

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

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November 21, 2017  
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Vanessa L. Gibson  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Vincent J. Gentile  
James Vacca  
Julissa Ferreras-Copeland  
Jumaane D. Williams  
Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.  
Chaim M. Deutsch  
Raphael Espinal, Jr.  
Rory I. Lancman  
Ritchie J. Torres  
Steven Matteo

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

Theron Pride  
Special Counsel on Justice Initiatives at MOCJ

Dana Kaplan  
MOCJ

Brian Conroy  
Assistant Chief Commanding Officer at NYPD  
Department of School Safety Division

Mark Rampersant  
Deputy CEO for Safety and Security for  
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Lois Herrera  
CEO Office of Safety and Youth Development

Kate Terenzi  
Center for Popular Democracy

Roberto Cabanas  
Urban Youth Collaborative

Onyx Walker  
Urban Youth Collaborative

Adilka Pimentel  
Urban Youth Collaborative

Jorki Badillo [sp?]  
Sistas and Brothas United

Keith Fuller

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

Nelson Mar  
Bronx Legal Services

Keren Farkas  
Brooklyn Defender Services

Johanna Miller  
NYCLU

Gianne Falvo  
NYCLU

Kara Chamber  
Legal Aid Society

Ashley Sawyer  
Youth Represent

Kadeesha Hudson [sp?]

Brittany Brathwaite

Charlotte Pope  
Children's Defense Fund



1  
2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Good morning ladies  
3 and gentlemen. Welcome to the City Council Chambers.  
4 I am Council Member Vanessa Gibson of the 16<sup>th</sup>  
5 District of the Bronx, and I'm proud to serve as  
6 Chair of the Committee on Public Safety. I want to  
7 welcome each and every one of you to our hearing this  
8 morning and certainly to all of my colleagues who are  
9 here and those who will be joining us. I thank you  
10 to coming to today's hearing. This morning we are  
11 examining the NYPD School Safety's role and efforts  
12 to improve school climate. The safety of our  
13 students, 1.1 million students that are in our New  
14 York City public schools, is of paramount importance  
15 to everyone and we depend and rely on our School  
16 Safety Agents to play a very critical role in  
17 ensuring the security of our students, parents,  
18 educators, and administrators. It is truly essential  
19 that we strike a very delicate but necessary balance  
20 between education and public safety. We need a  
21 cultural shift to ensure that our schools are a  
22 pipeline to success and not a pipeline to prison, but  
23 rather college and careers. We must focus our  
24 energies on creative approaches and education and  
25 providing sufficient resources to better enable the

1  
2 prevention and de-escalation of problem situations  
3 before they get out of hand. Truly, prevention is  
4 key and not reactions after situations occur. I want  
5 to recognize and applaud our Mayor, Bill de Blasio,  
6 and our Schools Chancellor, Carmen Farina, for their  
7 recent announcement of an eight million-dollar plan  
8 to prevent bullying in our schools. This plan would  
9 include an online portal where families can report  
10 any instances of bullying, harassment and/or  
11 discrimination. Both the Department of Ed. and the  
12 NYPD School Safety Division work hand-in-hand  
13 together to maintain and strengthen safe and  
14 supportive learning environments for all of our  
15 students. To that end, the NYPD School Safety  
16 Division instituted recently a warning card system.  
17 Through this system, the SSA officer issues a warning  
18 card for certain low-level offenses in lieu of a  
19 Criminal Court summons, and the issue is then handled  
20 administratively by that particular school. This  
21 system was initially piloted in several schools in  
22 the Bronx and now is being expanded to additional  
23 schools throughout the City. I am interested this  
24 morning in learning more about this program and  
25 certainly any limitations or challenges that we are

1  
2 currently facing and certainly any improvements in  
3 ways that we can continue to roll the warning card  
4 system further. In addition, I'd also like to learn  
5 about Team Up Tuesdays, which are programs in which  
6 officers from our local precincts lead students from  
7 grades K through 12 in activities that are focused on  
8 teamwork, partnership and leadership. I'd also like  
9 to learn about the status of the SSA's enhanced de-  
10 escalation training. Both the Department of Ed. and  
11 School Safety Division play a very important role in  
12 keeping our students and educators in a safe,  
13 supportive and secure learning environment, and I  
14 truly want to commend the School Safety Division for  
15 their efforts. Certainly, over the past four years  
16 in serving as Chair of this Committee on Public  
17 Safety, it's truly been a blessing and an honor to  
18 work very closely with School Safety Agents. You are  
19 the frontline to keeping our children safe. You are  
20 the first point of entry for every New York City  
21 public school, and we truly know that we cannot do  
22 this work without you. I appreciate that during this  
23 Administration we have recognized that every  
24 stakeholder has a role to play, and that's why in  
25 2015 the Mayor and the Chancellor announced the

1  
2 formation of the School Leadership Climate Team, to  
3 bring School Safety Agents, the Department of  
4 Education, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice,  
5 parents, advocates, civil rights organizations, and  
6 everyone who truly has a fundamental passion for  
7 keeping our children safe and brought us together,  
8 and even now over two years later, the School  
9 Leadership Climate Team continues to meet, continues  
10 to dialogue and talk about ways in which we can  
11 continue to work together. I don't think I have ever  
12 in my tenure as an elected official seen this level  
13 of partnership, and so I certainly publicly and  
14 privately-- you know that I've always been a  
15 supporter and an advocate with school safety-- want  
16 to commend each and every one of you. As I travel in  
17 my district, school district nine, school district  
18 eight, and school district 12 in the Bronx, I really  
19 have an opportunity to get to know many of our School  
20 Safety Agents, and I see the work they do. Many of  
21 the School Safety Agents in the district I represent  
22 are predominantly women and women of color who have a  
23 long tenure with the Department, and I appreciate  
24 their compassion and their commitment every single  
25 day. So, I'm looking forward to today's hearing.



1  
2 Certainly, I know that the Committee on Education has  
3 had a recent hearing in October as it relates  
4 specifically to bullying in our schools, and today's  
5 hearing is really an opportunity to hear from School  
6 Safety to make sure that you have an opportunity to  
7 go on record and talk about the role you play in  
8 school climate, where you see the Chancellor's  
9 announcement of bullying programs and resources,  
10 where you fall in line with that, and certainly  
11 moving forward into the new year. I will be serving  
12 for another term of four years, and so my commitment,  
13 whether I Chair Public Safety or not, is always  
14 there. So, I certainly want to hear moving forward  
15 into a new year where we can continue to partner and  
16 work together. So, I thank you for joining us today.  
17 I thank my colleagues for being here, Council Member  
18 Ritchie Torres is here, and Council Member Rory  
19 Lancman are with us as well, and I want to  
20 acknowledged and thank the staff of the Committee on  
21 Public Safety for their work today and getting our  
22 hearing together, our Senior Legislative Counsel,  
23 Deepa Ambikar [sp?], our Legislative Policy Analyst,  
24 Casey Addison [sp?], and our Financial Analyst Stever  
25 Riester [sp?], and my Chief of Staff Dana Wax.

1  
2 Looking forward to today's hearing, and now before I  
3 call the first panel, which we have our Assistant  
4 Chief of the NYPD School Safety Division, Chief Brian  
5 Conroy, as well as our Special Council on Justice  
6 Initiative, as well as Co-Chair of the Mayor's  
7 Leadership Climate Team on School Climate from the  
8 Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, we have Theron  
9 Pride. Welcome, gentleman, and looking forward to  
10 hearing your testimony today. We appreciate your  
11 presence and participation, and now I will have the  
12 Counsel administer the oath and then you may begin  
13 your testimony. Thank you, once again.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell  
15 the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth  
16 in your testimony before this committee and to  
17 respond honestly to Council Member questions?

18 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. You may  
20 begin.

21 THERON PRIDE: Good morning, Chair Gibson  
22 and members of the Committee on Public Safety. My  
23 name is Theron Pride, and I am Special Counsel on  
24 Justice Initiatives at the Mayor's Office of Criminal  
25 Justice. I also serve as the newest Co-Chair for the

1 Mayor's Leadership Team on School Climate. I'm  
2 joined by my colleague Dana Kaplan who previously  
3 served as Co-Chair and now leads other initiatives at  
4 MOCJ. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today  
5 and following my brief remarks, Chief Conroy will  
6 deliver his testimony. The Mayor's Office of  
7 Criminal Justice advises the Mayor on Public Safety  
8 Strategy and together with partners inside and  
9 outside of government, develops and implements  
10 policies aimed at reducing crime, reducing  
11 unnecessary arrests and incarceration, promoting  
12 fairness and building strong and safe neighborhoods.  
13 Within this context, MOCJ has formed a strong  
14 partnership with the New York City Police  
15 Department's School Safety Division and the  
16 Department of Education to ensure the wellbeing and  
17 safety of students and staff in the City's public  
18 schools while minimizing the use of unnecessary  
19 suspensions, arrests and summonses. Research shows  
20 us that all thing being equal, when students are  
21 suspended or arrested in school, their chances of  
22 being held back in school, dropping out, or entering  
23 the juvenile justice system increase. In addition,  
24 overly punitive responses have been shown to be an  
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1  
2 ineffective way to improve student behavior and  
3 school climate. Furthermore, these punitive  
4 responses have been shown to disproportionately  
5 impact students of color and students with  
6 disabilities, which can have damaging immediate and  
7 long-term effects on their development. as the Co-  
8 Chair for the Mayor's Leadership Team, and someone  
9 that has previously worked on these issues as a  
10 social worker in public schools and doing my time in  
11 the Obama Administration at the US Department of  
12 Justice, a I know improving school climate and  
13 reducing crime in our schools is a complex problem  
14 that will take all of us to solve. This is why the  
15 City has made significant investments not only in  
16 School Safety Agents but in mental health and other  
17 programs at schools that emphasize the importance of  
18 fostering a safe and healthy climate. This has  
19 included more than 47 million dollars annually in  
20 school climate reforms generally. Additionally, the  
21 City recently announced another eight million to  
22 support anti-bullying initiatives that include a  
23 bullying complaint portal for families, community  
24 workshops on bullying, prevention and reduction,  
25 mental health first aid, training for schools and

1 communities, increased protection from bullying for  
2 students, and funding for student-led Gender  
3 Sexuality Alliances and Respect for All clubs.  
4 Improving school climate is a critical issue that we  
5 must address because as Mayor de Blasio has said no  
6 parent should have to choose between a school that's  
7 safe for their child and a school where every student  
8 is treated fairly. All schools can and must be both.  
9 This work is complicated, and we have encountered  
10 some very tragic moments as we've worked together to  
11 improve the climate in our schools, but this has only  
12 caused us to redouble our efforts and recommit to  
13 this goal of ensuring schools are safe learning  
14 environments for all and every student is treated  
15 fairly. Thank you for the opportunity to say a few  
16 words here today and for helping us consider all that  
17 we can do to support the wellbeing and safety of our  
18 students and staff. We're happy to answer any  
19 questions following Chief Conroy's testimony.

21 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

22 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Good morning,  
23 Chair Gibson and members of the Council. I am  
24 Assistant Chief Brian Conroy, Commanding Officer of  
25 the New York City Police Department School Safety

1  
2 Division in improving school climate. At the outset  
3 of my testimony today, I believe it is important for  
4 me to state that all students need a safe and  
5 supportive learning environment to succeed in the  
6 classroom and thrive in their community, and the  
7 Police Department is committed to providing a secure,  
8 supportive, inclusive and equitable learning  
9 environment in every New York City public school.  
10 While last year, 2016/2017 school year was the safest  
11 year on record, ensuring the safety of our students,  
12 staff and families each day is always ongoing and at  
13 the forefront of the Police Department and the  
14 Department of Education. It has been over 18 years  
15 since the function of the Board of Education and  
16 Division of School Safety were transferred to the  
17 Police Department, giving the Police Department the  
18 responsibility for managing school safety personnel  
19 and designating School Safety Agents to be employees  
20 of the Police Department. over the years, members of  
21 the Police Department have discussed with the Council  
22 the reasons for that change and the level of crime  
23 that dangerously compromises the safety and security  
24 of the City's public schools at the time to the  
25 ultimate detriment of the educational commission.

