  
17 susceptible to law enforcement, to false confessions,  
18 that we should push Albany to pass this bill and  
19 protect all children of New York. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your  
21 testimony. Jerry Hypolite.

22 JERRY HYPOLITE: Thank you. Thank you Chair  
23 Joseph, member of the Education and Public Safety  
24 Committees for the opportunity to testify regarding  
25 the new safety initiatives in New York City public



1 schools. I'm Jerry Hypolite, Chief of Staff at  
2 Partnership with Children. Since 1908, Partnership  
3 with Children has strengthened the social emotional  
4 as well as cognitive skills of children in New York  
5 City to succeed in society school and most  
6 importantly life. We place licensed clinical social  
7 workers and teaching artists in schools of  
8 underserved communities to provide critical trauma  
9 informed mental health counseling, community-based  
10 programming as well as healing-based arts education.  
11

12 Last year alone, Partnership with Childrens  
13 program impacted over 27,000 children, families, and  
14 community members across 48 New York City public  
15 schools. In 2015, we began partnering with the  
16 Office of Community Schools as a lead CBO in  
17 community schools across the city. I say this to say  
18 that all students deserve to be safe in schools. We  
19 understand the DOE has made efforts to hire  
20 additional school safety agents and again, our  
21 condolences to the safety agent that passed away.  
22 Lock school doors, enhance safety training, but we  
23 would like to underscore and really emphasize that  
24 student safety should not be limited to the physical  
25

1  
2 nature of being safe but it also should be inclusive  
3 of the feeling of being safe.

4 As reported by the Mayor's Office in March of  
5 2021, nearly 40 percent of New York City high school  
6 students shared that they felt sad or hopeless,  
7 almost every day for at least two weeks during the  
8 past year. The Black and Latinx students were most  
9 at risk at the same survey. And this doesn't even  
10 include the ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.  
11 Student challenges with mental health often lead them  
12 to engage in the actions and behaviors that are not  
13 aligned with school expectations, making it really  
14 difficult for them and their peers to learn. So, our  
15 recommendation that speak to student safety, we're  
16 encouraged by DOE's efforts to prioritize mental  
17 health wellness, as well as they as they continue to  
18 strategize around school safety but we'd like to  
19 offer some recommendations. The first one being the  
20 continued expansion of community schools with  
21 transparency.

22 Community schools holistic approach to student  
23 learning has already been proven and increased the  
24 mental wellness of students as well as supporting  
25 their learning efforts. Secondly, examine structural

1  
2 capacity to support social workers. We believe that  
3 every student should have access to social workers  
4 and that every social worker should have the capacity  
5 training and resources to effectively support  
6 students. Note, the quality of services is just as  
7 important as the quantity and it's unfortunate that  
8 many social workers that are in school are stretched  
9 thin across multiple sites and not of them receive  
10 clinical supervision or training.

11 And so, we actually encourage DOE to examine the  
12 capacity as well as identify opportunities such as  
13 expanding partnerships with CBOs to provide more  
14 meaningful impact. And with that I say again, we  
15 appreciate the cities commitment to ensuring students  
16 are safe in schools and we continue to partner with  
17 children, families and community support across the  
18 spectrum of safety. Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
20 Next, we'll hear from Michaela Shuchman.

21 MICHAELA SHUCHMAN: Thank you for the opportunity  
22 to testify on behalf of Legal Services NYC today and  
23 Intro. Number 003. As this bill covers an issue that  
24 our Education Rights practice has been focused on for  
25 many years.

1  
2 LSNYC negotiated a settlement with the city in  
3 2014 to secure significant changes we hoped would  
4 lessen the overall use of EMS as a response to  
5 students in emotional crisis. Despite the  
6 settlement, New York City public schools overall are  
7 still calling EMS and using restraints for students  
8 in emotional distress at almost the same rate as they  
9 did pre-settlement. This is a problem because the  
10 involvement of school safety personnel or police  
11 officers, the use of mechanical restraints and the  
12 forced removal of students from their school  
13 environment through EMS traumatizes students.  
14 Increasing the likelihood of school drop out and  
15 future hospital or criminal incarceration.

16 To ensure that EMS is only called in the most  
17 extreme circumstances, there must be robust  
18 procedures in place to track the use of de-escalation  
19 methods. Schools should report not just instances in  
20 which EMS was called but should identify the de-  
21 escalation tactics used prior to the call and why the  
22 were deemed to be unsuccessful. And when officers  
23 are called, it is critical that they are trained in  
24 de-escalation tactics and trauma informed practices  
25 consistently.

1  
2 While these steps are important to fulfill the  
3 promise of the 2014 settlement, the need for other  
4 school-based measures is greater than ever as the  
5 nation deals with the crisis of children's mental  
6 health. If the goal is to lessen the involvement of  
7 officers in moments of crisis, the first and most  
8 impactful step is to lessen those moments of crisis  
9 in the first place. Funding should be primarily  
10 focused on investing in resources and training for  
11 all school personnel to support students social  
12 emotional learning, increasing the number of social  
13 workers and other staff trained in de-escalation and  
14 healing centered and restorative practices, and  
15 expanding mental health supports, including the  
16 mental health continuum.

17 For students to progress educationally, they need  
18 a safe setting where their social and emotional needs  
19 are met. For more vulnerable students, this safe  
20 setting includes schools that are equipped to support  
21 them while in crisis, allowing them to remain in a  
22 familiar setting with familiar faces.

23 To advance this goal, methods of restraint for  
24 students in emotional crisis must be used only in the  
25 rarest of circumstances and methods that are healing

1 centered and trauma informed must be able to be used  
2 easily and effectively. Thank you for your time.

3  
4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your  
5 testimony. Next, we will hear from Jessica  
6 Balistreri.

7 JESSICA BALISTRERI: Good afternoon Chair Joseph  
8 and members of the Council. My name is Jessica  
9 Balistreri. I am a Data Analyst at the New York  
10 Civil Liberties Union, NYCLU.

11 I am here today in qualified support of  
12 Introduction Number 003, as there is an urgent need  
13 to protect students in emotional crisis from the  
14 trauma and harm of being subjected to police tactics  
15 in their schools. The NYCLU recently conducted an  
16 analysis of the quarterly NYPD data on child in  
17 crisis incidence mandated under the Student Safety  
18 Act. Our findings observe how last school year once  
19 again, saw the criminalization of young people of  
20 color undergoing an emotional crisis.

21 Our announced – in 2022-2023 85 percent of NYC  
22 students handcuffed during a child in crisis  
23 situation, which is where a child is in need of  
24 urgent mental health intervention or Black or Latinx.  
25 In this same year, officers restraining Black and

1 Latinx children experiencing an emotional crisis with  
2 metal handcuffs in 186 incidents. That's 1.6 times  
3 the rate of White children. In the 2022 incidents  
4 where officers restrained children 12 and under with  
5 metal handcuffs, all but two involved were Black and  
6 Latinx students. Not a single one of those children  
7 were White.  
8

9 This pattern of racial discrimination has  
10 persisted for years, as students continuously call  
11 for the increase in mental health resources in their  
12 school facilities, only for the city to respond with  
13 an increase in police presence, a rise in metal  
14 detector implementation and ultimately more  
15 handcuffs. While we support the aim to this bill, we  
16 recommend amendment to remove the additional training  
17 requirements. We do not support additional training  
18 of school safety officers to fill gaps created by a  
19 lack of trained mental health professionals.

20 The cruel and brutal criminalization officers  
21 subject children in emotional crisis too in their own  
22 schools must end. The city must adopt empathetic,  
23 equitable, holistic practices that assist children in  
24 emotional crisis, rather than giving more resources  
25 to assist in mistakes to punish.

1  
2 So, thank you and we look forward to  
3 collaborating with you to put New York at the  
4 forefront of progressive school safety policy.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Uhm, I had a  
6 quick question for you. That's why if you heard  
7 earlier, I asked, "what was the reentry protocol when  
8 a student is taken out in handcuffs or criminally  
9 justice. How do we reenter back into the school  
10 system or do we move them to another school? That  
11 was one of the questions I asked New York City public  
12 schools.

13 SANDEEP KANDHARI: What is my experience with my  
14 clients experiences?

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yeah.

16 SANDEEP KANDHARI: So, it depends on the nature  
17 of the incident. Often the suspension is involved  
18 and then the link of the suspension will also - uh  
19 could determine their relationship to the school.  
20 What we find is you know children often want to go  
21 back to what's familiar and they do want to go back  
22 to their school despite the negative experiences  
23 they're having.

24 Uhm, but sometimes schools want them to go  
25 somewhere else because of their behavior. What we



1 notice when I'm talking about the hot messes, they're  
2 not the most popular kids with the Administration.  
3 They're hard kids to handle and so, I understand  
4 that. You know we work with them and they're not the  
5 easiest kids sometimes but those are the kids who  
6 need the most help because if they don't get the help  
7 in their school, they're going to end up in prison.  
8 And we're spending so much money to incarcerate so  
9 many people, so let's solve it earlier.  
10

11 So, I don't - it depends on the situation whether  
12 or not a transfer is going to be proposed by the  
13 school and sometimes that is what the young person  
14 wants too. They want a fresh start. I hear many,  
15 many young people say they want a better school.  
16 They don't like their school. They want a better  
17 school and a lot - the Center for Family  
18 Representation, we not only have lawyers working but  
19 we have social workers working always with our  
20 clients and most of the work we're doing is really  
21 school advocacy to try to get them a better for them  
22 in terms of school placement.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And yes, we will work - and  
24 you know, you said something about the bill not  
25



1  
2 Okay, we'll start with Tina Zeng.

3 UNIDENTIFIED: I will be reading for Tina since  
4 she is not here. My name is Tina. I am a student  
5 living in South Brooklyn.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Could you state your name for  
7 the record too please?

8 DARA LYNN: My name is Dara Lynn(SP).

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

10 DARA LYNN: My name is Tina. I am a student  
11 living in South Brooklyn. I came as an activist from  
12 YAYA Network with the Dignity In Schools campaign to  
13 advocate for restorative justice. Over the summer, I  
14 conducted interviews with students from six different  
15 high schools about their experiences with restorative  
16 justice. One of the key elements that came up again  
17 and again is "Harmed people harm people" as one  
18 participant shared.

19 Many students who have a difficult home lifestyle  
20 and do not have the support system at home or at  
21 school to cope with their trauma and sometimes  
22 misdirect their anger. When schools expose these  
23 vulnerable students to police in schools, any  
24 conflict that arises will exacerbate that harm  
25 occurring in the students' life, should the situation

1  
2 escalate into punitive disciplines that take the  
3 student away from learning as it often does.