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2 Today, I am pleased to be here to talk with you about  
3 the hard work that the School Safety Division has  
4 done in improving the safety of the school  
5 environment by reducing crime within our schools. Of  
6 course, improving school climate and crime within our  
7 schools is not something School Safety does on its  
8 own. The Police Department and the Department of  
9 Education have established a true partnership to work  
10 on on all issues related to school climate, school  
11 safety and training. Additionally, we would not be  
12 as successful in our mission without our strong  
13 working relationship with school principals, school  
14 administration, teachers, parents, and most  
15 importantly the students. As I mentioned previously,  
16 last school year was the safest year on record with  
17 an 18 percent decrease in major crimes from the  
18 2014/2015 school year, which was a first full school  
19 year under this Administration. Additionally, there  
20 was an eight percent decrease in school-related  
21 arrests and an 11 percent decrease in the number of  
22 summonses issued by the School Safety Division  
23 compared to the 2015/2016 school year. Currently,  
24 there is a two percent reduction in seven major  
25 crimes when comparing this school year to last year.

1  
2 In working in close collaboration with the Department  
3 of Education we are focused on referring minor  
4 incident where appropriate to school administration  
5 rather than involving a criminal justice response. We  
6 have sought to balance holding youths accountable for  
7 while also utilizing school-based interventions in  
8 order to provide opportunities for young people to  
9 stay on the path toward college and careers. Part of  
10 our strategy is to ensure safety of our students is  
11 to work to prevent weapons from entering our schools.  
12 In this regard, magnetometers play an important role.  
13 While all intermediate schools and high schools are  
14 subject to unannounced scanning, historically there  
15 had been 88 intermediate and high school buildings  
16 that had been subject to fulltime or random scanning.  
17 During this year scanners had been added to an  
18 additional three schools, year to date. Weapon  
19 recoveries have increased by a third when compared to  
20 last year. What is critical to note, however, is  
21 that while magnetometers are an important tool for  
22 recovering dangerous weapons, our community partners  
23 are also a valuable resource as well. Through  
24 cooperative working relationship with students,  
25 school administration, parents and others, we are



1 identifying more weapons and counting those in the  
2 school community among our strongest partners,  
3 fostering trust and making our schools safer. Based  
4 on a recommendations from the Mayor's Leadership Team  
5 on School Climate, clear public halls were  
6 established for school principals to request the  
7 addition or removal of magnetometers. We attribute  
8 much of our crime reduction success to enhance  
9 training for the 5,090 School Safety Agents and 113  
10 police officers and detectives assigned to the School  
11 Safety Division. It is not a coincidence that school  
12 climate and school safety improved together as our  
13 training has been enhanced. Our new School Safety  
14 Agent recruits participate in a 17-week training  
15 program at the Police Academy. This comprehensive  
16 program includes training in the areas of war, police  
17 science, behavioral science, and physical education  
18 and tactics, and focus on those topics such as  
19 bullying, the LGBTQ community, tactical  
20 communication, and diffusing hostility. In order to  
21 assist in preparing School Safety Agents for their  
22 special role as part of the school community,  
23 Department of Education personnel also participate in  
24 our training as instructors and address specific  
25

1 areas such as special education, school  
2 administration, school governance, adolescent  
3 suicide, conflict resolution, bullying, child abuse,  
4 and substance abuse prevention. Training also  
5 focuses on how to better work with school  
6 administration and students in areas of collaborative  
7 problem solving, restorative practices, conflict  
8 resolution, de-escalation techniques, and working  
9 with special needs students. Moreover, training does  
10 not end at the recruit level for School Safety Agents  
11 and uniformed members of service assigned to the  
12 School Safety Division. Agents and uniformed members  
13 of the service assigned to the division receive  
14 training throughout the year in such important areas  
15 as problem-solving, mediating conflicts, and response  
16 to emergency or dangerous conditions such as an  
17 active shooter incident. Equally important to the  
18 successful work of the School Safety Division are our  
19 partnerships and strong working relationships,  
20 including with elected officials and with  
21 organizations and advisory groups outside of city  
22 government. As you probably know, School Safety  
23 Division is an integral part of the Mayor's  
24 Leadership Team on School Climate. The leadership of  
25

1 the School Safety Division works with representatives  
2 from other city agencies, advocacy groups, union  
3 leaders, and school principals develop new ideas and  
4 make policy recommendations that will further improve  
5 the school environment and further enhance the  
6 positive role that our police officers and School  
7 Safety Agents have been creating a safe and  
8 productive learning environment. Many of the recent  
9 changes the School Safety Division has made with  
10 respect to training, utilizing school-based  
11 intervention and the sharing of data are a result of  
12 the work of this interagency, interdisciplinary team.  
13 The work with the Mayor's Leadership Team is ongoing  
14 and will play an important role in our efforts to  
15 continue to improve school climate. In 2016, we  
16 partnered with Department of Education to introduce  
17 Team Up Tuesday in which School Safety Agents and  
18 officers from precincts lead students in grades K  
19 through 12 in activities focused on teamwork and  
20 leadership. The program brings together students and  
21 NYPD personnel in productive activities ranging from  
22 visual and performing arts to physical fitness and  
23 foreign language lessons. In addition, School Safety  
24 Division holds annual events to empower students to  
25

1  
2 reduce verbal and physical confrontations in their  
3 school. By engaging in thoughtful dialogue and  
4 interactions, students learn about the resources  
5 available to them and our personal gain a better  
6 understanding of students' needs. On particularly  
7 effective partnership has been developed with the  
8 Bronx Parent Action Committee, a group of concerned  
9 parents who meet with us on a regular basis to  
10 discuss new ways to handle crime and disorder in  
11 schools and to promote positive school culture. This  
12 group has also participated in training School Safety  
13 Agents and continues to provide valuable feedback and  
14 counsel. Furthermore, the NYPD has continued to its  
15 efforts to build positive relationships and trust  
16 with students. Youth programs such as Explorers, the  
17 Youth and Police Academy, My School has Rhythm Not  
18 Violence, and our Police Liaison Program have been  
19 highly successful in bridging the gap between police  
20 officers, School Safety Agents and students. We  
21 continue to work with community-based organizations  
22 to maintain and help strengthen positive school  
23 climate and we welcome the Council's assistance in  
24 identifying community groups who would work with us  
25 on a local basis toward the same end. In closing,

1  
2 the Department takes the duty of providing a safe  
3 climate in every New York City public school very  
4 seriously. The Police Department and the School  
5 Safety Division will continue to work in a  
6 partnership with Department of Education, parents,  
7 students, and the community in furtherance of that  
8 responsibility. Thank you for the opportunity to  
9 speak with you today, and I am pleased to answer any  
10 of your questions.

11 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you very much  
12 for your testimony and certainly your presence and  
13 all the work on behalf of the School Safety Agents  
14 that work in our schools each and every day. I'd  
15 also like to recognize we've been joined by Council  
16 Member Robert Cornegy, Minority Leader Steve Matteo,  
17 Council Member Vincent Gentile, and we'll have more  
18 members joining us. So, the first question I wanted  
19 to ask is just in terms of clarification so we all  
20 understand some of the language used. When you talk  
21 about a magnetometer, are you talking about the  
22 physical presence of the metal detectors in a school,  
23 or are you talking about the wands that some of the  
24 agents may have?

25

1  
2 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: No, we're  
3 talking about the metal detection equipment.

4 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, the metal  
5 detection equipment, okay, great. I understand that  
6 as part of some of the new initiatives to improve  
7 school safety and overall school climate, the  
8 enhanced de-escalation training that now is included  
9 and incorporated into the base of training for SSAs  
10 at the Academy bring us to 17 weeks. Can you talk a  
11 little bit more about exactly the content, and does  
12 that apply to all of the new SSAs that are coming out  
13 of the Academy, and if so, what about the remaining  
14 SSAs that have already been trained under the old  
15 model, are they trained in the new CIT as well?

16 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Council Member,  
17 we're very excited about the change that we made to  
18 the training. We saw the need to bring more, the  
19 agents more training in the areas working together  
20 with school administration and students since that's  
21 what they're doing for certainly their bigger part of  
22 their day. SO, we added the two additional weeks to-  
23 - they always did get conflict resolution training,  
24 but we expanded that training for an additional two  
25 weeks. We brought in also outside experts in the

1 field to do that training and collaborative problem-  
2 solving with conflict resolution. We've expanded the  
3 opportunity for the Department of Education to join  
4 us at the Police Academy to assist us with training  
5 in areas that they specialize in, particularly in the  
6 areas of dealing with special needs students. We  
7 also do training outside the academy. So all our new  
8 agents have been getting that for the last several  
9 years. We also contracted with outside experts in  
10 the field of conflict resolution and collaborative  
11 problem-solving to give all our current agents. So  
12 we're very happy to say that as of today we've had  
13 over 4,600 of our agents and police officers trained  
14 in a three-day course in conflict resolution. So,  
15 we've really kind of pushed this agenda forward, and  
16 we think it's shown significant benefits.

18 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. So, the  
19 majority of the SSAs have been trained, 4,600 out of  
20 5,090, I believe. So the remaining few hundred, are  
21 they being trained and how is that going, and when do  
22 you expect to finish?

23 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We think within  
24 the next year we should be-- year, year and a half,  
25 we should be finishing that. We're also getting--

1  
2 all our agents are now getting and police officers  
3 mental first-aid training. We've just started that,  
4 but we've already-- we're over 700 of our School  
5 Safety Agents and police officers have received that  
6 training. So, that may take, you know, a couple more  
7 years to get through everybody, but we certainly have  
8 been adding training that I think better helps the  
9 agents to do their job working with the school  
10 community inside our schools.

11 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. Is that a part  
12 of the First Lady's ThriveNYC initiative in terms of  
13 mental first-aid training?

14 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. Is there any  
16 way to expedite that training? You said a few years.

17 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: well, I said  
18 maybe it will be another year or two.

19 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

20 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We have-- you  
21 know, doing 5,000 people training is a task for us.

22 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Right, right.

23 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: And we've done  
24 very well with that. So, I'll get you a better  
25 estimate when we can hope to have that done by.



1  
2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. And then  
3 within the curriculum of the training itself, you  
4 talked about the outside experts and other  
5 instructors that understand obviously with crisis  
6 intervention and dealing with so many of our children  
7 and students that have social/emotional issues.  
8 There's been a lot of talk from many advocates and  
9 parents alike about the City increasing its capacity  
10 of social workers and guidance counselors. We do have  
11 school-based health centers. So, we have a variety  
12 of different levels of resources in our schools  
13 today, but obviously every single school does not  
14 have the same in terms of one social worker, one  
15 guidance counselor, a school-based health center.  
16 I'm very big on the health centers because they do  
17 provide medical and dental and vision services which  
18 are really important. Do you see within the  
19 curriculum the crisis intervention training, does it  
20 include the ability of SSAs to be able to identify  
21 some of the social/emotional needs of students? So,  
22 a student may be deemed as acting out, but there  
23 could be something else that's going on. So, do you  
24 think SSAs in their training are able to understand  
25 what some of those factors are to look for in

1  
2 identifying some of the social/emotional needs of  
3 students?

4 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Yes, they do  
5 receive training in that area where they can-- which  
6 helps them to hopefully recognize these issues, but  
7 we also work very closely with the school  
8 administration. So, part of our training is to  
9 encourage that they're not alone in that school  
10 building, that they should be working together with  
11 guidance counselors, with social workers inside that  
12 school, and I think we do an excellent job of being  
13 part of the school community and everybody working  
14 together to identify issues and also to resolve  
15 conflicts.