4       Sharing my personal stakes with RJ at my school.

5 When I was a sophomore two years ago, there was a  
6 very contentious incident relating to the current  
7 humiliation crisis with the Israeli-Hamas war and the  
8 Palestinian Question and struggle. That incident  
9 resulted in much anger from the student body, but  
10 taking action upon anger my school's Student Equity  
11 Council organized a dialogue for students with  
12 Palestinian and Israeli guest speakers, which I  
13 attended. I bring this up because a Restorative  
14 Justice Action Team succeeded the Student Equity  
15 Council last year, and RJAT facilitated a space to  
16 work with CBOs like Morningside to train students to  
17 mediate.

18       Anyways, students need a facilitated safe space  
19 to process the situations within our schools and to  
20 think critically and feel all the very profound  
21 feelings that many students and families feel about  
22 what's happening in the world. And restorative  
23 justice practices are so essential to creating this  
24 safe space. From my interviews with other students'

1  
2 RJ experiences, I learned that RJ is so much more  
3 than conflict-resolution.

4 RJ is about creating a school environment and  
5 community where it is possible to compassionately  
6 discuss issues inside and outside of school because  
7 students feel valued in their perspectives as that  
8 might be through RJ circles. RJ also teaches  
9 accountability and it means so much more to students'  
10 development than receiving any punishment where they  
11 do not get the opportunity to come through the other  
12 side understanding how and why the things they have  
13 done may be harmful.

14 To me, the values of RJ are integral to  
15 transforming education from just responding to harm  
16 to actively identifying and mitigating harms from  
17 different aspects in students' lives. My vision is  
18 that students are empowered to thrive academically,  
19 intellectually, socially, emotionally because schools  
20 center our well-being.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your  
22 testimony Andrea Ortiz.

23 ANDREA ORTIZ: Good afternoon and thank you. My  
24 name is Andrea Ortiz from Dignity in Schools. School  
25 is a place where young people should feel safe, try

1  
2 new things, and learn. But punitive discipline and  
3 policing creates barriers to learning and violates  
4 the safety and wellbeing of students, particularly  
5 the Brown – Black and Brown students were targeted  
6 the most harshly by school policing.

7       When students in need are met with a policing  
8 response instead of care and support, they are  
9 further traumatized. New York City should be a  
10 leader in the United States by investing in practices  
11 that support young people and divesting from  
12 practices that criminalize them. We demand real  
13 safety, as you can hear from our students and parents  
14 here. We want the city to fully fund meaningful  
15 Restorative Justice and divest from school police and  
16 policing infrastructure: A commitment to restorative  
17 justice requires a meaningful culture shift that  
18 makes it possible to build community safety and  
19 respond to harm when it occurs.

20       We are calling on the city to not only protect  
21 previous investments but also expand them to ensure  
22 that all students have access to school-based  
23 Restorative Justice Coordinators and funding to hire  
24 caring community members into supportive positions.  
25 Schools need funding to provide training for staff

1  
2 and restorative justice electives that can pay  
3 students like these young people here, who can tell  
4 are amazing leaders, to lead the restorative justice  
5 practices in their schools.

6       Additionally, we want to offer conditional  
7 support for Intro. Number 003. We applaud the spirit  
8 of this bill, which would limit the use of restraints  
9 to address children in emotional crisis, as well as  
10 Council's leadership in creating more protections for  
11 students in our public schools. However, we oppose  
12 the section of the bill that requires training for  
13 police, as we believe that no new funds should go  
14 towards the NYPD.

15       DSC members and youth have been clear that police  
16 should not be interacting with young people,  
17 especially young people who are in crisis.  
18 Additionally, this bill mandates clinical and support  
19 staff to be employed to support young people in  
20 crisis, without significant funding to support this  
21 mandate. Funds should be invested in DOE positions  
22 that can care for and support young people.

23       Finally, we demand that initiatives focused on  
24 holistic student safety should be protected and not  
25 be pitted against one another. Restorative justice

1  
2 and other anti-violence efforts must not be forced to  
3 compete for city funds. By freezing hiring of school  
4 policing, redirecting the \$350 million in funding  
5 from school policing into opportunities for young  
6 people in schools and communities, and removing all  
7 remote surveillance technologies in our schools, we  
8 can make space and funding available for what youth  
9 and families really need, which is healing-centered  
10 and restorative schools.

11 Also, we heard from the DOE and the NYPD today  
12 that they have expanded restorative justice to 900  
13 schools, which we have to call into question today.  
14 What proof is there? We need the names of the  
15 schools and an accounting to the levels of RJ  
16 implementation inside those schools. Are they simply  
17 counting schools that have one time received a flyer  
18 or an hour-long presentation of RJ practices?  
19 Because as you heard from Chancy, RJ coordinators who  
20 are part of our coalition have shared that they have  
21 clearly been blocked from expanding RJ as planned and  
22 hiring is frozen and RJ programs are being defunded  
23 and replaced by Project Pivot. We need transparency  
24 here.



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3 Finally, it is unconscionable hearing the  
4 millions of hundreds of millions of dollars going  
5 into locking door systems, bullet proof vests, high  
6 tech camera systems and I plead with you all to see  
7 that this is a simple cost cutting avenue to ensure  
8 our schools can have what they truly need. Thank  
9 you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
11 Rohini Singh.

12 ROHINI SINGH: Good afternoon. My name is Rohini  
13 Singh and I'm the Director of the School Justice  
14 Project at Advocates For Children of New York. For  
15 over 50 years, AFC has worked to ensure a high-  
16 quality education for New York students who face  
17 barriers to academic success. AFC is also a proud  
18 Dignity in Schools New York member. DIC as we've  
19 heard today is a coalition dedicated to shifting the  
20 culture of New York City Public Schools away from  
21 punishment and exclusion and policing and towards  
22 positive approaches to discipline and safety. We  
23 stand with them and support our DOC colleagues in all  
24 of their testimony here today. We're here today to  
25 testify in support of Intro. 003, which would  
regulate the NYPD's response to students in emotional

1 crisis within public schools. We also support  
2 Resolutions 473 and 534-A. We're also here to  
3 discuss the importance of sustaining key initiatives  
4 that are critical to our students' safety including  
5 restorative justice programs and social workers  
6 funded by the expiring federal COVID-19 Relief  
7 funding. And to express our overall concern about  
8 this Administrations commitment to these programs.  
9

10 In June 2021, AFC published a report analyzing  
11 NYPD data over four school years and finding that  
12 NYPD officers including precinct officers and school  
13 safety agents responded to a 12,050 incidents in  
14 which a student in emotional distress was removed  
15 from school. Almost half of these interventions  
16 involve children between the ages 4 and 12. A  
17 disproportionate number of these interventions  
18 involved Black students, students with disabilities  
19 in District 75 special education schools and students  
20 attending schools located in low income communities  
21 of color.

22 Unfortunately, despite what the NYPD implied  
23 earlier today, the Student Safety Act data in the  
24 most recent school year 2022-2023, continues to  
25 demonstrate these trends.

1  
2 There were 2,838 child in crisis interventions,  
3 which is an 18.9 percent increase from the 2021-2022  
4 school year and NYPD used handcuffs in 228 of those  
5 2,838 interventions, around eight percent, which is  
6 consistent with prior years. 41 percent of child in  
7 crisis interventions in the last school year and 56  
8 of those in which the student was handcuffed involved  
9 Black students who made up only 24 percent of  
10 enrollment last year.

11 Black students were twice as likely as White  
12 students to be handcuffed while in emotional crisis.  
13 Intro. 003 is an important step toward ensuring that  
14 our young people in crisis are met with trauma  
15 informed and healing response, not with a threat of  
16 law enforcement and handcuffs.

17 While we support Intro. 003, we have been calling  
18 on the city to shift funding from the NYPD to instead  
19 provide needed mental health and social emotional  
20 support for student and therefore, we want to be  
21 explicit that we are not advocating for additional  
22 funding to be allocated to train law enforcement  
23 officers to respond to students in emotional crisis.

24 Instead, the city's resources must be invested in  
25 more support for students, so that schools do not

1  
2 rely on law enforcement when a student is  
3 experiencing an emotional crisis. As we've heard  
4 today, many schools do not have access to train staff  
5 to support students, prevent crisis and respond when  
6 incidents and crisis occur.

7 To this end, we're deeply concerned about the  
8 federal stimulus funding for COVID-19 relief that is  
9 set to expire in less than a year and is currently  
10 being used to fund a lot of the critical initiatives.  
11 These include \$12 million for restorative justice  
12 practices and \$67 million to hire 450 school social  
13 workers. The need for these supports will continue  
14 long after the federal funding expires and we've  
15 already heard that this Administration has been  
16 scaling back on its restorative justice work in  
17 schools, even though funding was allocated for  
18 restorative justice this year.

19 Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.  
20 I'd be happy to answer any questions.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your  
22 testimony. Theresa Frey.

23 THERESA FREY: Thank you Counsel. My name is  
24 Theresa Frey. I'm a parent of a middle schooler.  
25 I'm also an educator for over 20 years and I'm also a

1 PhD education researcher and I'm here today with YaYa  
2 and DSC as an Education Researcher.

3  
4 I just want to take a moment to pause and uplift  
5 the youth voices that have been shared because I  
6 think those are really important but from an  
7 education research piece, I often think about two  
8 questions when I think about education. I think  
9 about what is education for and who is education for?  
10 And within this line of questioning, what makes these  
11 education spaces feel safe or unsafe and I think  
12 that's why we're mainly here today.

13 I would also like to further have some  
14 quantitative and qualitative data on those 900  
15 schools because we've actually been looking for that  
16 data methodologically.

17 So, back to the industry, the work to minimize  
18 the handcuffing and mechanical restraints by precinct  
19 officers and school safety personnel for our students  
20 experiencing emotional crisis does not fully place  
21 the responsibility of safety with the student in the  
22 forefront.

23 I want to talk about four points. One, it's  
24 essential to separate the students' actions and needs  
25 away from the police action and response. And also,

1  
2 the school counselors and restorative justice  
3 practitioners are professionals. They are the  
4 experts in de-escalation and emotional crisis of  
5 supporting the youth.

6 Two, the de-escalation work of the bill is a step  
7 towards restorative justice policies. In order  
8 however, the de-escalation to be effective and  
9 actionable, there must be counselors and restorative  
10 justice practices in the schools.

11 Three, the training and funding proposed for a  
12 precinct officers must be redirected towards the  
13 support within our schools.

14 Four, instead of in the wording in the bill, it  
15 says whether a students behavior is believed to be  
16 the result of factors including but not limited to  
17 age, medical conditions and mental impairment, it  
18 should be assumed that the student is struggling.  
19 And the needs for de-escalation and support and not  
20 punitive are carceral measures.

21 I will also submit this as a written testimony  
22 with academic references and policy.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
24 Dawn Yuster.

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3 DAWN YUSTER: Good afternoon. My name is Dawn  
4 Yuster. My perspective comes from working for over  
5 two decades as a Civil Rights Lawyer dedicated to  
6 racial, social and youth justice.

7 Most recently I was Advocates for Children of New  
8 Yorks Director of the School Justice Project, where I  
9 led the strategic integration of the organizations  
10 juvenile justice school discipline and mental health  
11 work, aiming to end the school to prison pipeline.

12 I represented and oversaw a team of attorney's who  
13 represented students who had emotional mental health  
14 challenges as well as those who faced NYPD Officers  
15 in handcuffs.

16 I conceived and co-authored Advocates for  
17 Childrens reports on NYPD Child in Crisis data that  
18 served as the impetus for Intro. 003 2022. My  
19 perspective also comes from lived experience.

20 Decades ago as an adolescent when I faced NYPD  
21 officers in handcuffs myself, when I was I emotional  
22 crisis in the community. I did not have a weapon. I  
23 did not threaten anyone. As students in schools  
24 similarly are in situations where they face the NYPD.  
25 The trauma from this experience has remained with me  
and undoubtedly trauma remains with the thousands of

1 students each year who face NYPD and are in emotional  
2 crisis.

3  
4 So, I'm here in support of Intro. 003-2022 and  
5 I'm grateful to Deputy Speaker Ayala for sponsoring  
6 this critical bill and for all the Council Members  
7 who support it. I also support Resolutions 473 and  
8 534-A. I think a couple points I want to make in  
9 terms of things about the NYPD that they left out,  
10 which my colleague Rohini Singh at Advocates for  
11 Children mentioned, is that there was an increase, a  
12 nearly 20 percent increase in child in crisis  
13 incidents from 2021-2022 school year to this last  
14 school year and the disproportionality by race  
15 continues.

16 The other thing that the NYPD did not mention was  
17 that their patrol guide, their patrol guide  
18 explicitly talks about handcuffing restraining  
19 students for arrest or as they "or as emotionally  
20 disturbed person." So, they are already  
21 criminalizing students who are have emotional  
22 challenges in their own patrol guide and I think it's  
23 really worth taking a look at that 215-13 that they  
24 drafted three years ago. It's definitely due for  
25 changes.



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1  
2 I also want to say that I do support Intro. 003-  
3 2022 with some modifications. I don't think that the  
4 funding should be allocated to train law enforcement  
5 officers at all. They should not be responding to  
6 students in emotional crisis. Instead, we should  
7 absolutely be putting so much more funding into  
8 restorative practices, which of course you were a  
9 huge champion of Chair Joseph. Mental Health  
10 continuum, which is - we are seeing students. I am  
11 privileged to be part of the group biweekly meeting  
12 the three agencies that are working diligently and  
13 the schools. We are seeing students getting  
14 expedited access to mental health care in those  
15 schools. We're seeing schools have you know  
16 clinicians that they have access to and alternatives  
17 in terms of building up the supports within the  
18 schools, including collaborative problem solving and  
19 collaborative and proactive solutions which are  
20 trauma informed evidence-based approaches.

21 So, these are things that I really encourage our  
22 city and City Council to look at. These are  
23 investments that are tried and true about teaching  
24 skills and I know you know this, so I'm preaching to  
25 the choir. There happens to be a conference, a live

1 free virtual conference that lies in the balance.

2  
3 One of the vendors is holding this Friday, which they  
4 talk about their model in depth and you know last but  
5 not least, I want to say that what we're doing in the  
6 city is we're starting to make a huge shift in the  
7 community for adults, for everybody in terms of  
8 there's a be heard response model, right. It's  
9 largely imperfect because these workers are EMT  
10 workers, paramedics, and social workers which is  
11 great, which is fantastic. We need to add peer,  
12 crisis trained peer specialists to that model. Use  
13 that model in schools and not be calling the police  
14 in and also have more youth and family respite  
15 centers you know and use children's mobile crisis  
16 teams. Crisis teams with timely responses and these  
17 are all again, as a last resort after using the  
18 evidence-based approaches, trauma informed approaches  
19 in schools.

20 So, thank you so much for the opportunity to  
21 testify before you today and I look forward to  
22 collaborating with you on implementation.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Same, likewise,  
24 mental health continuum was very important to me and

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3 that's why we fought for looking to get a baseline in  
4 the budget.

5 DAWN YUSTER: Yeah, we are incredibly grateful.  
6 So grateful to you thank you and your colleagues.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: It's important to me and I  
8 always tell them young people are the reason why I do  
9 this work. Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much to this  
11 panel. Our next panel, Ajifanta Marenah, Yyra Takat,  
12 Husein Yatabarry, Wali Ullah, Musfika Moshahid,  
13 Fatimah Thiam, Reverend Mark Fowler and Paulette  
14 Healy. Please make your way to the front.

15 [04:10:19]- [04:11:05] Ajifanta Marenah, you may  
16 begin your testimony.

17 AJIFANTA MARENAH: Good evening Chair Joseph,  
18 Chair Hanks and all members of the Council. My name  
19 is Ajifanta. I'm the Advocacy program manager at  
20 Muslim Community Network and we're here today as an  
21 interfaith coalition including students in youth to  
22 testify in support of Resolution 476 to ask the  
23 Department of Education to include a religious  
24 diversity education curriculum that would make sure  
25 that hate - antireligious hate crimes immediately  
disclose to parents included in the annual public

1 school reports as well as training is given to  
2 educators and staff in these areas and then that  
3 students have a curriculum that teaches them about  
4 religious traditions across the board.  
5

6 This Resolution came about from a survey we did  
7 from that hate crime report surveying community  
8 members under experiences with hate crimes. For the  
9 Muslim community in particular, we found very  
10 alarming numbers. So, anti-Muslim hate, Islamophobia  
11 has been on the rise since following 911 but when we  
12 did this survey in 20— between 2020 and 2021, we  
13 found that 76 percent of Muslims in New York City  
14 witness the hate crime. Over 40 percent experienced  
15 the hate crime and out of that, we found a very  
16 alarming thing, that youth ages 10 to 18 were at 43.5  
17 percent victims of those anti-Muslim hate crimes. 47  
18 percent of community members made a recommendation  
19 that they wanted to see more diversity specifically  
20 really just diversity education in New York City  
21 public schools because they were concerned about the  
22 bullying that the children were facing in schools.

23 Just to share a little bit of what that looks  
24 like from student perspectives, which we have Yyra  
25 here, who will speak but some of the narratives that

1  
2 we've got, a 12-year-old female student expressed  
3 that a person at school, this person called me a  
4 freak for hijab.

5 We have a 16-year-old student who said, "my  
6 friend was on the R Train in Brooklyn when a man  
7 yelled at her and stated that Muslims are all  
8 terrorists and started to pull out a gun. We have  
9 someone else who experienced physical assault and  
10 said, "when I was in the elevator and they spit on my  
11 Islamic wear and head scarf." We believe that these  
12 incidents, especially happening in public schools in  
13 2020 the FBI found that over 41 percent of hate crime  
14 incidents that are happening in public schools are  
15 anti-hate crime, anti-religious hate crimes. This is  
16 really important to zero in on this specific issue  
17 and address it by providing religious diversity  
18 education.

19 I will the panel share more information on the  
20 other aspects of why this Resolution is important and  
21 timely at this moment. Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your  
23 testimony. Yyra Takat.

24 YYRA TAKAT: Uhm, sorry can you hear me? Good  
25 afternoon honorable Council. My name is Yyra Takat.

1  
2 I'm a junior at the Bronx High School of Science and  
3 have been attending in NYC DOE public schools my  
4 entire life.

5 I grew up going to the mosque, fasting during  
6 Ramadan and confused why I had to skip school until I  
7 was in the second grade when it became a holiday on  
8 the school calendar.

9 I grew up learning about Christmas and Hanukkah  
10 during the holiday season from my teachers and my  
11 peers. Seeing my friends constantly show off their  
12 first communion dresses but I was confused. Why were  
13 they wearing wedding dresses as kids? I grew up  
14 fortunate though, that my parents would explain to me  
15 what these events and holidays meant for the people  
16 celebrating and why they celebrated them impartially  
17 when I asked.

18 Others, however, have been evidently less  
19 fortunate than me in this experience. Where it is  
20 clear that their parents or their guardians projected  
21 prejudices against the groups being asked about  
22 instead.

23 I was I the first grade when I received a death  
24 threat from my classmate. It was a small class of 14  
25 kids including myself and I was the only Muslim.

1  
2 Others knew because I was absent on Eve. This  
3 classmate told me, "I'm going to come to your house  
4 at night and murder you because you're a terrorist."

5 I remember this vividly mainly because of what  
6 happened after. I stared blankly at him confused. I  
7 responded, sorry, my parents wont let you. I only  
8 have sleep overs with my girl cousins. I didn't know  
9 what the murder meant. Later that day, as my mom was  
10 paying for a parking ticket after a doctor's  
11 appointment, I asked her, what did murder mean? I  
12 remember how shocked she was that her little baby was  
13 asking what such a violent word meant. But what is  
14 engraved in my memory is the horror in the woman  
15 paying for her ticket beside us is her face when I  
16 told my mom where and how I learned of this word.

17 I knew what the word terrorist meant though  
18 because we learned about it at the beginning of that  
19 year after a moment of silence in remembrance of 911.  
20 This event still plays in my mind. How could a child  
21 be so full of hate? My questions were answered a few  
22 years later by that same very kid. I was in the  
23 fourth grade when the 2016 presidential elections  
24 were taking place. There was already an increasing  
25

1  
2 presence of Islamophobia in the media but I didn't  
3 expect it to be so prevalent in my own school.

4 I was waiting outside of a math class when he  
5 threatened that his cop father would deport my  
6 family, "back to Afghanistan because we caused 911."  
7 This horrified me, not only because I was scared that  
8 my life as I knew it would change but also because he  
9 threatened to send me to a country whose cultures and  
10 languages were completely foreign to me because my  
11 family is from India.

12 My Muslim math teacher was within an ear shot and  
13 dragged him to the deans office to where I was called  
14 the next day for him to read me an apology letter  
15 where he said, he wouldn't bully anyone for the rest  
16 of the school year. There was no additional action  
17 taken.

18 I had exposure to the beauty of my faith because  
19 I practice it but this boys only exposure to Islam  
20 was when teachers would teach us about what happened  
21 on 911 and what his parents were telling him my  
22 people were doing. Looking back on these  
23 circumstances, even after the tole it has taken on my  
24 confidence and pride in my identity, it makes sense  
25



1  
2 how a child could bring such thoughts to a school and  
3 project them onto others.