16 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. So, while all  
17 of the SSAs are trained in the same de-escalation  
18 tactics and other education, is there anything that's  
19 different with SSAs that are assigned to the  
20 elementary schools since the students are much  
21 younger as compared to middle and high school, or is  
22 it all the same across the board?

23 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We give the same  
24 training across the board, and the reason for that is  
25 that an agent assigned to an elementary school could

1  
2 be in a high school the next day or the next week and  
3 the same thing the other way. High school agents  
4 assigned to high schools, can certainly be assigned  
5 to an elementary school and often fill in there. So,  
6 I think we need to have our agents trained to deal  
7 with the wide range of student ages.

8 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. Wanted to ask  
9 about the Warning Card Program, and I actually am a  
10 little more familiar with it, because a lot of the  
11 advocacy and the work leading up to the Warning Card  
12 Program came out of the Parent Action Committee, and  
13 I first really want to thank you and certainly  
14 Assistant Commissioner Ramon Garcia who still attends  
15 the meetings today with New Settlement and the  
16 parents, specifically in District Nine in the Bronx,  
17 and I wanted to find out if there is an update on the  
18 Warning Card System. I know we started in the Bronx  
19 in some of the campuses, high school campuses, but in  
20 terms of expansion, where are we looking to expand  
21 and how is the warning card system going now?

22 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We're very  
23 excited about the results this time, and this is  
24 another collaborative with the Department of  
25 Education. This is a partnership. This is where

1 we're working very closely with Department of  
2 Education, but also inside the schools. This is  
3 where our agents and police officers are working very  
4 closely with the school Administration. So, you  
5 know, we currently are-- we went, started off in the  
6 five campuses in September 2015. We're now in 16  
7 campuses, and that's 72 schools. Now we're throughout  
8 the city. We're in all the boroughs. We've given  
9 out a total of 126 warning cards to date. So, we're  
10 excited about the partnership and we're looking to  
11 see, you know, analyzing the data to see if we can  
12 certainly expand that program, and I think we're  
13 going to be able to do that based on what we see so  
14 far.  
15

16 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. The  
17 maintenance of the records of the warning card  
18 system, is that kept at a school level, or is that  
19 kept at a central location in terms of the warning  
20 cards that are issued to each of the students? How  
21 is the data maintained?

22 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We track the  
23 number of warning cards we issue. We're not keeping  
24 records on particularly who gets the warning card.  
25 We're relying on the Department of Education to

1 provide us with feedback on, you know, what happens.  
2 Is there recurring? Is a student getting a second  
3 warning card? You know, an individual inside the  
4 school, they would know that, but for us to analyze  
5 the data to see how effective, and what we've seen is  
6 a very low recidivist rate, and we get that  
7 information from the Department of Education where  
8 students getting warning cards are not getting  
9 involved in a second incident. So, that's a  
10 positive. We think, you know, showing the program is  
11 working.  
12

13 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. That's showing  
14 a lot of promise. I wanted to ask specifically on the  
15 warning cards, looking at the data that you and the  
16 Department of Ed is tracking, are you looking at any  
17 patterns or any trends? So, if you're at one  
18 particular campus, as an example, Theodore Roosevelt  
19 in the Bronx, and you notice that on an annual basis  
20 there are x number of warning cards that are issued,  
21 in terms of trends and identifying any patterns,  
22 repetitive students, the same students, a particular  
23 school on the campus? Because in essence, that  
24 should be an indicator where we need to go in and  
25 make sure that there are more resources and programs

1  
2 for that particular school on that campus. So, are  
3 you doing that, looking at any trends? Because you  
4 said the recidivism rate is decreasing, which is a  
5 good thing, so if you're noticing other students that  
6 are getting more warning cards than someone who  
7 already received it, what are we doing to make sure  
8 that the response can come from the school and the  
9 Department in terms of more resources that may be  
10 needed in that particular school? Does that make  
11 sense?

12 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We do look at  
13 trends all the time. So, what we're looking at, and  
14 particularly since we're limited to the two areas of  
15 the warning cards, two offenses which is disorderly  
16 conduct and marijuana use, so we're looking at the  
17 schools to see if we see that there's a particular  
18 issue with marijuana in the school, and that's where  
19 the Department of Education and working with the  
20 schools to-- and their guidance counselors and their  
21 substance abuse counselors and their substance abuse  
22 counselors that work with students to come up with  
23 programs inside that school to get ahead of, you  
24 know, why are there-- why is there an increase or the  
25 use of marijuana in this particular school, and/or it

1  
2 comes down to disorderly conduct which typically is  
3 maybe students that are acting up or fighting or  
4 pushing and shoving each other in school, we look at  
5 that issue also to see if there's something we could  
6 do together to diffuse those issues and make sure  
7 that they're not happening again.

8 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. Is the  
9 warning card in only high schools?

10 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: High schools, okay.  
12 And I also know that the school climate taskforce  
13 made a series of recommendations about the warning  
14 card program, specifically in conducting some level  
15 of an evaluation to determine if any changes/  
16 improvements were needed, and then also there was a  
17 recommendation of standardized policies and  
18 procedures related to the actual warning card system.  
19 Is that an ongoing conversation, or is there anything  
20 you could share with u in terms of improvement that  
21 we need to consider for the warning card program?

22 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: As far as the  
23 procedures for issuing a warning card, that that is  
24 standardized. We have the same system throughout the  
25 school system. As far as analyzing the program, I

1 think we had discussions about doing that and that I  
2 think is more the Department of Education can answer  
3 that question.  
4

5 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. I wanted to  
6 specifically ask about, you cited a number of  
7 statistics on reductions and crime, school related  
8 arrests, 11 percent decrease in the number of summons  
9 as well as two percent reduction in the seven major  
10 crimes when compared to the last school year. So, I  
11 guess the number one question, overall, are our  
12 schools really safe, and what are we still doing to  
13 make sure that we reduce the number of weapons and  
14 items that are coming into our schools?

15 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: I believe our  
16 schools are safe. I think that the data has shown  
17 that over the years. Crime has been significantly  
18 down. We've reviewed the last three years, but it's  
19 been down for the last six years that we've had  
20 decreases in crime. The issue of weapons, we have  
21 seen an increase in weapons and we certainly  
22 acknowledge that, and that is a-- we take that very  
23 seriously, and we're working very closely with the  
24 Department of Education to reduce the number of  
25 weapons that come in schools. So, we take very



1  
2 proactive measures. We think scanning is just one  
3 part of that, but the other part is working together  
4 with all the other schools to have that cooperative  
5 relationship within the school to not only talk to  
6 the students and talk to parents about the carrying  
7 of weapons into schools, but also that we have that  
8 relationship in a school to identify when somebody  
9 may have a weapon. So, the scanning is really-- it's  
10 in six percent of our school buildings, so we rely on  
11 that cooperative relationship throughout the school  
12 system to identify weapons.

13 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. Six percent,  
14 right? That's the percentage?

15 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We go by the  
16 buildings.

17 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Overall, okay. And  
18 when we talk about weapons that are identified  
19 through the magnetometers, what types of weapons are  
20 we talking about?

21 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We're primarily  
22 talking about knives and box cutters. That is the --  
23 the largest number we get is in those two areas, and  
24 that's also where we see our increases.

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. And is there  
3 a protocol that's in place-- if a weapon is found on  
4 a student, is the student or students typically  
5 arrested, or does the SSA have a level of discretion  
6 and procedures to follow? What happens in an  
7 instance where a weapon is recovered in the school?

8 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Again, at a  
9 school level we're working very closely with  
10 Administration, and it depends on the type of weapon,  
11 actually. So, many of the weapons that are  
12 recovered, as a matter of fact, the vast majority of  
13 them, they're not illegal weapons. So, typically a  
14 knife is a kitchen or something that they get from  
15 their house. So, that type of knife would be--  
16 incident would be referred to the school  
17 administration. So, we would not make an arrest or  
18 give a summons. On the cases where a knife is  
19 illegal or another type of weapon gets carried in,  
20 like it's a firearm, obviously, or something other  
21 serious weapon, a switchblade type of knife or other  
22 weapons that are illegal, brass knuckles, then the  
23 student may be subject to enforcement action whether  
24 it's a summons or an arrest.

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, so what  
3 happens--

4 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: [interposing] Or  
5 a juvenile report, just to add that.

6 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Right.

7 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: That student  
8 could receive a juvenile report based on the age.

9 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. What happens  
10 if a knife is recovered that's deemed, that is  
11 illegal? Is there a different mechanism to respond  
12 to that versus those that are legal?

13 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: If the weapon is  
14 illegal, then that student would be subject to an  
15 arrest or a summons depending on the age, depending  
16 on the type of weapon, but yes, that student would be  
17 subject to some sort of action.

18 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. So, I guess  
19 what I'm asking is, all the SSAs have the same  
20 procedures and guidelines to follow, and it's not up  
21 to their own discretion, but it's based on what's in  
22 the guidelines that they have to follow if it's an  
23 illegal weapon versus a legal weapon.

24

25

1  
2 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Correct, but  
3 again, there's very close work with Administration on  
4 these types of issues.

5 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

6 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We also-- we  
7 discuss with the students. Sometimes the student may  
8 have something that they carry based on something  
9 they're using at their job, and we'll verify that  
10 information with the school administration, and if  
11 that's the case, sometimes we can also refer that  
12 incident to the Administration.

13 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. I also wanted  
14 to ask, I've met with a number of advocacy groups. I  
15 've met with a lot of youth groups and students  
16 themselves, and there generally has been some concern  
17 on not safety-- while safety in schools is important,  
18 but I think equally as important is safety outside of  
19 the schools during dismissal time and arrival,  
20 particularly for older students, middle school and  
21 high school, and I've noticed myself in my district  
22 during dismissal, the SSAs do exit the building and  
23 walk the perimeter and make sure that, you know, the  
24 students are not necessarily congregating, but  
25 they're walking to their destinations. What is being

1  
2 done from School Safety Division to ensure that while  
3 our students are safe in the schools they're also  
4 equally as safe when they are being dismissed and  
5 they're going to their destinations, how does that  
6 process work?

7 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Well, we  
8 certainly agree with you that that's an important  
9 issue, students getting back and forth to school.  
10 It's critically important to us that they're able to  
11 safely get to school and to leave school safely. So,  
12 as you mentioned, you noticed that we work very  
13 closely with the precincts, the patrol officers. We  
14 work also with the transit officers to make sure that  
15 there are safe ways to get back. We're very  
16 knowledgeable of where the transportation hubs are,  
17 and those are the areas that we're going to  
18 concentrate on. The agents will monitor those paths  
19 going from the school to the-- to either the train  
20 station or a bus stop, but we also work and you'll  
21 also see outside those schools is members of the  
22 school administration. So, typically we'll see deans  
23 outside. We'll see principals outside, and we're  
24 working closely with them to make sure that that  
25 corridor is safe for the students to get back and

1  
2 forth to school. But our partnership with the  
3 precincts, our partnerships with the transit  
4 districts is critically important in accomplishing  
5 that mission.

6 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Agreed. Do-- does  
7 the division make an effort to ensure that SSAs stay  
8 at their post in terms of the schools they're  
9 assigned to so they can build relationships with  
10 students? Because I know you said that there are  
11 times when SSAs that are working at a high school  
12 could be transferred to an elementary or a middle  
13 school, vice versa. But to the best of your ability  
14 as chief and certainly the division's efforts keeping  
15 SSAs at schools where they can build a relationship  
16 is a primary goal as well.

17 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: It is. You'll  
18 find throughout the system typically agents are at  
19 schools for extended, you know, period of times. So,  
20 we do keep that in mind. We know that in working  
21 with the principals in the schools, they like having  
22 their agents there that they have relationship with  
23 and work with and that know the students. So, we  
24 think that's very important. So, we do certainly  
25 make an effort to keep [inaudible]. Now, promotions

1  
2 or needs sometimes cause us to have to move agents,  
3 but for the most part agents do stay for extended  
4 period of time in the school that they're in.