4 In the ninth grade in history class, we were  
5 finally learning about religions across the world but  
6 it was too little and too late. Disproportionate  
7 amounts of time were spent on the major religions of  
8 the world. For example, we spent six weeks learning  
9 about Christianity in Europe compared to two weeks on  
10 Judaism and a mere four days on Islam. I was so  
11 excited to tell my class mates about how much I love  
12 eve and how Ramadan brings me closer to my faith.  
13 But hearing my teacher call the GABA the Black Cube  
14 and that we fast all day every summer was  
15 disappointing to say the least. And also extremely  
16 confusing.

17 Why is half of the stuff that my teacher is  
18 saying wrong? And why doesn't she even care? I  
19 stayed after class that day to inform her of some  
20 misinformation in her slides, hoping that she would  
21 correct it but the first thing she did was mock me.  
22 "You took a shoe, uh, uh." I continued telling her  
23 that Ramadan doesn't happen strictly in the summer.  
24 It falls the Islamic calendar that is Lunar,  
25 something which wasn't even mentioned in the slides

1  
2 and she cut me off saying that she was a public-  
3 school teacher on a public-school salary and that it  
4 wasn't her responsibility to teach us about "these  
5 little religions, Islam, Christianity, Judaism and  
6 Hinduism." And if I wanted to learn about them so  
7 bad, I could go to a mosque or synagogue myself.

8       The next day, she kept me after class telling me  
9 her outburst was because she hadn't had her coffee.  
10 Even when we were supposed to be learning about  
11 religions, the lack of structure in what needs to be  
12 known left half the people in my class wondering  
13 whether Muslims pray five times a day or seven when  
14 time came to take the unit test.

15       When the one place we go to learn and prepare to  
16 enter society will not teach us about the things we  
17 need to know about the things we need to know about  
18 the world we live in, there is no question why  
19 religious and race-based hatred is so prevalent not  
20 only in adults but also children. It is because the  
21 eventual education we do receive is too little and  
22 too late.

23       Learning about the richness of the cultures and  
24 religions surrounding me earlier on in school would  
25 have helped prevent not only external but also

1 internal xenophobia in myself and in others. And if  
2 stricter measures were taken to reprimand and prevent  
3 targeted bullying like I and millions of other  
4 students have experienced and continue to experience  
5 in schools by peers, and even administrators, more  
6 people would feel safe in schools and other diverse  
7 environments and hate crimes would definitely  
8 decrease.  
9

10 An introduction of such measure can ensure  
11 stronger community in schools and prevent living a  
12 life with trauma. And such experiences that have  
13 detrimental effects on people can be prevented with  
14 this Resolution, which advocates for religious  
15 diversity being introduced in school curriculums.

16 Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your  
18 testimony. Husein Yatabarry.

19 HUSEIN YATABARRY: Dear Chief uhm Chair Joseph  
20 and Esteemed Members of the Education Committee and  
21 City Council. My name is Husein Yatabarry and I am  
22 before you today as the Executive Director of the  
23 Muslim Community Network. Our vision has been to  
24 empower the diverse Muslim communities that stretch  
25 across our five boroughs through civic engagement,

1 leadership development, and unwavering advocacy.

2 Imagine a world where a child is judged not by the  
3 content of their character but by the  
4 misrepresentation of the religion they practice or  
5 the culture they were born into. Sadly, that's not  
6 just a figment of my imagination or our imagination,  
7 it's the reality many face right here in our city.

8 The weight of religious and cultural  
9 misunderstandings has manifested in a startling rise  
10 in hate crimes against our fellow New Yorkers. Last  
11 year alone, we bore witness to nearly 220 such  
12 incidents in the city. The FBI's Uniform Crime  
13 Reporting Program unveils a disheartening trend of  
14 growing hate crimes against Jews, Sikhs, and Muslims  
15 since 2015.

16 Even more disconcerting, NYPD figures show a 7  
17 percent spike in hate crimes correlating with the  
18 recent tensions in Occupied Palestine and Israel. In  
19 just over two weeks, 51 hate crimes have been  
20 reported, primarily targeting Jewish, Sikh and Muslim  
21 communities. Our schools, which should be  
22 sanctuaries of learning and understanding, are not  
23 exempt. Bias-related incidents are alarmingly  
24 prevalent, and even worse, they often go unreported.  
25

1  
2 Data from the Muslim Community Network's hate crimes  
3 report of 2022 with over 200 New York City Muslims  
4 reveal: 76 percent of Muslims in NYC have been  
5 spectators to a bias incident. About half believe  
6 broader religious diversity across various  
7 institutions, starting in our schools is necessary.

8 Drawing from my background as an educator, I  
9 taught for seven years, I have personally witnessed,  
10 mediated, and educated students on religious  
11 diversity. I had no formal training. I navigated a  
12 bias-related incident involving a young Muslim girl  
13 in the 5th grade. She was told she would "go to  
14 hell" for being Muslim and not Catholic. Her peers  
15 did not understand why she wore a hijab in class and  
16 mocked her for it. While the students did face  
17 consequences, this situation was preventable. I  
18 received no formal training in religious diversity,  
19 no other teacher did but they used the Muslim on  
20 staff to mediate the situation. The students were  
21 not exposed to a religious diversity curriculum.  
22 This situation did not need to happen.

23 I urge the Department of Education and I urge the  
24 City Council to push this resolution through to  
25 collaborate intensively with non-profits, faith-based

1 organizations, and the clergy. Together, let's  
2 design a curriculum for all grade levels that  
3 celebrates religious diversity, working actively to  
4 eliminate prejudice and foster unity from a young  
5 age. It's not just about the curriculum, though. We  
6 talked earlier here today about training and  
7 professional development educators themselves need  
8 professional development, staff, principals, ensuring  
9 they're equipped to foster an environment of  
10 acceptance.  
11

12 It's our duty to ensure that no school staff  
13 member, parent, or student ever experiences friction  
14 based on external circumstances that have unfairly  
15 targeted religions and nationalities. Furthermore,  
16 we demand transparent reporting of hate crimes in  
17 schools. The Department of Education must prioritize  
18 accurate classification, timely notifications, and  
19 absolute transparency in disclosing hate crime  
20 statistics in their annual reports.

21 Parents, community leaders, and educators alike  
22 need this information to understand patterns and  
23 proactively address such situations. In conclusion,  
24 we urge the adoption of City Council Resolution  
25 Number 476. Let's stand united in condemning any

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3 form of bullying or harassment based on religious or  
4 cultural practices. Let our schools be beacons of  
5 hope, acceptance, and unity in these divisive times.  
6 Thank you for your time and consideration.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your  
8 testimony. Wali Ullah.

9 WALI ULLAH: Good afternoon Chair Joseph and all  
10 members of the New York City Council Education  
11 Committee. My name is Wali Ullah and I am the  
12 Community Education Coordinator at the Muslim  
13 Community Network, a nonpartisan and interfaith civil  
14 society organization aimed at empowering Muslims  
15 across all five boroughs.

16 We greatly appreciate the Education Committee for  
17 finally granting us a hearing on Resolution 476 on  
18 short but long awaited notice and the timing, though  
19 unfortunate, the larger scope of domestic and  
20 international affairs is especially crucial when  
21 we've seen not only a spike in bias based incidents  
22 and hate crimes targeting Muslims, Jews, and Sikhs  
23 across New York City and the country, but unequally  
24 bothersome inflammation of social tensions that  
25 affects the safety and livelihood of said groups in  
the workplace and most importantly what this

1 Resolution is seeking to bring light to our K-12  
2 public education system.

3  
4 Currently more than 800,000 Muslims live in New  
5 York City, not even you know counting for demographic  
6 shifts after the 2020 Census or the ongoing migrant  
7 crisis, given that many migrants and their families  
8 also come from majority-Muslim countries and regions.  
9 If before you know, the events of September 11th, at  
10 least half a million Muslims were still residing in  
11 the city. Though we commend state and local elected  
12 officials for gradually trying to take more proactive  
13 measures to ensure that you know the spiritual and  
14 religious needs are properly accommodated for just  
15 like every other faith. There's still more to be  
16 done. You know we're proud to say that so far this  
17 Resolution has 16 sponsors and counting with its  
18 previous iteration introduced in 2020 as the  
19 Resolution 1257 sponsored by former Council Member  
20 then, Daniel Dromm along with 22 additional Council  
21 Members, and the support of the Public Advocate of  
22 the City of New York.

23 This Resolution, we're not expecting educators or  
24 you know DOE or the staff to be experts or scholars  
25 or have the bureaucratic knowledge on part with



1 clergy leaders but simply to provide you know  
2 continue providing the space to either those  
3 educators, staff or nonprofit community civil society  
4 organizations with the lived experience and necessary  
5 credible theological expertise around any faith  
6 background to function as something akin to public  
7 educational chaplains for lack of any other phrasing  
8 right now and be competently and impartially trained  
9 to de-escalate and effectively address any incident  
10 if you know a certain bullying or harassment tactic  
11 might involve direct or passive religious  
12 discrimination.

14 Anger and disgust rooted in fear and  
15 misunderstanding is not really a unique experience  
16 for any singular religious group. You know that  
17 having been said, we reaffirm our commitment to the  
18 goals of this Resolution not just as Muslim New  
19 Yorkers, but also Muslims, such as myself and my  
20 siblings, who attended New York City public schools  
21 during the years following waves of Islamophobia  
22 unleashed after September 11<sup>th</sup> and the 2016 election  
23 season. 22 years is frankly two decades too long to  
24 have to continue advocating, if not plead, to our  
25 fellow New Yorkers and our government to not only

1  
2 treat us as proper American equals but to be more  
3 proactive against repeating, encouraging, or  
4 snowballing via public or media channels the same  
5 divisive of rhetoric that already otherized half a  
6 million New Yorkers after 9/11, also not counting  
7 anyone else who you know remotely resembled somebody  
8 Brown, South Asian, Middle Eastern North African or  
9 you know even practiced the Sikh or Hindu faiths  
10 while also being you know the same victims of  
11 senseless, ignorant acts of violence and bigotry.

12 The City of New York again, already had 20 years  
13 to get this right. The ball is in your court now, so  
14 just get it right. Thank you again to Chair and the  
15 rest of the joint committee body for allowing me to  
16 testify and I will yield the rest of my time.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your  
18 testimony. Musfika Moshahid.

19 MUSFIKA MOSHAHID: Thank you. Hello Council  
20 Members. Hello honorable Council Members. My name  
21 is Musfika Moshahid. I am the woman's program  
22 coordinator at MCN but I'm going to be speaking on  
23 behalf of a program alumni of ours. So, this is her  
24 testimony as follows: She wasn't able to be here  
25 today, so this is her testimony.

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3 Hello, thank you for the opportunity to testify  
4 today. My name is Memunatu Mohammed. I am an  
5 Educator and Teacher from the Bronx. I am a women's  
6 program alumni and community member and I'm here to  
7 testify in support of Resolution 476. As we are all  
8 aware religious hate crime has been on the rise  
9 recently especially when it comes to Black and Brown  
10 individuals. There is a rise in hate crimes against  
11 the Muslims, Jewish people and Sikhs.