5 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. I've also  
6 noticed that some schools have both SSAs as well as  
7 patrol officers or police officers from the lower  
8 precinct, I believe. And in your testimony you cited  
9 you have about 113 officers and detectives. How does  
10 that work? And in terms of where they're assigned,  
11 is there a formula you use? Like, how does that work  
12 where some schools have both school safety agents as  
13 well as police presence within the school?

14 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: So, that's based  
15 on analysis of data, and that's an ongoing every day.  
16 We have now 113 that's assigned to the division. We  
17 have 94 police officers in our taskforce, so that  
18 covers throughout the City. So, we have to be very--  
19 be able to move those offices as we see conditions  
20 change, and that's like daily. We'll review  
21 conditions that are going on in schools, and we'll  
22 move those offices around to support the agents and  
23 the school administration side as need.

24 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. So, I guess  
25 what I'm asking is-- in our overall work with the

1 School Leadership Climate Team with the restorative  
2 justice work, with all of the efforts that we are  
3 embarking on to make sure that we focus on prevention  
4 and not detention and reactionary work. Do you see at  
5 any point where we can reduce some of those police  
6 officers that are physically in many of these schools  
7 as you continue to assess data? So if the data is  
8 telling it, I'm assuming it's arrests and other crime  
9 data, but population of the school, etcetera. As you  
10 continue to assess that, do you see an environment  
11 where that number will be reduced and there'll be  
12 less police officers in schools as well? Is that a  
13 possibility?  
14

15 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: I won't go to  
16 predict that, and I don't necessarily--

17 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: [interposing] Okay.

18 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: think it's a  
19 negative--

20 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: [interposing] Okay.

21 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: for the police  
22 officers to be inside the schools. These police  
23 officers [inaudible] extensive training. The ones in  
24 the School Safety Division get that conflict  
25 resolution training. We do different-- they work



1  
2 with students in a lot of different areas. So, we  
3 don't think it's a negative that the police officers  
4 are necessarily inside the school. They're working  
5 together with the School Administration, developing  
6 relationships with student. We'll see where the data  
7 takes us--

8 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: [interposing] Okay.

9 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: but I don't find  
10 it to be a negative law that the offices are part of  
11 that school

12 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. Through the  
13 Leadership Climate Team you indicated in your  
14 testimony that there are specific protocols that have  
15 been identified for principals to either add a metal  
16 detector or remove. Is there anything that you could  
17 share with us as it relates to any new protocols that  
18 have been established? Because when we first started  
19 this conversation some time ago, we didn't really  
20 know some of the details in terms of what factors we  
21 look at to determine if a school needs or if a school  
22 does not need, and six percent is obviously a very  
23 low number, but I think there are many that want to  
24 reduce that number even further. Obviously, because  
25 of the uniform presence in schools, the message that

1  
2 it sends, but overall, just making sure that we-- I  
3 think we can invest both in social works and guidance  
4 counselors, but also look at the work School Safety  
5 does as well. We can do that simultaneously, but  
6 specifically protocols from principals, we have a lot  
7 of co-located schools with multiple principals which  
8 I know sometimes can be a challenge. I have two high  
9 school campuses with five schools and five principals  
10 and a building manager. So, it's a lot. How do you  
11 identify the protocols that principals establish and  
12 implement in order to either add a metal detector or  
13 remove one?

14 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: So, the-- you  
15 know, there always was this sort of unwritten  
16 protocols for principals who could ask for metal  
17 detection. They could ask for unannounced scanning,  
18 or they could ask for permanent metal detection in  
19 their schools, or to have the metal detectors removed  
20 from their schools. So, these new protocols that  
21 came out of all our work with the Mayor's Leadership  
22 Team, we formalized those protocols so now they're  
23 written. Every principal has been issued those  
24 protocols. So every principal has the opportunity to  
25 either ask for scanning and it could be unannounced

1 scanning, could be for a day. Or they could ask for  
2 magnetometers to be installed in their schools or  
3 removed from their schools. So, based on those  
4 requests, which we don't have. I think we have one  
5 request for a principal to have scanning removed or  
6 lowered, the levels. So, we lowered the level from  
7 full time to random scanning, and we'll continue to  
8 analyze, you know, what the data shows us. But we're  
9 based on analyzing data, working very closely with  
10 our Department of Education partners to determine  
11 where those magnetometers should be.

13 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, and I guess my  
14 last question before I get to my colleagues, and I  
15 wanted to ask is specifically about the Chancellor's  
16 recent announcement to address building in our  
17 schools and where school safety fits in that. There  
18 was a talk about additional training and other  
19 professional development to identify some of the  
20 warning signs, potentially, but also services. I  
21 think obviously in light of recent occurrences, it  
22 sheds light for all of us on what we can do as a city  
23 to respond better, to ensure that we close any gaps  
24 in services, and we really make sure what students  
25 and parents understand what services are available.

1  
2 So, with the Chancellor's announcement, where does  
3 school safety fit in terms of any resources that will  
4 be available for the School Safety Division, and how  
5 do you see the role that your agents will play in a  
6 lot of the new services that will be available in our  
7 schools?

8 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We work very  
9 closely with the Department of Education on all progs  
10 [sic] and certainly on bullying programs, and we're  
11 very closely. I'm working very closely with Mark  
12 Rampersant right now to sort of update our bullying  
13 presentations that we do inside the schools. That's  
14 the cooperative relationship that we have. We do do-  
15 - we actively do presentations in high school on  
16 bullying; we have been doing that. As far as the new  
17 initiatives, we look very forward to working with  
18 Department of Education. You specifically mentioned  
19 training, certainly training with inside a school  
20 building. We would certainly welcome the opportunity  
21 to certainly be part of that. But since the new  
22 initiatives, I think we have to certainly continue to  
23 collaborate on how we can be partners in that.

24 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, so if an SSA  
25 identifies a student that they believe is a victim of

1  
2 bullying, is there a protocol or a series of steps  
3 that that agent can take to ensure that that student  
4 is getting the assistance they need?

5 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Well, that  
6 comes-- that goes back to our relationship with the  
7 school administration. Certainly, if a School Safety  
8 Agent identifies the students are bullying, they  
9 would certainly bring that to the attention of the  
10 school administration and work with the school  
11 administration or the parents. They typically sit in  
12 on mediation sessions with the school administration  
13 if there's going to be a-- parents brought up for a  
14 conference to be part of that, and we encourage that  
15 they're part of the process, because they need to  
16 know what's going on inside that school, and they  
17 need to be part of the solution.

18 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, okay. Thank  
19 you. I'll continue as I have my colleagues ask  
20 questions. We have been joined by Council Member  
21 Robert Cornegy, Council Member James Vacca, and  
22 Council Member Rafael Espinal, and now we'll have  
23 questions from Council Member Lancman followed by  
24 Council Member Vacca. Thank you, colleagues.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Thank you, Madam  
3 Chairwoman. Good morning. So, I want to ask you-- I  
4 hate to be parochial, but I want to ask you about a  
5 school in my district which has been having some  
6 problems, including I think it was yesterday. A  
7 student was caught with a gun, unloaded, as I  
8 understand it, a real gun, a .40 caliber and a BB  
9 gun. This is John Bowne High School in Flushing. In  
10 last spring some students were arrested. There was a  
11 stabbing incident. And my office, we just pulled  
12 some of the stats. In 2016/2017 there were 224 total  
13 removals and suspension, nine for weapon possession.  
14 It was the-- if I'm reading this right-- the 13<sup>th</sup>-  
15 most in the City. At some point soon we're going to  
16 have to meet again and go over what's going on in  
17 this school, but what is the Department doing to try  
18 to get schools that are having persistent problems,  
19 because I think at this point it's fair to say John  
20 Bowne is, and 13<sup>th</sup>-most in the City is not a  
21 distinction to be proud of. What are we doing for  
22 these schools in particular? Because there are some  
23 schools that are not responding as well to the  
24 broader game-plan as others are, and do you have any  
25 particular familiarity with John Bowne?

1  
2 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Yes, I do. So,  
3 John Bowne came-- certainly, you know, last year you  
4 mentioned there was a stabbing incident inside the  
5 school. We started looking at multiple factors and  
6 what might be going on inside that school, and we're  
7 working very closely with the school administration  
8 on creating a better environment inside the school or  
9 identifying what the issues might be, making sure  
10 that we're in the right areas of the school as far as  
11 our patrolling inside the school with our School  
12 Safety Agents, but also working with our community  
13 outreach team has been to the school to talk with  
14 students and work with students. We certainly want  
15 to improve the environment where certainly concerned  
16 based on even the issues that happened last Friday.  
17 That was the recovery of the one firearm unloaded and  
18 a BB gun. So the issues have continued. So, we need--  
19 - we have more work to do.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: So, can you just  
21 tell me, what is the status of metal detectors at  
22 John Bowne, and what's the thinking on why it's at  
23 the level that it is?

24 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: So, based on the  
25 incident that we had in the spring the last-- at the

1  
2 end of last school year, we hadn't-- there was no  
3 scanning in the school. now we did put in a random  
4 or a part-time scanning inside the school, so the  
5 scanning equipment is at the school, and we work with  
6 the school administration and we rotate the days or  
7 offer different days that we do scanning on. So,  
8 that was the response to that incident, and we were  
9 going to monitor-- as we were monitoring conditions  
10 this year to see which direction we would go from  
11 there, and based on the incident we had on Friday,  
12 we've made it starting yesterday doing fulltime  
13 scanning in that school. So, now we're doing it  
14 every day, but we'll continue to monitor that to see  
15 where we need to go, because that's not our only  
16 answer. That's just part of the immediate solution,  
17 but we continue to work with the Administration. We  
18 put additional agents inside the school. Again, we  
19 want to work to improve the culture, the climate  
20 inside that school so the violence does not continue.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: So, do you mean  
22 now that there's full scanning, meaning every child,  
23 every kid walking in the building goes through the  
24 metal detectors?

25 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: That's correct.



1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Is that a  
3 temporary placement, or?

4 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Right now it's  
5 there and it's going to be done every day, and we'll  
6 evaluate that going forward to see what results we  
7 get from that. We'll see what the data shows us.  
8 We'll see with the school climate. We'll work with  
9 the Administration for the feeling inside the school,  
10 and we see if we can, you know, improve conditions  
11 inside the school, because we're very con-- you know,  
12 obviously, you know, a person bringing a weapon in  
13 whether it's unloaded or not, that is a serious, you  
14 know, serious issue inside the school.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Yeah, no, I do  
16 appreciate that, and I don't know that metal  
17 detectors are the answer on a long-term basis either,  
18 I just don't know. Have you been able to figure out  
19 yet-- I know this happened, I said yesterday, but it  
20 was actually Friday.

21 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Friday.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: How did this  
23 student bring the weapon into the school? What broke  
24 down? Was there some screening or random screening  
25 that didn't occur, or was there some polic-- my

1  
2 understanding is some of these students had been--  
3 they weren't even students anymore. They were  
4 students who had, what we used to say, "drop out."  
5 Is there anything you could tell us about the  
6 incident and the people involved?

7 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: It's an ongoing  
8 investigation, so I won't discuss the specific  
9 students. I can say that on that particular day there  
10 was not a breakdown. Like is said, we were doing  
11 random scanning up to that point at the time, so that  
12 day we didn't do scanning. So, that's just something  
13 that--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: [interposing]  
15 When you say random scanning, just so we understand,  
16 that means some days you scan and some days you  
17 don't, right?

18 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: That's correct.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: It doesn't mean  
20 it's random and that every day there's some scanning-

21 -

22 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: [interposing] No.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: but who gets  
24 scanned is random.

1  
2 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: No, it's random  
3 on the basis of the day that we're doing it. That's  
4 what I mean by random, or I usually got quarters  
5 [sic] or part-time scanning which probably more  
6 accurately describes it.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Forgive me if  
8 this was asked before, I had to step out, but do you  
9 feel that you have the number of school safety agents  
10 you need to properly do your job and accomplish your  
11 mission?

12 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: I think we're  
13 always assessing the needs for agents or the current-  
14 - if we have enough agents, and there'll be upcoming  
15 budget hearings that'll be coming up and that issue  
16 will be discussed at those hearings.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Okay. Well,  
18 listen, I appreciate and as how difficult it is to  
19 calibrate the right amount of, I'll say, police  
20 presence just as a generic term, and we don't want  
21 our schools to feel like prisons, and I'm completely  
22 on board with the whole movement to de-escalate and  
23 de-- well, just to lower the law enforcement  
24 temperature in the school buildings, and it's a  
25 challenge to calibrate it and get it right, but we

1  
2 always want to hear on the side of safety. So, we'll  
3 want to meet again on John Bowne, whether it's at  
4 your level, or, you know, we have a wonderful 107  
5 precinct; it's terrific, but the parents rightly so  
6 look at the incident in April and now another  
7 incident in November, and they want to feel that  
8 something's being done, not that you all haven't been  
9 present in the meetings and all this stuff. Like,  
10 we're getting where now we're getting people want to-  
11 - how do I get my kid out of that school? And once  
12 you get at that level, it's a big problem. Thank  
13 you.

14 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you, Council  
15 Member Lancman. We've also been joined by Council  
16 Member Jumaane Williams. Next, we'll have Council  
17 Member Gentile, then followed by Council Member  
18 Vacca. Thank you, colleagues.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Thank you, Madam  
20 Chair, and Chief Conroy, thank you for being here  
21 today with your team. It's a pleasure to have you.  
22 I'm curious about the youth programs that you  
23 mentioned here. How do the different-- how do the  
24 youth programs differ, and how do you decide what  
25 schools and how many to put in those schools?

1  
2 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: So, some of the  
3 programs I mentioned was the--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: [interposing]  
5 Explorers.

6 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Explorer  
7 Program, which we think is a great program. So,  
8 we're always looking to expand that program. So,  
9 that's something we offer schools. Of course, it  
10 comes with do we need resources to do it, it's post  
11 [sic] advisors, but this was a school safety agent or  
12 a police officer. But we work with schools, and we  
13 offer that program in schools that it's available for  
14 the administration schools to work with us and join  
15 with us in that, but it's not only-- we're not the  
16 only ones who do that. The precinct do Explorer  
17 Programs all-- each precinct has an Explorer Program  
18 or housing PSAs have Explorer Programs. So, there's  
19 other government agencies that have Explorer  
20 Programs. You know, there's a summer camp that they  
21 take certain number of students to a camp which is  
22 multi-agencies, so that's one of our programs that we  
23 think is great. We have a Youth Police Academy that  
24 we run over the summer with the--

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: [interposing]

3 Right. How does-- how do they differ? How does like  
4 the Police Liaison Program differ from the Police  
5 Academy and the Explorers?

6 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: So, the Explorer  
7 Program is an ongoing program. So, we work in a  
8 school or they work out of a precinct that program is  
9 going. The Youth Police Academy is just a summer  
10 camp program where we had up to 2,000 students in the  
11 last year in that program where agents and police  
12 officers work together with students. They're in a  
13 sort of a day camp type of thing, working inside the  
14 schools, but also taking them on various trips, but  
15 that's a limited. That's just for the summer months.  
16 We started a Police Liaison Program in two schools in  
17 the Bronx where our police officers from various  
18 different units for the Department are part of the  
19 curriculum in the schools. So, they go into a class.  
20 They give a presentation on it could be crime scenes,  
21 working crime scenes. It could be on domestic  
22 violence, and it's part of the curriculum inside the  
23 schools. So, we're excited about that program, but  
24 we now-- we started one school in the Bronx, we're  
25 now in a second school in the Bronx.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: And that's  
3 something you coordinate?

4 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: That's correct.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: To have the  
6 precinct officers go in?

7 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We actually take  
8 officers from various specialized units, for example,  
9 crime scene, domestic violence. They'll come into  
10 the school to give a lecture, as well as our own  
11 officers that are there to talk to students also, and  
12 that's working with the principal to coordinate that  
13 as part of their regular curriculum.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Is there a  
15 criteria used to determine what program goes to what  
16 school given the resources?

17 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: There's given  
18 resources. So, the Explorer Program is open to any  
19 school or kids can join it at any precinct also, can  
20 join an Explorer Program. So that's sort of a wide  
21 open program, as many weeks we could handle. We'd  
22 certainly like to see more young people sign up for  
23 the Explorer Program.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: So, if it's  
25 available, anyone can sign up.

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ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Okay. Let me just ask you about the issue of removing magnetometers. What would a principal's reasoning be to you to remove magnetometers?

ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: I think a principal would look at what they feel that the school has become a safer from the time that the magnetometers were originally installed inside the school, and we certainly appreciate, you know, reviewing that principal's request. We certainly take those seriously, but in the end we'll look at the data and we'll be driven by that data and what our own-- we'll make that decision based on a review of that data with the Department of Education.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: So, ultimately it's your call in the particular school.

ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Yes, the final decision rests with the Police Department to make that, right.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: So there could be instances where you and the principal disagree?

ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Yes.



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2 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I see. We over  
3 the last day or two have been told through news  
4 reports that there have been requests by educators at  
5 Brooklyn College to ask the NYPD to back off, to  
6 become less of a high-profile on campus, to sort of  
7 be "unseen" on campus. I'm curious, has the DOE or  
8 any employee of the DOE made that request of the  
9 School Safety Officers or to you?

10 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: I'm not aware of  
11 that at all.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: In fact, you're  
13 going the other way. You're trying to get more  
14 involved, aren't you?

15 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: WE have-- we  
16 want to have the appropriate level of involvement in  
17 a school. We think we're an important part of the  
18 school community and keeping that school safe, but  
19 also to improving the school climate.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: So, just based  
21 on your testimony it appears that your collaboration  
22 with the schools seems to be opposite of what seems  
23 to be taking place at the college level, at Brooklyn  
24 College, at least.

1  
2 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: I won't speak to  
3 that because I'm not aware of it, so I'm not going to  
4 speak on that.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Alright, let me  
6 ask you this, should you ever get a request like that  
7 to back off, what would your response be?

8 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: My response  
9 would be to evaluate the situation and what the data  
10 is. I don't expect to have that request, but if I  
11 did we would take that as it came in, and it would  
12 depend on the circumstances itself.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Right, and as  
14 you said, ultimately you make the call.

15 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Yes.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Great. Okay,  
17 thank you so much. I appreciate it.

18 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you, Council  
19 Member Gentile. Next, we'll have Council Member  
20 Vacca, and we've also been joined by Council Member  
21 Chaim Deutsch.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Thank you, Madam  
23 Chair. What fell through the cracks with the  
24 Wildlife Conservation School in the Bronx?

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2 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Before that, I  
3 just want to clarify that with the previous Council  
4 Members' question, we're not in colleges, so just to  
5 clarify that. School Safety is not in colleges.  
6 We're only in public high schools, intermediate and  
7 elementary schools. As far as what fell through the  
8 cracks in Wildlife, I don't know if anything fell  
9 through the cracks. It certainly was a tragic  
10 incident. We take that incident certainly very  
11 seriously, and we're certainly reviewing and matters  
12 are still under investigation regarding that  
13 particular incident, but--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: [interposing] I say  
15 that because communication had to fall down at one  
16 point or another. Communication had to fail. If you  
17 have parents and students filling out forms telling  
18 DOE that they do not feel safe in their schools, that  
19 they are afraid, those surveys came back saying that  
20 the school atmosphere was frightening to them in many  
21 respects. Where do those surveys go, and where is  
22 your specific unit communicated with? How does that  
23 funnel down to you? There was no metal detector in  
24 the building. Did the principal there ever request a  
25 metal detector, or was there never a request for one

1  
2 even though the surveys showed a concern over student  
3 safety?

4 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: I'm going to  
5 bring my partner up here, the Department of  
6 Education, to sort of help with this question. I  
7 think it's something that we work together on, so I  
8 think it's important that we talk about this  
9 together. Okay?

10 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Just identify  
11 yourself for the record. Thank you.

12 MARK RAMPERSANT: Good morning. I'm Mark  
13 Rampersant, Deputy CEO for Safety and Security for  
14 the Department of Education.

15 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: So,  
16 specifically, I'm not aware that the principal ever  
17 asked to have magnetometers installed inside that  
18 school. So, as far as I know there was never a  
19 request. You know, the matters of what happened  
20 inside that school, or-- it's still under  
21 investigation, but I'm not aware of any request by  
22 that principal to have magnetometers installed inside  
23 that school.

24

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: How many School  
3 Safety Agents are there there in the school now as  
4 compared to before that incident?

5 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We now have a  
6 level three, and we have five agents inside the  
7 school.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: You have five  
9 level-- I'm sorry?

10 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: A level three is  
11 a supervisor.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: One level there?

13 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Yes.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: And how many  
15 level, eight? [sic].

16 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: I think weren't  
17 we at five? Five.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Five. You have  
19 six security guards in that entire building, because  
20 there's several schools there I'm aware of.

21 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Correct.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: What did you have  
23 before the incident?

24 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We had a level  
25 three supervisor and we had two agents inside.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: So, you increased  
3 dramatically the number of agents, more than doubled  
4 the number of agents.

5 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Correct.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: My concern, and I  
7 appreciate that you did that, but my concern is that  
8 we are in a position where we reacted. The City put  
9 metal detectors in the next day. We more than doubled  
10 the number of School Safety Officers, yet, the  
11 parents and the students in this building were crying  
12 out for help based on the surveys they filled out,  
13 and no one listened. Based on those surveys alone,  
14 you indicate the principal did not ask for metal  
15 detectors. How? How did a principal not ask for  
16 metal detectors as you indicated, and if the  
17 principal didn't, why didn't DOE look at their own  
18 surveys and say we better intervene here? Forget the  
19 principal for a second. Why didn't DOE look? Aren't  
20 they supposed to analyze these surveys and say to  
21 themselves we have to take action, whether the  
22 principal is asking for it or not? So, I bring that  
23 to your attention. I think something fell through  
24 the cracks here. How many schools now have metal  
25 detectors?

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2 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: There's 91  
3 buildings that have metal detectors.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Ninety-one schools  
5 have metal detectors.

6 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Ninety-one  
7 school campuses.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Ninety-one school  
9 campuses, is that number-- do you anticipate  
10 increasing that number or decreasing that number?

11 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We analyze the  
12 data so I'm not going to say it's going up or down.  
13 We're going to analyze the data, and where that takes  
14 us, that's where we'll go.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: When you consider  
16 removing metal detectors, and I had read articles  
17 several months ago, that that was under consideration  
18 to remove many of the metal detectors. Who was  
19 consulted in that process about whether or not to  
20 remove metal detectors from a school?

21 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We never said we  
22 were going to remove metal detectors from the school.  
23 What we did say is that we would evaluate the metal  
24 detectors in the school and analyze data to determine  
25 if their-- if schools could be potentially be

1 removed, or if schools needed to be added onto it.

2 So, we're open in both directions to do that based on  
3 analyzing data, based on working very closely with  
4 the school administration inside the schools. So, we  
5 haven't had requests to remove scanning except for  
6 one school that we downgraded the scanning from full-  
7 time to random scan.  
8

9 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Do- I think I  
10 heard my colleague, Council Member Lancman, referring  
11 to John Adams High School in Queens, but I just want  
12 to be sure I heard correctly.