12 One of the reason why many people leave their  
13 countries in the first place, an immigrant is because  
14 they are seeking religious freedom. To leave your  
15 country with high hopes and face the same thing  
16 you're running away from is very contradicting. My  
17 cousin Amina had an experience where she was bullied  
18 for been Muslim. Her class mates will always  
19 question why she wore her hijab. She tried to never  
20 pay them any attention. They use to ask if she did  
21 it because she was bold or edgy. One day they  
22 decided to take the initiative to rip the hijab off  
23 of her head. That experience was very traumatizing  
24 for a young girl. She was only 14 years old. She  
25 decided then to stop wearing her hijab because she  
was worried for her safety. That isn't right. She

1 shouldn't have been forced to make such a decision  
2 because of fear and other peoples ignorance. Passing  
3 this bill will be allow for increased awareness on  
4 different religions and a better understanding for  
5 students and a better understanding for students on  
6 the different religious life styles of different  
7 people. Passing this bill will educate students and  
8 decrease the amount of hate crimes that are taking  
9 place.  
10

11 I urge the City Council to pass this Resolution  
12 and stand in support of diversity and inclusion.  
13 Thank you once again for the opportunity to testify.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
15 Fatimah Thiam.

16 FATIMAH THIAM: Alright, hello honorable Council  
17 Members, Chair Council Rita Joseph and members of the  
18 Education Committee. My name is Fatimah Thiam. I'm  
19 the Youth Program Coordinator at MCN, Muslim  
20 Community Network and I will be reading the testimony  
21 of one of our alumni in our woman program Fatimah Y  
22 Nor.

23 As it goes, she solutes you all. Hello honorable  
24 Council Member Chair Council woman Rita Joseph and  
25 members of the Education Committee. Thank you for

1 the opportunity to testify today. My name is Fatimah  
2 Y Nor. I'm a Patient Navigator and a community  
3 member of Muslim Community Network here to testify  
4 today in support of Resolution 476. Hate crimes can  
5 have a profound impact on the youth mental health.  
6 Being targeted or witness such act can lead to  
7 feelings of fear, anxiety and depression. It can  
8 erode self-esteem and self-worth. Making it  
9 difficult for young people to develop a positive  
10 self-image. In cases, victim may experience post-  
11 traumatic stress disorder, which can persist into  
12 adulthood. Additionally, hate crime can contribute  
13 to a sense of isolation and exclusion, feeling  
14 loneliness and despair.

15  
16 To address this issue, it is crucial to promote  
17 tolerance inclusivity and provide support to effected  
18 youth, immediate notification to parents, empower  
19 them to protect and support their children, both  
20 emotionally and legally a crucial step in addressing  
21 the impact of hate crime on the youth mental health.

22 I urge the Council to pass this Resolution 476 to  
23 stand in support for this Resolution. Thank you once  
24 again for the opportunity to testify.

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3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thanks for your testimony.

4 Reverend Mark Fowler.

5 REVEREND MARK FOWLER: Good evening. My name is  
6 Reverend Mark Fowler and I'm the CEO of the Tanenbaum  
7 Center for Interreligious Understanding. Very proud  
8 to be here with all of you and stand in support of  
9 the passage of Resolution 476.

10 We know as a community that educating students  
11 about religious differences, create societies that  
12 are safer from the intolerance and hatred and the  
13 bullying that stems from that ignorance. And in real  
14 time, we're seeing such acts play out today in anti-  
15 Jewish, anti-Muslim, anti-Sikh hate crimes in  
16 response to the war between Israel and Hamas. For 31  
17 years Tanenbaum has worked to promote justice and  
18 build respect for difference, including religious  
19 difference in schools.

20 Our experience working with educators, students,  
21 parents and Administrators for over 25 years, has  
22 taught us that not constructively including critical  
23 inquiry about religions role in society. By doing  
24 that, we're creating generations which may not  
25 respect religious difference, nor recognize its  
powerful contribution to society. Rather, we create

1 generations that are more vulnerable to stereotypes  
2 and fear mongering. When education reflects the  
3 diversity of religious identities, it reduces  
4 bullying behaviors in students. Our curricula and  
5 our trainings are designed to facilitate  
6 conversations across lines of difference and help  
7 students recognize religious difference as something  
8 to be celebrated, rather than something to be feared.  
9 When students actively explore each other's religious  
10 identities, they build essential social and emotional  
11 skills like active listening, respectful questioning  
12 and open-minded curiosity, which helps them recognize  
13 and challenge stereotypes. When learned early  
14 enough, these behaviors continue outside of the  
15 classroom helping form active and engaged community  
16 members.  
17

18 I was a public school, high school teacher for 11  
19 years at the Brooklyn Comprehensive Night High  
20 School. I was an English Teacher and for nine of  
21 those years, I was the coordinator of student affairs  
22 and as it related to professional development, never  
23 in my preservice education which took place at Duke  
24 University, nor in my career with the Department of  
25 Education was I ever presented with the opportunity

1 to examine my own implicit bias toward people from  
2 other groups and certainly none of the implicit  
3 biases that I had towards people from other religious  
4 traditions. Teachers report to us at Tanenbaum that  
5 they are unfamiliar and uncomfortable with talking  
6 about religion, which limits their ability to address  
7 issues of religious difference with their students.  
8

9 The professional development directive in  
10 Resolution 476 gives the educators the pedagogical  
11 tools that they need to have respectful conversations  
12 about religious diversity but also to explore their  
13 own biases and prejudices about the topic.

14 I think that Resolution 476 addresses the root  
15 causes of hate and bullying by combating in  
16 ignorance. The most dangerous threat is not just to  
17 our students but to our society. Resolution 476 is  
18 not only a good thing to do, it's the responsible  
19 thing to do to prepare our students for an  
20 increasingly diverse and vibrant world. And at  
21 Tanenbaum, we're proud to give Resolution 476 our  
22 full support and ask the members of the City Council  
23 to do the same.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your  
25 testimony. Paulette Healy.



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1  
2 PAULETTE HEALY: My name is Paulette Healy. I am  
3 a Special Education and D75 Advocate and I have two  
4 children attending New York City public schools.  
5 Uhm, I had an entire testimony prepared and which I  
6 will submit later with facts and data and numbers and  
7 things of that nature but sitting here and hearing  
8 the different testimonies from this panel and hearing  
9 the testimonies of our children who testified from  
10 Dignity in Schools earlier today, it's hard not to  
11 think about how - this didn't happen overnight. The  
12 reason you know our children are being targeted and  
13 there's so much divisiveness going on, not only in  
14 our schools but in our world, is because we don't  
15 have a safe space to talk about these things and our  
16 teachers don't feel empowered to be able to have  
17 honest and open conversations about what our children  
18 are going through and how confusing this entire world  
19 is. And this didn't happen overnight and we know  
20 that because funding is lacking where it's needed and  
21 it's being pushed to agencies that have money to  
22 burn, this is the end result. This is the end result  
23 of not having restorative practices in our schools.  
24 This is the end result of not having culturally  
25 responsive curriculum being able to be implemented

1  
2 you know within our schools that actually reflects  
3 the populations that we're serving. This is an  
4 immediate response to the continued policing that  
5 we're constantly having in our schools. Where we  
6 have teachers who are villainizing some children and  
7 uplifting others. You know, saying boys will be  
8 boys. It's okay that you hijab off of her head.

9 No, someone has to say no and quite honestly, you  
10 know sitting in this meeting for as many hours as we  
11 have, with all of the department heads that were in  
12 this panel, the fact that they were so ill prepared  
13 and with no answers and with no data, they didn't  
14 earn their paycheck today and that was a  
15 multimillion-dollar panel that was sitting here  
16 today.

17 So, let's really think about how we're utilizing  
18 the money that didn't go into the DOE because it  
19 doesn't belong with you know Directors, Executives,  
20 Super and shit. Whatever their titles are because  
21 it's not hitting where it belongs, which is in our  
22 schools and our schools are no longer safe havens for  
23 our children. We can talk about it. We could throw  
24 that word around as much as we want but if our  
25 children don't feel that there's people in their

1 school that they trust or that they feel that they're  
2 not being seen by the people who are tasked to take  
3 care of them and educate them, that there's no hope  
4 for our children. There are constantly going to  
5 children in crisis and these numbers are going to  
6 just continue escalating.  
7

8 So, you know I had a whole story about a child in  
9 my district who you know was handcuffed and left in  
10 handcuffs for hours until his parents came to get him  
11 and he was five and he was forced to go back into  
12 that same kindergarten class the next day with no  
13 explanation about what he did wrong. With no support  
14 and with no change in culture in that classroom.  
15 That teacher still treated him like crap when he went  
16 back because he was the behavior problem in that  
17 class and he's five.

18 So, what hope do we have? If we are not going to  
19 prioritize where we're spending our money, even  
20 within the agencies that are supposed to be doing  
21 good for our children. So, my one ask is one, thank  
22 you City Council Member Rita Joseph for amplifying  
23 Chancellors regulation A412 because it's garbage the  
24 way it's written right now. It totally takes away  
25 all the rights of parents and students and

1 prioritizes you know the DOE to cover their butt for  
2 sake of a better word when they divert everything to  
3 legal counsel in incidences of crime and harm. But  
4 as City Council, when we are gearing up for these  
5 discussions about budget because budget is always you  
6 know it's - we say it all the time, it's our morality  
7 in the document right. Really look at the MOU  
8 between the DOE and the NYPD because the amount of  
9 money that is constantly being laundered away from  
10 our schools and back into NYPD is criminal. Thank  
11 you.  
12

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your  
14 testimony and thank you to all of our panelists. Our  
15 next panel. I'm sorry. Go ahead, you can state your  
16 name.

17 REVEREND CHLOE BREYER: Good evening. Thank you  
18 Chair Joseph and Chair Hanks and for the Education  
19 Committee of the New York City Council. My name is  
20 Reverend Chloe Breyer. I am Director at the  
21 Interfaith Center of New York. An organization  
22 that's been around for a long time here in the city  
23 that works with grassroots and immigrant faith  
24 leaders from different traditions and offers a lot of  
25 civics education. So, we join this faith base in

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3 secular community organizations along with civic  
4 institutions and educators to support Resolution 476  
5 and we strongly request that the City Council do as  
6 well.

7 We are you know as you know, we are asking for  
8 the city, Department of Education to provide  
9 religious diversity curricula for those students of  
10 all different ages and professional development for  
11 teachers in this area as well. One thing that the  
12 Interfaith Center has done for a long time, about ten  
13 years, is to work with the National Endowment for the  
14 Humanities and Union Theological Seminary to provide  
15 three-week modules in the summer for public, private,  
16 and parochial teachers from all over the country.  
17 And together, we have worked on religious literacy  
18 and also taught a lot about the first amendment and  
19 how it is as a public-school teacher. You can  
20 educate about religious diversity without running a  
21 foul of the first amendment. And so, that's a really  
22 important component as well and something that we've  
23 had good success with. And I just want to hold up  
24 two reasons for the support.

25 One, which the support of this Resolution. The  
first of which my colleagues have you know mentioned,

1 which is just the human cost of religious illiteracy,  
2 which we've seen too much of in the rise of hate  
3 crimes of late and the second reason, I want to add  
4 however, that hasn't been mentioned so much today,  
5 has to do with the way that religious diversity  
6 education when it's done in this way is really a road  
7 into civics education because the minute you have to  
8 put yourself in the position of a classmate or a  
9 teacher whose religiously other than you, you are  
10 exercising a civic muscle if you will. You're  
11 putting yourself in the space and in through your  
12 imagination in the shoes of someone else. Which as  
13 Americans, we have to do and particularly as New  
14 Yorkers, if we wish to create and hold fast to this  
15 vibrant kind of civic fabric that we're part of.

17 So, that is it for my comments today. Thank you  
18 so much.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
20 Our last panel will be Heba Khalil, Kulsoom Tapal,  
21 and Harwinder Singh.

22 HEBA KHALIL: Thank you so much. My name is Heba  
23 Khalil and I am the Executive Director of the New  
24 York Metro Chapter of Emgage. A Muslim Civic  
25 engagement and advocacy nonprofit that empowers

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1  
2 Muslim voters and advocates for policies that effect  
3 our community on the state, local and federal level.  
4 I support City Council Resolution 476 calling upon  
5 the New York City Department of Education to consult  
6 with faith-based organizations to develop and provide  
7 all grade levels with a curriculum that focuses on  
8 religious diversity to provide professional  
9 development focused on religious diversity for  
10 teachers, staff and administrators to ensure accurate  
11 classification of hate crimes and annual school  
12 reports and immediate notification and full  
13 disclosure to parents of hate crime statistics. And  
14 to ensure that schools take actions to condemn  
15 bullying and harassment based on religious clothing,  
16 food requirements and the need for prayer spaces and  
17 time year around.

18       There are around one million Muslims in New York  
19 City and this resolution is more important than ever.  
20 There has been a worrying uptick in anti-Muslim,  
21 anti-Jewish and anti-Sikh rhetoric hate crimes across  
22 the city, especially against young people and those  
23 that are visibly identifiable faith groups. We are  
24 seeing levels of anti-Muslim, anti-Jewish and anti-  
25 Sikh rhetoric that is reminiscent of post 9/11. This

1  
2 has led to discrimination, vandalism of houses of  
3 worship and hate crimes. Most recently, a 16-year-  
4 old Muslim girl was attacked on the subway and a Sikh  
5 man in Queens on a bus. It is especially important  
6 to make sure that young people feel protected in  
7 their schools and that they are not targeted because  
8 of their faith.

9 Religious based bullying and harassment is often  
10 due to misunderstanding or negative perceptions about  
11 how others express their faith. Religious diversity  
12 and education can help address hate crimes and create  
13 healthy school environments for students, educators  
14 and staff. Researchers and advocates contend that  
15 lessons in schools that address religious biases and  
16 inaccuracies can help decrease religious based  
17 bullying. Curriculums in Chicago and Michigan have  
18 been developed and in New York City, the Center for  
19 Asian Children and Families is advocating for an  
20 inclusive curriculum to prevent misunderstandings  
21 about the AAPI community.

22 Educating students not only reduces hate crimes  
23 but can also promote civic leadership and tolerance  
24 among youth. It is imperative that New York City be  
25 an example and pave the way for school curriculum



1 inclusivity of prominent religions and all others.

2 There is a dire need to address hate crimes and to  
3 create policies and laws that address religious  
4 intolerance and antireligious bigotry. There is also  
5 a dire need to improve and enhance access to  
6 resources to educators and staff.  
7

8 Teachers often do not have the resources to teach  
9 about world religions and how to dispel biases and  
10 hatreds. New York is a city that prides itself on  
11 its diversity. According to the Public Religion  
12 Research Institute, New York City has the largest  
13 number of Jewish and Muslim residents of any  
14 municipality in the U.S. Because of this, we should  
15 take a leading role in encouraging a robust line of  
16 policies that support religious diversities and  
17 address harmful rhetoric against different faith  
18 groups through education.

19 We ask that you pass Resolution 476 to protect  
20 youth in New York City, enhance their understanding  
21 of other groups and work with educators and staff by  
22 connecting them to resources that can elevate their  
23 understanding of others. Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your  
25 testimony and thank you to all of our panelists. If

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3 there are any more people in the room who would like  
4 to testify, please make your way to the Sergeant at  
5 Arms desk at the back to fill out a witness slip. We  
6 will now move on to our virtual panelists.

7 Just as a reminder to our virtual panelists,  
8 please wait for the Sergeant at Arms to announce that  
9 you may begin your testimony after you are unmuted.  
10 Our first panel B. Gibbs, Aneej Bhandari, Brittany  
11 Kaiser and Erin Reid. B. Gibbs, you may begin your  
12 testimony.

13 B. GIBBS: Give me a moment please. Hi, my name  
14 is Alexis Krickman(SP?). I'm a student [04:52:11] as  
15 well as an RJ representative at Harvest Collegiate  
16 High School and a member of Teachers Unite. I'm here  
17 today to say we need more counselors, social workers  
18 and less police. I want to urge you to find more  
19 useful things that would actually help young people  
20 in schools, especially low-income schools, which  
21 always get the short end of the stick.

22 Doing practices like restorative justice help  
23 support students and helps us thrive. It urges  
24 students to build a stronger and more -

25 Sorry, where was I? Okay, stronger community  
with each other by listening to what they had to say.

1  
2 A big part of restorative practices involves the  
3 youth. Restorative justice empowers youth to use  
4 their voices to make a change. My experience in past  
5 schools were not the best. They would practice  
6 punitive punishments, which means they would give out  
7 harsh and harmful punishments for bad behavior. This  
8 led students down a more difficult road in their  
9 life. Punitive practices disturbs not only their  
10 learning but minor problems will stay with them and  
11 follow them for the rest of their lives. These types  
12 of students that face nonstop punitive practices are  
13 more likely to end up not coming to school or worse.  
14 Go down a long path of negative behavior. The  
15 problem some students face most likely could have  
16 been prevented if they just had someone to talk to  
17 instead of being punished for the mistake they said  
18 or did.

19       What I more than anything today is to urge you to  
20 pass a budget that moves money away from policing  
21 young people and towards restorative justice  
22 practices, which means funding money to hire school  
23 based restorative justice counselors. This includes  
24 youth activism, parent coordinators, counselors and  
25 social workers. This brings huge support. It also

1 encourages students to build a safe and welcoming  
2 community in knowledge what they deserve. Thank you.

3  
4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your  
5 testimony. Aneej Bhandari. Aneej Bhandari, you may  
6 begin your testimony.

7 ANEEJ BHANDARI: Hi there and with peace. My  
8 name is Aneej Bhandari. I'm a Restorative Justice  
9 Organizer with Restorative Justice Initiative and  
10 testifying today with Teachers Unite. In addition,  
11 for a number of years, I was also a restorative  
12 justice coordinator in New York City public schools.

13 I am here today to advocate for the investment in  
14 community-based support positions and restorative  
15 justice coordinators in New York City schools that  
16 are not trained by or associated with the New York  
17 City Police Department.

18 During my time as a restorative justice  
19 coordinator, I was able to be a part of extremely  
20 transformative work with young people, with  
21 educators, with parents, with organizers, especially  
22 with young people, watching them grow from curious  
23 students into facilitators and to circle keepers and  
24 to go to resources in times of conflict. And also,  
25 simultaneous to this, my time working in New York

1 City schools was also defined by seeing what happens  
2 when resources are continually taken away from  
3 staffing positions that otherwise support the needs  
4 of our growing young folks. They become  
5 unsustainable and unfair to the health diverse union  
6 community.  
7

8 A crucial piece of restorative justice work and  
9 mend building is understanding that a community holds  
10 responsibility for safety to one another, rather than  
11 holding that within a single entity. When funding is  
12 reduced for support roles in schools, those  
13 responsibilities don't go away. Instead, they're  
14 implicitly added onto existing staffing jobs in  
15 schools that then make supportive environments harder  
16 for folks to sustain together.

17 Not only this but the reliance on school safety  
18 agents for support roles are racist and ignores the  
19 history of restorative justice organizing and  
20 movement building that's taking place across schools,  
21 both in New York City and across the nation. The  
22 history that is powerful, alive, transforming lives  
23 in a relational level daily and not inclusive of an  
24 historically oppressive entity in order to respond to  
25 harm and conflict.

1  
2 The proximity of out young people to policing  
3 agencies makes the very human lives of our students  
4 data points for continuing surveillance that  
5 continues to criminalize them. We know from years in  
6 this movement that police in schools create a  
7 foundation of distrust and a sense of fear. One that  
8 is unable to sustain a healthy environment of  
9 learning, of growth, of transformation, especially  
10 for the young folks in our city with histories of  
11 trauma.

12 Why take this route in a city with such rich  
13 ample evidence of healing alternatives that are lead  
14 by and for young people, by and for educators, by and  
15 for families. Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
17 Brittany Kaiser.

18 BRITTANY KAISER: Hi, my name is Kaiser and I  
19 teach elementary art. I'm testifying today with  
20 Teachers Unite. Thank you all for your time today.  
21 Earlier Council Member Joseph asked about an increase  
22 in NYPD presence in public schools that was  
23 concerning to staff and students. And the School  
24 Safety Administrator responded that the community  
25

1 should think about whether their might have been an  
2 increase in incidents that required NYPD involvement.  
3

4 I think this really gets to the crucks of the  
5 missed understanding here. My perspective as a  
6 teacher is that indeed incidents of conflict and  
7 violence having increased. We have a lot of kids who  
8 are traumatized and in crisis and the have disruptive  
9 behaviors as a result.

10 It's the apparent assumption that NYPD  
11 involvement is the correct response to these  
12 behaviors. Meanwhile, when asked about restorative  
13 justice, the same administrator said, "I can't talk  
14 to restorative justice."

15 So, when we talk about NYPD in schools, we are  
16 only talking about punishment. No amount of  
17 punishment can heal trauma. No amount of punishment  
18 can teach a student how to have positive and peaceful  
19 interactions with their peers. The good news is, we  
20 know what works. Hiring counselors and school social  
21 workers works. Implementing thoughtful, holistic and  
22 proactive restorative justice programming works, not  
23 Project Pivot. We are for restorative justice.