13 UNIDENTIFIED: John Bowne.

14 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: John Bowne.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: John Bowne, I'm  
16 sorry. John Bowne high school in Queens does not  
17 have metal detectors.

18 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: It does now. It  
19 did not--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: [interposing] it  
21 does?

22 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: It did not in--  
23 prior to May of this year it did not have metal  
24 detection. It was a non-scanning school.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: now it does.



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ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Yes, it does.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: So, my question, obviously, I think the answer is yes, but there-- my question is, there are high schools in New York City that do not have metal detectors. They're our high schools. They're our high school campuses--

ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: [interposing]

Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: that do not have metal detectors.

ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: How many intermediate schools have metal detectors?

ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Just to be accurate, I can get you that data.

MARK RAMPERSANT: No elementary schools.

ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: No elementary schools, intermediate.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: No intermediate schools, I--

ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: [interposing] No, intermediates do have it, but I'll get you the exact number.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: There are several,  
3 I would--

4 MARK RAMPERSANT: [interposing] Scanning  
5 is only subject to our middle schools and our high  
6 schools.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: No, that's what I  
8 meant. Intermediate school, I'm using the same term.  
9 Middle schools, so how many middle schools have metal  
10 detectors?

11 MARK RAMPERSANT: We would have to look  
12 down at-- look at the breakdown. We don't-- I mean,  
13 the breakdown is not--

14 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: [interposing] We  
15 can get you that. We can get you that number.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: And am I to assume  
17 that no elementary schools have it?

18 MARK RAMPERSANT: Correct.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: No K to five  
20 schools have it.

21 MARK RAMPERSANT: That's fine. In  
22 addition to metal detectors, you do random--

23 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: [interposing] We  
24 do--

25 MARK RAMPERSANT: random checks.

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2 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: unannounced  
3 scanning.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: That's fine. In  
5 addition to metal detectors, you do random?

6 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We do--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Random checks?

8 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: unannounced  
9 scanning. So, every intermediate and high school is  
10 subject to the unannounced scan. So, that's mobile.  
11 We have the equipment on trucks and we take that  
12 equipment to schools, and we do at least one school  
13 per day. We take that scanning equipment and we scan  
14 the school, and again, based on requests from  
15 principals, based on data analysis. We move [sic]  
16 prior incidents in the school. We take that-- we  
17 move the scanning around. So we have the  
18 capabilities to do it in at least one school each  
19 day.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you very much,  
22 Council Member Vacca. I just wanted to continue in  
23 that same question. The random and the rotating  
24 scanners that you have, how often do you analyze the  
25 data? Is it week to week? You said that there is

1  
2 potentially one school each day that gets a random  
3 scanner at their school just for the day. How do you  
4 look at the data? How often do you review it to  
5 determine those particular schools that are selected?

6 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We consistently  
7 review it daily. So we may have an incident today  
8 that in a non-scanning school that would-- we would  
9 say, let's go there and do scanning tomorrow.

10 Alright? So we look at that information daily,  
11 historically going back, but also what's occurring  
12 right now.

13 MARK RAMPERSANT: Until--

14 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: [interposing] We  
15 call that unannounced scanning. I just want to be  
16 clear [inaudible]. We call that unannounced  
17 scanning.

18 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Unannounced as in no  
19 one knows at the school?

20 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: The school  
21 Administration knows.

22 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

23 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: So, that they  
24 know the day before, so the--

25 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: [interposing] Okay.

1  
2 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: school  
3 administration does know that.

4 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. So, the SSAs  
5 know, you let the principals know that it's coming  
6 the next day.

7 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Correct.

8 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. And then how  
9 often do you review the data to determine-- I'm very  
10 big on trends and patterns, because it's usually a  
11 sign that something is wrong. How often do you  
12 review and analyze the data if you see too many  
13 schools that are getting unannounced visits, so to  
14 speak, of a scanner, how long do you wait to  
15 determine if something else is going on in that  
16 particular school before you take any level of  
17 action?

18 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: So, we would  
19 react quickly to the data analysis. So, for example,  
20 if we see a school that we recovered weapons on a  
21 particular day when we did our unannounced scanning,  
22 we'll come back to that school again at some point in  
23 time, and based on, you know, continued analysis--  
24 that's why I say it's ongoing, that we're looking at  
25 the analysis, the information daily to see if we

1  
2 should raise the level from no scanning to either  
3 random scanning, or if we don't go there we don't get  
4 any weapons, and that's another thing we take into  
5 consideration. We may not need to go back to that  
6 school. So, we're analyzing that data daily, and  
7 things come up on a daily basis where we may have to  
8 go to a school, as I mentioned the next day or we may  
9 wait a couple of days, you know, strategy-wise to  
10 say, we'll wait a couple of days, we'll go  
11 unannounced scanning. So, we work closely with the  
12 Administrations on that, and again, that's an ongoing  
13 process of analyzing that data.

14 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, and in that  
15 regard, how does it work, especially with DOE and  
16 School Safety in those particular instances where  
17 there is something going on where there is repetitive  
18 behavior or there are weapons that are recovered  
19 during unannounced scans? Going into the school to  
20 determine if there are gaps in services and programs  
21 that are available-- I'm very big on indicators and  
22 factors and warning signs, flags that are raised  
23 because of this that propel us to go into a school  
24 and say there are gaps in services. Maybe we need to  
25 do an assessment on the level of programs, guidance

1  
2 counselors, social workers. Do you do that, and how  
3 often is that done? And then the other part of my  
4 question, School Leadership Teams. Every school has  
5 an SLT. Is School Safety a part of that, and do you  
6 meet regularly with the school team at each  
7 particular school?

8 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: They are part of  
9 the Safety part of that and they're--

10 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: [interposing] Okay.

11 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: offered regular  
12 safety meetings. But going back to the analyzed  
13 data, we share the data that we get from an  
14 unannounced scanning with the Department of Education  
15 that day that it happens, and we have the discussion  
16 on what else can we do in that school. For example,  
17 we see that we did recover a weapon in school. Now,  
18 we'll look to see what can we do inside that school  
19 to maybe improve the climate inside the school. It  
20 may be presentations by our Community Outreach Team.  
21 It may be some other action that the Department of  
22 Education and the Administration's going to take.  
23 Maybe the SSAs working together with the school  
24 administration to identify what may be issues in that

1 school that are causing students to, you know, carry  
2 weapons.  
3

4 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. And in  
5 addition, I want to further understand. I believe  
6 Council Member Gentile talked a little bit about the  
7 Explorers and all the other programs that really the  
8 Community Affairs Division of the Safety of SSD  
9 really has. I participated in My School has Rhythm,  
10 not Violence, and I really love the work. I've been a  
11 part of anti-bullying demonstrations and  
12 presentations when we have Anti-Bullying Month where  
13 we recognize obviously that we have to do a lot more,  
14 Respect for All week and some of the other things, I  
15 think I've been a part of everything. Coupled with  
16 all of that, where do you see any improvements that  
17 needs to be made? So, as an example, the NYPD has  
18 the Neighborhood Coordination Officer Program, right,  
19 the NCO program where they divide the precinct into  
20 sectors and each sector has an NC-- two NCOs that are  
21 assigned to work with in that particular sector. Are  
22 there any other opportunities that school safety is  
23 looking to identify to ensure that we can have  
24 greater partnerships and more engagement with our  
25 youth? So, outside of all of the monthly's [sic], I



1  
2 call them monthly's, what else are we doing to make  
3 sure that we are engaging with the school, students,  
4 as well as our administrators?

5 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: I think you  
6 brought up a point. That's why we're working  
7 together now with the Department of Education.  
8 Particularly, we're working with the Community  
9 Affairs Bureau with Chief Jaffe, and we have been in  
10 ongoing discussions with Mark Rampersant on how we  
11 can incorporate more people into this. So, including  
12 our Neighborhood Coordination Officers. So, we're  
13 working on our bullying presentation now to see if we  
14 can have a presentation that not only we could do,  
15 but our Neighborhood Coordination also could be  
16 involved in also going into schools and participating  
17 in programs such as anti-bullying presentations. So,  
18 we're moving forward. We are looking to do more, and  
19 I'm fairly confident we will be doing more.

20 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. Do you see and  
21 anticipate any further recommendations coming out of  
22 the School Leadership Climate team as it relates to  
23 School Safety Agents?

24 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: I think in  
25 general I expect some further recommendations for

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2 this. We had a meeting a few weeks ago, and I think  
3 we're excited about, you know, some of the things  
4 that were brought up at that meeting about going  
5 forward and working together and coming up with more  
6 recommendations. So, we're excited about that  
7 partnership that we have. We don't always agree on  
8 everything at these meetings, but that's what it's  
9 about. I think it's about us getting together and  
10 opening up the discussions and having these  
11 discussion about issues that I think are serious, and  
12 things that we need to work together on. So, we're  
13 excited about going forward. I think the Mayor's  
14 Leadership Team is going well under-- so we think  
15 we're going to accomplish a lot.

16           THERON PRIDE: And Chief, if I can just  
17 add to that. Chair Gibson, I think with the Mayor's  
18 Leadership Team here on School Climate, there is that  
19 opportunity, that potential for further dialogue and  
20 conversation about what more can be done. To the  
21 extent recommendations can go forward from the team,  
22 we'll certainly look at that, and as the Chief was  
23 saying, you know, this is a partnership, a strong  
24 partnership across a lot of city agencies as well as  
25 community and community advocates, and so we want to

1  
2 use every opportunity we have to bring the best minds  
3 together through that process of collaboration on the  
4 team. So, just to kind of reiterate and emphasize  
5 your point about the value of that team, that we  
6 certainly can use that as a way to further dialogue  
7 and kind of consider what are some more best  
8 approaches that can be taken. So, I just think  
9 that's a good question that you've asked

10 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. And I guess I  
11 have just a few more questions. I wanted to  
12 understand the Respect for All training for School  
13 Safety Agents, as I understand is there a liaison  
14 that's designated at each school? I believe that's  
15 DOE staff that is responsible for ensuring that SSAs  
16 are trained in our Respect for All students and some  
17 other work that we're doing around that. Can you  
18 affirm that for me?

19 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yeah, that's a  
20 Department of Education responsibility--

21 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: [interposing] Okay.

22 MARK RAMPERSANT: to have a Respect for  
23 All liaison at each school.

24 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Does that come under  
25 your unit?

1  
2 MARK RAMPERSANT: Well, it comes under  
3 our respective office--

4 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

5 MARK RAMPERSANT: the office of safety  
6 and youth development, yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, is that-- is  
8 that ongoing and underway?

9 MARK RAMPERSANT: Oh, absolutely, it is  
10 ongoing.

11 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Oh, okay, got it. I  
12 also wanted to ask a question. Since-- when we  
13 talked about school leadership climate and school  
14 discipline and, you know, the pipeline to prison.  
15 The disproportionate impact, obviously, that some of  
16 these harsh discipline and penalties has on students  
17 of color, LGBTQ students, students with disabilities,  
18 immigrant students, our vulnerable students. So, I  
19 wanted to ask with all of the work we've done, the  
20 School Leadership Climate team year two of  
21 completion, where do you see the work that we're  
22 doing having a greater impact on the Stuyvesant that  
23 have been faced by the most harshest of penalties. So  
24 with all the work that we're doing and even now with  
25 the warning card system and looking across the entire

1  
2 portfolio, students of color are the ones that are  
3 having this disproportionate impact and are at the  
4 greater disadvantage. So, how do we turn that around  
5 to make sure that the work we're doing gives them a  
6 greater advantage so they're not feeling the burden  
7 of being a statistic or any other category.

8 Sometimes I-- concerning that, you know, we put  
9 everybody in categories. It bothers me. But what  
10 are we doing to make sure that students of color and  
11 students that have been faced under some of these  
12 harsh penalties are feeling the improvements that we  
13 are working so hard to achieve?

14           THERON PRIDE: Well, if I can, I'll  
15 respond first, and I'll turn to some of my colleagues  
16 here on the panel. I'll just quickly say from my  
17 time briefly here with the leadership team, I know  
18 there's a real intentional look at the data around  
19 the populations that you discuss or impacted, and I  
20 think in the direction that we're going with the  
21 partnerships around really working together to find  
22 not only solutions to reducing arrests and summonses  
23 and suspensions in school, but really thinking about  
24 what are those programs that specifically support  
25 those young people who again oftentimes turn to be

1  
2 the moats vulnerable students in our school  
3 community. And so being data-driven is certainly  
4 first and foremost in this work, and I believe our  
5 colleagues here can say more. I'd also say that my  
6 perspective coming at this from the nation level, is  
7 I know that this is a particularly persistent  
8 challenge that many school districts have faced  
9 across the country, and I think your point and your  
10 question to continually call it out. I think that is  
11 a real value of the School Leadership Team,  
12 partnering with the advocates and people on the  
13 ground who see this day in and day out. The fact  
14 that New York City is intentionally talking about  
15 this and looking at program, thinking broadly about  
16 school safety beyond just metal detectors, realizing  
17 that schools have a certain field and a certain  
18 identity, and the students that walk into those  
19 school building to take on that feel and that  
20 identity. So being really intentional about that  
21 School Climate, and what's the message that we send  
22 to our young people? Are we sending messages for  
23 them to succeed or are we sending messages that are  
24 more negative and impact the development in a  
25 negative way.

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CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Right.

THERON PRIDE: So, I would say that because we have this School Climate Leadership Team and this collaboration and these partnerships, the fact that we're calling it out and addressing it intentionally by looking at the data is certainly first and foremost an excellent way I think we have going forward, but I certainly will defer to my colleagues here to maybe offer a few more specifics.

CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

LOIS HERRERA: Hi, I'm Lois Herrera. I'm CEO of the Office of Safety and Youth Development within the Department of Education, and I'm so glad you asked the question because we are particularly proud of the work that we've done in the last year and a half, two years, with restorative practices, and you asked-- you mentioned harsh discipline, and with the help and advice of the Mayor's Leadership Team as well as help from City Council we've expanded the initiatives that we have that are pretty deep. They're slightly different initiative based on the source or the intent, but we a have seen a really dramatic results in the 105 or so schools that have gone very deeply with restorative practices. There's

1  
2 one initiative that's with-- in collaboration with  
3 City Council, another initiative within the warning  
4 card, the original warning card campuses as well as  
5 all of the schools in District 18. And while we had  
6 an overall reduction of over six percent, 6.4  
7 percent, in suspensions last school year. In schools  
8 that had restorative practices, the results were very  
9 much more, way more dramatic. So we're very proud of  
10 that work and that's very promising.

11 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, I did here  
12 about District 18 work, and you know, certainly, you  
13 know, we would love to see that universal, and I know  
14 that we have to certainly pick and choose the  
15 locations based on need and priority and funding and  
16 capacity as we move forward, but I'm certainly  
17 looking forward to expanding that, certainly would  
18 love to have a presence in the Bronx. District Nine,  
19 District Nine always needs, and my advocates from  
20 District Nine have really put forth a priority and a  
21 real plan to make sure that a lot of that work can be  
22 expanded to District Nine. And so while I'm not, you  
23 know, throwing my district out there, certainly, I  
24 want to make sure that as you look to expand, looking  
25



1  
2 at priority locations is obviously very key, and I'm  
3 happy to support that as well.

4 LOIS HERRERA: So, part of the bullying  
5 package that we announced several weeks ago, we are  
6 going to expand to three new districts, the  
7 restorative practices initiative. We have not yet  
8 decided.

9 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Oh, okay.

10 LOIS HERRERA: We're reviewing data, but  
11 we are expanding and we're really excited about that.

12 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Oh, okay. Maybe  
13 that's why there's a push. So, when is the  
14 Department going to make the selection on the three  
15 districts?

16 LOIS HERRERA: We're in process.

17 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Oh, okay. So, will  
18 that happen this year or?

19 LOIS HERRERA: Yes, it will this year.

20 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, great. Thank  
21 you. Okay. And I guess my last question is an  
22 important one. A couple of years ago I was very  
23 proud to work within the Council and lead the efforts  
24 to amend the Student Safety Act, which is reporting  
25 that the Department provides to us on the number of

1 students that are issued summons, arrested, as well  
2 as suspended, and I wanted to specifically ask,  
3 pursuant to the Administrative Code 14-150, is the  
4 reporting part, specifically there is no report on  
5 the number of SSAs per school and the average number  
6 per quarter based on a public safety exception that  
7 we're using that's been written in law. I think it  
8 may be called-- right, right. It's the Public Safety  
9 Exception. It's written in law. So I wanted to  
10 understand what information can be reported to us  
11 that does not compromise public safety? Are we able  
12 to see the number of SSAs whether it's per police  
13 precinct, per borough? Is that something that we're  
14 able to get without violating any public safety  
15 measures or compromising rather? Hello there.

17 UNIDENTIFIED: Good afternoon, Council  
18 Member. I think we can certainly look at some of the  
19 ideas that you just suggested, meaning the number of  
20 SSAs by precinct with the understanding there were  
21 multiple schools in a precinct. The type of data  
22 that we have given in response to that data point is  
23 the total staff allotment in school safety, uniform  
24 versus SSAs, but we've kind of stayed away from how  
25 many SSAs are per school, because first, as the Chief

1  
2 had mentioned earlier in the testimony, that number  
3 does shift from day to day. And second, from a  
4 public safety position, we really rather not create  
5 the roadmap of identifying schools that may not have  
6 sufficient-- well, not that it's an insufficient  
7 manpower, but based on the size of the school for  
8 individuals that are looking to doing harm to map  
9 about the manpower and potentially try to find cracks  
10 to bring weapons or try to make the school  
11 environment less safe.

12 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Right, no, no, and I  
13 understand that. Certainly, this Council is never  
14 asking the Department to do anything or comply with  
15 local law where public safety is compromised, but I  
16 think that you will find in the report that we are  
17 getting as a matter of the local law but just also in  
18 terms of the work we're doing, the majority of the  
19 metal detectors that we have in schools today I know  
20 are in the same communities where we're trying to  
21 address vulnerable students, students of color,  
22 students with disabilities, immigrants, LGBTQ  
23 students, it's the same students we're talking about.  
24 So, obviously the reporting for us is a greater  
25 understand of where the trends and patterns are, but

1  
2 it's a call to action of what further work needs to  
3 be done to say to us why these particular schools,  
4 and again, we're not asking for a school data itself  
5 in terms of the schools, but if you can extrapolate  
6 it if it's a geographical, it's a police precinct, if  
7 it's Community Board. I mean there are several ways  
8 that we can go about doing this. We just wanted to  
9 make sure that it was put forth as a recommendation  
10 because what we're getting now is really not  
11 sufficient. Does that make sense?

12 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Sure, we'll  
13 certainly look into it.

14 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, okay, great.  
15 You have questions? Okay, great. Let me get to  
16 Council Member Deutsch. Thank you.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you, Madam  
18 Chair. Good morning. So, I have a concern which I  
19 like to bring up. So, most recently I visited one of  
20 my of CUNY College, and one of the concerns I had was  
21 that there was drug use outside of the college like  
22 right after class. And at times I revived complaints  
23 of-- when I say drug use, it could mean, you know,  
24 some marijuana use inside the campus. So, if there  
25 is smoking marijuana or using other types of rugs

1  
2 outside of the campus like right after class that  
3 would mean that people are coming on the campus with  
4 drugs, narcotics on their possession, on their  
5 possession. So my question to you is, in the school  
6 system do you believe that there are students that  
7 have on their possession narcotics while in class?

8 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: We don't cover  
9 colleges, so just at the outset to say that. We're  
10 not covering colleges, but as far as, you know, we're  
11 always certainly looking to see if there is narcotics  
12 present inside of schools. We do document when we do  
13 recover narcotics. Largely it's marijuana, if we do  
14 recover anything, but certainly we look for that and  
15 that's why we work with the school administration  
16 with their guidance counselors. The warning card  
17 program particularly covers possession of a small  
18 amount of marijuana, and that's when we work with the  
19 school administration, refer that student to a  
20 guidance counselor or a substance abuse counselor  
21 when necessary. So, that's something we do certainly  
22 look for, but I can't say anything further than that.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, what is the  
24 protocol like when a student walks in? Do you  
25 believe that when a student walks in they should be,

1  
2 he or she should be asked, "Do you have-- are you  
3 carrying anything illegal on your possession?" Or is  
4 that something you do, or you just take it as, you  
5 know, if someone happens to mention that someone has  
6 some type of drugs on them, then, you know, we will  
7 check that out. Because you know, my concern is that  
8 a school is supposed to be a safe place, and if we  
9 should know that students are carrying narcotics on  
10 their possession, then there should be some type of  
11 protocol or some type of additional training that  
12 School Safety and DOE should do in order to prevent  
13 something like that from happening, because if you  
14 have a metal detector, yeah, it will tell you if the  
15 person, if the child or student has a weapon, but  
16 many of the schools don't have those metal detectors,  
17 and the metal detectors cannot tell you if someone  
18 has-- is carrying anything on their possession that  
19 might be other than a weapon.

20 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: The answer would  
21 be no, we don't. Just ask students if they're  
22 carrying a weapon or anything else. I don't think  
23 that would be an appropriate use of our resources.  
24 We do certainly, again, work with the Administration.  
25 If there's a reason if we have suspicion or probable

1  
2 cause to look more closely at a particular student,  
3 based on information we may receive from either  
4 what's from within the school, or if a school  
5 administration person identifies somebody who may be  
6 in possession of something they're not supposed to  
7 have, then we would work with the school  
8 administration in that particular incident, but  
9 there's no random answering of questions or students.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, Chief, you  
11 don't have to answer the next question, it could be  
12 someone from DOE. But if someone, like if you take  
13 any given let's say high school or middle school  
14 without questioning a student, without knowing  
15 anything, without even looking, do you feel is a  
16 percentage that would be in that school that is  
17 carrying some type of drug on his or her possession?  
18 That means, if you wouldn't even ask and you would  
19 have 700 students in one building. Would you assume?

20 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: I would not  
21 assume, no.

22 MARK RAMPERSANT: I wouldn't assume.  
23 Without any evidence of drug use or acting in a  
24 manner that would make one believe that a student is

1  
2 under the influence, we wouldn't just automatically  
3 assume.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Do you have any  
5 stats of how many reports there are in a given school  
6 of someone reporting someone carrying drugs or using  
7 drugs?

8 MARK RAMPERSANT: We have stats of  
9 reported drug use in school or students in possession  
10 of drugs. We don't--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: [interposing]  
12 What is that number overall in the New York City  
13 school system?

14 MARK RAMPERSANT: We don't have that  
15 number here right now.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Is it a high  
17 number, a low number?

18 ASSISTANT CHIEF CONROY: Considering the  
19 size of the school system and the number of students,  
20 the number is a low number.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: It's a low  
22 number, but do you have-- I mean, considering the  
23 size of the school system it's a low number, but you  
24 still have those numbers that people are carrying  
25 drugs in a school that is supposed to be a safe



1  
2 place. If you think about not having those numbers,  
3 and you know, you have no stats whatsoever, what is  
4 the school system doing in order to prevent any type  
5 of drugs being brought into a school?

6 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, as the Chief  
7 mentioned, the Department of Education, we have SAPIS  
8 workers that do drug presentations, anti-drug  
9 presentations for young people. Any young person  
10 that we find that is in possession or under the  
11 influence, their guidance counselors are working with  
12 those young people, and further external  
13 interventions are provided if needed.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Is that 100  
15 percent proof? Would that be 100 percent proof that  
16 someone should not bring in any type of drugs into  
17 the school, or this is more preventative measures?