24 Educators, students and families have  
25 consistently shown up to hearings and to panel for

1 educational policy meetings to fight for those things  
2 but again and again, we are ignored by this Mayor and  
3 by the panel which access his rubber stamp. The  
4 funding and infrastructure for restorative justice in  
5 schools, which was finally beginning to get off the  
6 ground right at the beginning of Adams term was  
7 unceremoniously cut. Chancy spoke earlier to the  
8 fact that the new money earmarked for restorative  
9 justice seems to be being diverted to Adams friends  
10 and Project Pivot. The schools budget has been cut  
11 over and over and is about to be cut again, so that  
12 schools are operating on a skeleton crew and don't  
13 have enough staff to cover IEP mandates, let alone an  
14 extra person to run in and keep everyone safe when  
15 there's a fight or a student in crisis.  
16

17 It feels more and more intentional that the  
18 resources in our schools that are dedicated to  
19 carrying for and educating young people are being  
20 twiddled away while there seems to be never-ending  
21 funding for cops. Because of the budget cuts and the  
22 lack of flexibility within the budget, both  
23 individual schools and the system as a whole are  
24 under immense pressure to educate our students with  
25 fewer and fewer resources.



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3 To be clear, cops are not a resource. Council  
4 Members, because New York City is currently mayoral  
5 control, your role is really crucial here. We need  
6 you to intervene and stop this cycle of defunding and  
7 criminalization in our schools.

8 Please come to the PEP meetings and use your  
9 public platform to call out the panel for Education  
10 Policy when they inevitably ignore hours and hours of  
11 public comments from community stakeholders and  
12 approve every new expensive contract or over policing  
13 initiative that the mayor asks them too. I ask you  
14 to vote down any budget, any bill that proposes to  
15 increase funding to the NYPD.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time is expired. Thank  
17 you.

18 BRITTANY KAISER: The funding our schools  
19 deserve. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
21 Erin Reid.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

23 ERIN REID: My name is Erin. I am a Visual Arts  
24 Educator at a Title I high school in District 2. I  
25 am testifying with Teachers Unite and I firmly  
believe that cops do not belong in our schools. And

1  
2 I first want to acknowledge that our students face a  
3 number of very real and present risks and threats to  
4 their safety and I share the concerns, the worry, the  
5 fear that we all have. However, the answer to  
6 creating more safety and addressing these fears is  
7 not more police. Police often escalate situations as  
8 demonstrated in many of the examples provided  
9 tonight. Black and Brown students are  
10 disproportionately impacted and targeted by police  
11 presence, contributing to the widely documented  
12 school to prison access.

13 Police make our students feel unsafe, surveilled,  
14 harassed. When police are in schools, violence is  
15 only met with more violence and with more punishment  
16 and the answer to ensuring our children's safety is  
17 not more police. I'll repeat it again, right? The  
18 answer is more root deep. We have to fund our  
19 schools fully to echo all these comments I've heard  
20 tonight, allowing them, the schools the opportunity  
21 to provide this holistic safety for our children.

22 So, that includes ensuring that our schools have  
23 ample, adequate mental health services in every  
24 single school. It includes strengthening and funding  
25 more restorative justice practices and resources in

1  
2 our schools. It even includes things like having  
3 well-funded and robust after-school programming to  
4 offer youth you know supportive structures and  
5 opportunities for their time. It includes finding  
6 ways to provide additional supports for our families  
7 to address their broader needs, including for food,  
8 for shelter, for other services. And it includes  
9 supporting as well in curriculum and programming that  
10 centers social emotional learning and well being as  
11 well as diversity, equity and inclusion.

12       And there's just so much more to be said and so  
13 many better solutions that have already been  
14 reflected tonight than more police. I cannot tell  
15 you how much it would positively impact my school  
16 community if we had the ability to have more  
17 counselors and more restorative justice coordinators.  
18 With just the limited resources we have, I've seen so  
19 many critical and necessary interventions guided by  
20 those practitioners and by teachers and community  
21 members. Some fights don't escalate or they never  
22 start in the first place. Students can learn to be  
23 accountable for their own actions. Students don't  
24 feel discarded or pushed out or thrown away.

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3 So, I just want to stand with the teachers who  
4 are here and community members more broadly who are  
5 here, calling you to allocate money to the staff.  
6 The resources on all these practices that actually  
7 make our school safe and take it away from policing.  
8 Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your  
10 testimony and thank you to everyone on that panel.  
11 We will now move onto our next virtual panel. Lupe  
12 Hernandez, Linda Livingston, and Melinda Andra. Lupe  
13 Hernandez, you may begin.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

15 LUPE HERNANDEZ: I can give you guys some money  
16 for – can I give you cash though?

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Lupe Hernandez, you may begin  
18 your testimony.

19 UNIDENTIFIED: I apologize, I'm only here  
20 listening in the capacity of the Office of the Public  
21 Advocate. He has already submitted his testimony.  
22 Thank you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much. Linda  
24 Livingston.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

LINDA LIVINGSTON: Can you hear me?

1  
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can hear you.

3 LINDA LIVINGSTON: Hi, good evening to you all.  
4 Forgive me, I'm still at work but I'm a parent of a  
5 student who attends school in District 2 in Manhattan  
6 and I firmly believe schools should be places where  
7 our kids could be cared for, learn, make mistakes and  
8 grow. However, because of violent and excessive  
9 school policing and suspension practices, school  
10 safety can easily lead to incarceration. My son and  
11 my family were confronted with the disaster of school  
12 security when my son was bullied in school. He was  
13 the victim of bullying but quickly became the  
14 offender.

15 Unfortunately unbeknownst to anyone at home he  
16 never said anything to anyone at home and also didn't  
17 feel safe with school staff to address his concerns,  
18 so he acted on his own behalf. Instead of the school  
19 principal and staff addressing what took place,  
20 especially when we presented proof that he was being  
21 bullied, they decided that calling in school safety  
22 officers would be their best option for a student who  
23 has never been in contact with school security  
24 officers, less more being in trouble in school.

1 School often times know the families students,  
2 the homes that students come from and what support is  
3 given to their students. How do you think this would  
4 effect a 16-year-old child that is met with a room  
5 full of school agents with aggression and being  
6 spoken to like he is an adult in police custody?  
7 This has impacted my son on so many different levels.  
8 He didn't want to return to school. I kept him home  
9 for most of the school year. I even hired tutors so  
10 that he would stay on task with school work, to then  
11 be told he was going to be held back because of  
12 attendance and then he had school truancy, which is  
13 the principal counted my home for absences when we  
14 agree with the principal that he would stay home  
15 until we sought out another school.

17 All the other schools that were offered to us  
18 were high truancy, metal detectors, etc.. So, we  
19 decided that he would return to the school that he  
20 attended. Had he not had family support, he would  
21 have been unfairly treated, shunned and scorned.  
22 What happens to students who don't have that support?  
23 I'm here because ending the school to prison pipeline  
24 is deeply important to me and it starts with school  
25 security being inside of our schools, not knowing how

1  
2 to address situations other than with aggression and  
3 force, which can be very overwhelming and traumatic  
4 for students.

5 They say they're here to protect but that's not  
6 the situation. It's a system and they're following  
7 that system to target Black and Brown students.  
8 School safety is often times there with intimidation,  
9 aggression and bullying tactics, portraying  
10 themselves as police officers.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time is expired. Thank  
12 you so much.

13 LINDA LIVINGSTON: Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
15 Melinda Andra.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

17 MELINDA ANDRA: Good afternoon. My name is  
18 Melinda Andra. I'm the Director of the Education  
19 Advocacy Project at the Legal Aid Society. I want to  
20 thank Chairpersons Joseph and Hanks and the  
21 Committees on Education and Public Safety for holding  
22 this hearing.

23 The Legal Aid Society represents New York City  
24 public school students in special education matters,  
25 disciplinary hearings, child welfare, juvenile and

1 criminal legal matters in New York City. Many of our  
2 clients are children with disabilities who have  
3 underserved mental health needs, many have suffered  
4 from trauma. Many have experienced homelessness,  
5 abuse, neglect, food insecurity and family  
6 separations.  
7

8 The children we work with face significant  
9 challenges in accessing the mental health supports  
10 that they need. And they attend schools that over  
11 rely on police or EMS, rather than providing the  
12 emotional support.

13 Disproportionately there are students of color  
14 who live in communities where they are over  
15 surveilled by police. The nature of police  
16 interactions with students also relates to the need  
17 for Resolution 473, Endorsing the Right to Remain  
18 Silent Act. Decades of research established that  
19 children do not understand the warnings or the  
20 consequences of waiving their constitutional rights.

21 This is even more true when applied to children  
22 with disabilities. Many of whom who have  
23 disabilities that interfere with their ability to  
24 read or understand Miranda warnings. And young  
25 people are particularly vulnerable to high pressure



1  
2 interrogation techniques, which sometimes lead to  
3 false confessions.

4 As a result, we have an over representation of  
5 people with disabilities in the juvenile and criminal  
6 legal system throughout New York State, which is why  
7 we also need the City Council to pass Resolution 753.  
8 We agree with many here today, most importantly the  
9 students that have spoken to you that support the  
10 redistribution of the city's resources away from the  
11 NYPD and towards school staff that can provide mental  
12 health supports and restorative justice. However, as  
13 long as we have police officers in our school, there  
14 must be training and accountability.

15 For 25 years, the NYPD has had the flexibility  
16 that Inspector Taylor wants and it has led to abuses.  
17 We therefore support the passage of Introduction 003  
18 and Resolutions 753 and 473. Our written policy will  
19 provide additional information about the research.

20 But I want to tell a story of a Legal Aid client  
21 who was represented by both our juvenile rights and  
22 criminal defense practices, who I will all Meah.  
23 Meah is 17 years old. We began representing her five  
24 years ago when her parents were charged with having  
25 abused her. She has a diagnosis of PTSD and

1 depression. She's never been in any trouble before  
2 and she doesn't get any special education services.  
3 But two weeks ago, she had an argument with her  
4 boyfriend at school and in emotional distress she  
5 attempted to remove herself by leaving school. As  
6 she walked through the hallway crying, a school  
7 administrator called after her telling her to go into  
8 the office.  
9

10 Meah fled toward the door -

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired. Thank  
12 you.

13 MELINDA ANDRA: Apologies.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You can finish.

15 MELINDA ANDRA: Thank you. There was no  
16 suspicion that she had done any criminal act. She  
17 merely failed to comply with the directive. With two  
18 - she was clearly having an emotional crisis. At  
19 this point, a school safety agent blocked the door to  
20 prevent her from leaving and two other agents  
21 attempted to physically restrain her. She panicked  
22 and tried to get away. She pushed the SSA who was  
23 blocking the door and she began flaying her arms and  
24 kicking her feet. She struck one of the SSAs who was  
25 attempting to restrain her. She was handcuffed in

1 front of her peers. Officers from the precinct were  
2 called, and she was questioned in front of  
3 Administrators and police. And she stated that she  
4 pushed and kicked because she was just trying to  
5 leave. No social worker or mental health  
6 professional was present.  
7

8 Rather than providing the mental health support  
9 she needed, officers took her to the precinct. She  
10 was charged in the youth part of adult court with  
11 assault in the second degree, two counts of assault  
12 in the third degree, two counts of attempted assault  
13 in the third degree and two counts of menacing. In  
14 addition to her pending court case, she's facing a  
15 lengthy suspension where the school described her  
16 actions as a violent attack and is requesting a 40 to  
17 180 days suspension. The school is treating her  
18 statement, that she pushed and flailed at the SSAs  
19 because she wanted to get away as a confession of  
20 having assaulted a police officer.

21 This experience has further traumatized Meah.  
22 She's expressed shame about having to return to  
23 school and facing her peers and as pointed out by  
24 Deputy Speaker Ayala, she has now been to trained to  
25 fear police officers.

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3 We want our students to be safe but NYPD – New  
4 York City school overly rely on the NYPD for  
5 discipline. Police should not be involved in routine  
6 disciplinary issues and we urge the Council to pass  
7 Introduction 003 and also to pass Resolutions 753 and  
8 473. Thank you and I'm happy to answer any  
9 questions.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your  
10 testimony. Our next panel Kiran Kaur Gill.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry, Reda Taleb, Cecilla  
13 Teuber and Anthony Springer. Kiran Kaur Gill, you  
14 may begin your testimony.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 KIRAN KAUR GILL: Thank you. Good afternoon or  
17 good evening rather. My name is Kiran Kaur Gill and  
18 I'm the Executive Director of the Sikh American Legal  
19 Defense and Education Fund SALDA.

20 The oldest national Sikh American advocacy group  
21 in the U.S.. Today, I'll be speaking about the Sikh  
22 perspective on Resolution 476 and why it's important  
23 to support.

24 As shared earlier, Resolution 476 calls on the  
25 New York City Department of Education to consult with

1  
2 faith-based organizations to develop and provide all  
3 grade levels with a curriculum that focuses on  
4 religious diversity education.

5 This Resolution is needed because we are seeing a  
6 rise in hate violence against minority religious  
7 communities across the country and in particular in  
8 New York. The Sikh community is no exception.

9 Recently the Federal Bureau of Investigation released  
10 their 2022 crime in the nation statistic where they  
11 reported in increase in anti-Sikh American hate  
12 crimes. The FBI documented 190 incidents of hate  
13 crimes against Sikh Americans, which is the highest  
14 number of hate crime incidents ever recorded by the  
15 government.

16 The FBI's latest hate crime data reveals a  
17 disturbing trend for minority and religious  
18 communities in the United States and this reflects  
19 what we are seeing and hearing from Sikh Americans  
20 across the country, as well as through our own  
21 studies.

22 In 2020, SALDA published the first ever Sikh  
23 American survey to better understand the needs and  
24 experiences of our community. Among the findings, we  
25 say that 58 percent of respondents indicated that

1  
2 they have been bullied or harassed because of their  
3 Sikh identity and 63 of the respondents who wear  
4 Turbines indicated they had been discriminated  
5 against for wearing one.

6 We know there were two recent horrific assaults  
7 against Sikh community members. One on an MTA bus, a  
8 man punched a Sikh teenager in the back of the head,  
9 tried to knock his turbine off and told him, we don't  
10 wear this in this country.

11 In another where an elderly Sikh man was  
12 assaulted and killed after a minor fender bender.  
13 These types of incidents are horrific and should not  
14 happen to anyone from any community, anywhere and how  
15 does Education help? We know there's a deep lack of  
16 awareness of Sikh Americans and Sikhism.

17 In 2012 SALDA conducted a study in conjunction  
18 with Stanford University called Turbine Myths to  
19 better understand the broader American publics  
20 perception of Sikhs and Sikh Americans. Among the  
21 findings of the study, roughly 70 percent of American  
22 public could not identify a pictured Sikh man as Sikh  
23 and there's very little knowledge or awareness of  
24 their religion.

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3 SALDA has implemented Sikh awareness training,  
4 working with government agencies on the federal,  
5 state and local level. The continuous benefits of  
6 education and training around religious diversity.  
7 Roughly 90 percent of those trained say they are  
8 better able to understand and relate to members of  
9 the Sikh community. We've also seen stronger  
10 relationships being built with community members. We  
11 know this approach can also work in schools. We  
12 strongly encourage you to support Resolution 476 with  
13 the lead it will be instrumental in curbing hate and  
14 promoting understanding. Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
16 Reda Taleb.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

18 REDA TALEB: Good Evening Chair Joseph and  
19 esteemed members of the Education Committee. Thank  
20 you for holding this hearing, and for the opportunity  
21 to testify today. My name is Reda Taleb, and I'm the  
22 former Community Education Program Coordinator for  
23 the Muslim Community Network or MCN.

24 For over two decades since the aftermath of  
25 September 11, 2001, MCN has dedicated itself to  
molding an accurate public narrative of what it means

1 to be Muslim by Muslims. In my role, I had the honor  
2 of leading our Diversity Education Workshops. Our  
3 workshops aim to: Inform and equip educators,  
4 parents, public officials, and students with the  
5 tools and resources to address the needs of the  
6 Muslim community; to help break stereotypes and  
7 discrimination against Muslims; to facilitate  
8 community building between sects, racial, and ethnic  
9 groups, such as through our Sunni Shia dialogues; to  
10 increase awareness of Muslims such as through  
11 community education workshops on the role of African  
12 American Muslims in the history of the United States.  
13 Some of our presentations have included.  
14 Understanding Islam and the Muslim American  
15 Experience. Inclusive Learning: Your Muslim  
16 American Students and Muslim Contributions to  
17 American History, and so many other presentations.

19 During my time at MCN, I saw firsthand the  
20 positive and transformative impactful outcomes that  
21 these workshops had on our students as well as school  
22 staff and leadership. For example, in our post-  
23 workshop surveys 100 percent of attendees stated that  
24 they gained knowledge about Muslims that was not  
25 taught in their schools. For this reason and more, I



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3 fully support Resolution 476, and I urge this  
4 Committee to adopt it. I wholeheartedly believe that  
5 those of us closest to the problems we are facing,  
6 are indeed best suited to provide the solutions we  
7 need for true systemic change. Resolution 476 will  
8 provide us with the resources to do just that, so we  
9 can create a safe, just, and equitable NYC for all.  
10 Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your  
12 testimony. Cecilia Teuber.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

14 CECILIA TEUBER: Hey. Thank you Chair Hanks and  
15 Chair Joseph and all Committee members. My name is  
16 Cecilia Teuber, I am the Community Organizer at Bronx  
17 Connect. We are an organization that provides  
18 wraparound services for at-risk and justice-involved  
19 youth within the five boroughs.

20 Decades of research has proven that brains are  
21 not fully developed until your mid-20's. Due to this  
22 fact, decision-making skills in young people under 18  
23 years old are impaired. They think of the immediate  
24 moment rather than the future. This causes youth to  
25 say or do things that do not mean but it is instead  
their automatic response when faced with stressful

1  
2 situations. Research has shown that 34 percent of  
3 young people under 18 falsely confess to crimes they  
4 did not commit.

5 As mentioned earlier, at Bronx Connect we work  
6 with justice-involved youth on a daily basis.  
7 Something I hear repeatedly among our participants is  
8 their lack of understanding basic constitutional  
9 rights. That being said, many of these same young  
10 people have ended up waiving their rights when faced  
11 with a custodial interrogation. This waiver does not  
12 correlate with understanding their rights but rather  
13 their automatic response to those stressful  
14 situations or by being coerced by parents and police.

15 Across the state, laws prohibit minors from  
16 purchasing cigarettes, alcohol, and even whipped  
17 cream chargers. Why are we allowing the same  
18 children who are not allowed to purchase those items  
19 to waive their Miranda rights without fully  
20 understanding the meaning and the consequences of  
21 waiving them?

22 I urge the City Council to pass Resolution 473  
23 sponsored by Council woman Cabán to call on the New  
24 York State legislature to pass, and the Governor to  
25 sign the Youth Interrogation Bill, which is Senate

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1 Bill 1099 and Assembly Bill 1963. This would protect  
2 children during a custodial police interrogations.  
3

4 Thank you so much for the time and I apologize  
5 for not being on camera. I am in transit.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No problem. Thank you so  
7 much for your testimony. Anthony Springer.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

9 ANTHONY SPRINGER: Yes thank you for the time. I  
10 appreciate Chairperson Hanks, Chairperson Joseph and  
11 the Committees for hosting this and allowing us the  
12 time to speak on this.

13 As we continually heard today, our youth need to  
14 be protected. You know our youth are our vulnerable  
15 population. This should be one of the main focuses  
16 of our city. Our youth are the carriers of our  
17 values, vision and future. Currently our justice  
18 system targets the underprivileged, smothering  
19 potential with overly punitive practices. And this  
20 is something that's continually been spoken about  
21 today how police really don't understand how to  
22 interact with young people.

23 I'm here supporting Reso. 473, which really  
24 speaks about adding those layers of protection where  
25 our young people need those layers of protection.

1  
2 The Youth Interrogation Bill will make it mandatory  
3 that a young person has to have legal representation,  
4 legal counsel prior to facing interrogation.

5 As the Cecilia just mentioned, we have high  
6 number of young people. Young people are three times  
7 more likely to waive their rights than adults, which  
8 is sad really to hear when we look at the fact that  
9 we have a system that really caters to adults rather  
10 than young people. This is why we need to pass this  
11 Resolution. We found out over 90 percent of young  
12 people under the age of 18 waive those rights. And  
13 this really speaks to those facts that Cecilia just  
14 mentioned about the lack of impulse control, how  
15 they're eager to police, police, police and they  
16 don't really understand the long-term consequences as  
17 we know studies show that young people are still  
18 developing up until the age of five. So, I urge the  
19 Council to pass Reso. 473 in order to see our younger  
20 people protected. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your  
22 testimony and thank you to everybody on that panel.  
23 Uhm, if you hear your name, please use the raise hand  
24 feature, Solomon Blecher, Chris Hassan, Rebecca  
25 Mayfield, Christopher Jeffries, Memunatu Mohammed,

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Rabia Nasseem, Ammar Abdul Rahman, Salma Barkat Shah,  
Savnoor Kaur, Lamis Idris, Heba Khalil, Jason Cowan.

Please use the raise hand feature if you're  
logged onto the Zoom or if there is anybody else  
logged on to Zoom who wishes to testify, please use  
the raise hand feature.

No hands. That concludes our virtual testimony  
for today.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And this concludes our  
Education hearing along with Public Safety. [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 interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date NOVEMBER 6, 2023