18 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, the education is the  
19 preventative measures, and in terms of the provisions  
20 made to individual students, those are obviously the  
21 case-by-case.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, in other  
23 words, people could still come inside having drugs on  
24 their possession, and by you having educational  
25 preventive measures and not actually knowing if

1  
2 someone's walking into the school with drugs, you  
3 would have no idea.

4 MARK RAMPERSANT: We would have no idea  
5 if a person is in possession of drugs.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: If someone's in  
7 possession. So, there's no additional training that  
8 you think should be given or something should be done  
9 in policy in order to make it 100 percent drug-free  
10 in our school system.

11 MARK RAMPERSANT: I'm not sure what that  
12 training would be, but we definitely welcome any  
13 ideas on how-- on ways by which to ensure that  
14 schools are 100 percent drug-free.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you.  
16 Okay, that's what I wanted to hear, and I think we  
17 should continue this conversation to make sure that  
18 our schools are 100 percent drug-free as best as we  
19 can do to make sure our kids are safe in school.  
20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you very much,  
22 Council Member Deutsch. Just my final question, are  
23 there any instances where with some of the  
24 legislation that the City Council advances that is  
25 codified in local law where there are amendments to

1  
2 the NYPD's Patrol Guide, if there are any instances  
3 where there's an amendment that's applicable to  
4 school safety, how does that work to ensure that all  
5 of the SSAs are trained in terms of knowledgeable and  
6 understanding what those changes could potentially  
7 be? Has that happened before? It's just a question  
8 that I thought about, if there are any Patrol Guide  
9 changes that relate specifically to school safety.

10 UNIDENTIFIED: Sure. So, it's-- I guess  
11 the answer would be it would work the same way that  
12 anytime the Council or the state passes a pieces of  
13 legislation--

14 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: [interposing] Yeah, I  
15 forgot about Albany.

16 UNIDENTIFIED: Right. We assess the  
17 impact of that legislation on the department as a  
18 whole or any particular specific subset of the  
19 department, and then we tailor the training  
20 accordingly. So, whether-- and I know you've seen  
21 plenty of this, whether it's an amendment to the  
22 Patrol Guide, whether it's a FINIS [sic] message that  
23 goes out, whether we do it during roll call training  
24 and train officers before they're deployed to patrol,  
25 whether we train the training sergeants in the Police

1 Academy, whether-- there's a variety of ways that we  
2 could disseminate the information. Now we have the  
3 ability to, with the officers having smartphones,  
4 they're able to watch tutorials on the internet. So,  
5 there could be a tutorial created and uploaded and  
6 officers could actually watch it on their smartphone  
7 as well.

8  
9 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Oh, okay.

10 UNIDENTIFIED: So, there's a variety of  
11 ways that we can do the training and we tailor it  
12 accordingly.

13 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, thank you. So,  
14 it is exactly 12 o'clock. I have three more panels  
15 that are following you. First, I always ask if it's  
16 possible to keep someone from School Safety and  
17 Department of Ed and MOCJ. It would be great so you  
18 can hear the remaining panels who are youth as well  
19 as some of the advocacy groups that are certainly  
20 very active in terms of the work we're doing on  
21 school climate. That would be great. And then  
22 secondly, I want to thank you because I have not had  
23 School Safety on this committee in over a year since  
24 we amended the Student Safety Act and we had other  
25 legislation related to security in non-public

1 schools. So it's been a while, so it's great to have  
2 you back, and certainly as this year is ending and we  
3 do have, you know, obviously new leadership coming  
4 into the City Council, I really want to take an  
5 opportunity publicly to say it's been a pleasure to  
6 work with you as a partner, as an advocate in a lot  
7 of the work we've done. This Administration has been  
8 very deliberate and aggressive in its priority of  
9 keeping children safe, but really being creative at  
10 doing it, not just having a police presence in school  
11 safety, but bringing everyone to the table. I have  
12 not seen this since I've been in office, and it's  
13 really pleasing because it recognizes that we all  
14 have a role to play, and I'm thankful for that. I  
15 thank you for being a part of the School Leadership  
16 Climate Team. I thank you for your work. I travel  
17 throughout my district, as you know, so I speak to  
18 SSAs all the time, and I really want to continue to  
19 engage with all of the events. The Youth Academy, I  
20 go to their graduations. Just amazing work that  
21 we're doing that obviously I want to build upon.  
22 Certainly, it's the floor and not the ceiling. So  
23 that means we strive and aim to continue to do  
24 better. So, I thank you for your work. I thank you

1  
2 for your partnership. I thank you for your  
3 commitment, and I'm certainly looking forward to  
4 working with all of you in the future, Public Safety  
5 Chair or not. We are looking forward to working with  
6 you. So, I thank you for being here today, and please  
7 continue to keep someone here for the remainder of  
8 the hearing so that you can hear the rest of the  
9 panels that are coming after you. Thank you once  
10 again for joining us today. Thank you. Our next  
11 panel is our young people. I'm calling our youth up  
12 to the panel from the Urban Youth Collaborative,  
13 Keith Fuller, from Make the Road New York and Urban  
14 Youth Collaborative, Adilka Pimentel, from Future of  
15 Tomorrow, Onyx Walker, from Urban Youth  
16 Collaborative, Roberto Cabanas, from Center for  
17 Popular Democracy, Urban Youth Collaborative, Kate  
18 Terenzi, as well as Urban Youth Collaborative, Jorki  
19 Badillo [sp?]. If I butchered your name, I  
20 apologize. Call the names again. Keith Fuller,  
21 Adilka Pimentel, Onyx Walker, Roberto Cabanas, Kate  
22 Terenzi, and Jorki Badillo. Thank you everyone for  
23 being here. So you can begin first. Just make sure  
24 you identify yourself for the record, and we do have  
25 a timeframe, simply because there are panels behind

1  
2 you and there is another hearing coming into this  
3 room at one o'clock. So, I want to make sure we get  
4 an opportunity to hear from everyone. But once  
5 again, welcome, and thank you so much for joining us  
6 at today's hearing. Thank you. Make sure your  
7 microphone's on. Okay, there you go.

8 JORKI BADILLO: Hi, good afternoon. My  
9 name is Jorki Badillo. I am a Youth Organizer at  
10 Sistas and Brothas United. Throughout my work I've  
11 come to notice that youth have a chance to be their  
12 best selves only when they've received the full and  
13 positive support that their capacity demands. In any  
14 environment a child thrives through encouragement. A  
15 child thrives through rewards and having positive  
16 influences in their life, not through punishments.  
17 So we take two scenarios, Rico and Evan. They both  
18 steal a bag of chips. While Evan gets caught by law  
19 enforcement, Rico escapes. Evan gets a violation and  
20 probation. Rico, on the other hand, confesses to his  
21 role model who then convinces Rico to return the bag  
22 of chips and apologize to the store owner. While  
23 Evan faces the consequences of their actions, Rico  
24 learns the errors and his mistakes. Both didn't know  
25 any better. However, one received the support from a

1  
2 positive influence when it was needed. So, can we  
3 not say that similar scenarios do take place in our  
4 education system today? I graduated from Samuel  
5 Gompers High School in the Bronx. This was in 2011.  
6 At the time, the ratio of guidance counselors to  
7 students was one to 100. Even then our retention  
8 rate was 25 percent. Out of 224 students in my  
9 graduating class, only 56 made it. We saw that  
10 counselors weren't able to reach all students. They  
11 were not able to accommodate such workload while  
12 handling 100-plus personalities in the school. Due  
13 to this, some of my classmates did not receive the  
14 support and guidance needed to walk down the aisle  
15 with me, and it is unbelievable that this ratio has  
16 nearly quadrupled in the last seven years. We now  
17 have a regulation of one guidance counselor to 407  
18 students. In my experience I can say it barely  
19 worked in my environment, so how can it work with a  
20 much higher ratio? Just like in the scenario of  
21 Rico, positive influences can provide space for  
22 growth to rectify mistakes and to learn deeper and  
23 stronger values. Through increasing and investing in  
24 support systems of students, our communities can  
25 continue to reduce incidents linked with bullying and



1  
2 conflicts in school. When I think of a safe school,  
3 I think about Peace Circles. I think about fellow  
4 students resolving conflicts with their words and  
5 expression, and in times of conflict, being equipped  
6 with the tools that keep young people close to a  
7 supportive environment, not just to de-escalate  
8 situations, but also to guide and better paths. So I  
9 ask, let us be Rico's role model. Let us give  
10 schools the capacity and tools to hire more role  
11 models like Rico's. We know that guidance counselors  
12 and social workers are the key to creating supportive  
13 communities in our schools, and unfortunately the  
14 current discipline practices that are going on in our  
15 schools are not working. We know this already.

16 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you very much.  
17 Thank you. You may begin.

18 ADILKA PIMENTEL: Good afternoon. My  
19 name is Adilka, and I'm a Youth Organizer with Make  
20 the Road New York and the Urban Youth Collaborative.  
21 Over a decade ago I sat in this very seat as a high  
22 school student testifying about my experiences as an  
23 undocumented queer Latina attending high school in  
24 Brooklyn. My every day lived experiences was  
25 struggling with invasive, aggressive and dehumanizing

1 school safety policies and practices. As a student I  
2 was fighting for the City to change its approach to  
3 school safety and discipline and to give young people  
4 the social, emotional and mental health resources all  
5 young people deserve. Instead, the City gave us  
6 suspensions, arrests, and summons. Today, I am here  
7 on behalf of the young people I organize with who  
8 face the same policies and practices I faced and  
9 continue to struggle to be heard. We knew then as we  
10 know now that metal detectors and policing are  
11 ineffective school safety strategies, but yet the  
12 City continues to pour over 400 million dollars a  
13 year into the school-to-prison-pipeline. Research  
14 shows police officers and metal detectors do not  
15 reduce incidents of fighting, bullying or conflict,  
16 but more importantly, our experiences tell us this. I  
17 remember mornings where I felt traumatized knowing I  
18 was going to have to go through metal detectors and  
19 scanning and the disrespect and harassment we faced  
20 just trying to get into the school. I remember  
21 watching confused, scared and angry as the NYPD  
22 handcuffed a fellow classmate having a mental health  
23 crisis. Today, 97 percent of students handcuffed  
24 because of a mental health crisis are black and  
25

1 Latinx. It is a disappointing and disheartening  
2 feeling to not have enjoyed my four years of high  
3 school because of the hyper-aggressive, punitive and  
4 zero-tolerance environment of the school. My  
5 experience as an undocumented student was filled with  
6 fear and anxiety of being introduced to the very  
7 unforgiving school-to-deportation pipeline. New York  
8 City is the only home I have known, and the idea of  
9 being uprooted from my home and community was  
10 frightening and agonizing. Due to continued policies  
11 that criminalize black and Latinx youth for normal  
12 youth behavior, undocumented students continue to be  
13 vulnerable. Seventy-eight percent of all arrests,  
14 summons and juvenile reports are for non-criminal  
15 violations and misdemeanors. We should be here  
16 discussing how we can get the Mayor to pass an  
17 operations order to eliminate the practice of arrests  
18 and summons for low-level infractions and not  
19 embedding police deeper into school discipline. It  
20 pains me to sit in this very seat over 10 years later  
21 as someone who works closely with young people who  
22 attend these same high schools and are going through  
23 the same thing I did. The young people of New York  
24 City deserve to go to a school where humanity is  
25

1  
2 respected, valued, and when there is a safe and  
3 supportive learning environment. I am here today to  
4 say that we do not need School Safety Agents or  
5 police inside of our schools. We need more  
6 counselors, curriculum that's culturally responsive,  
7 mental health services, and safe inclusive spaces for  
8 members of the LGBT community. These things will  
9 provide a nurturing school climate that allows  
10 building and sustaining a healthy community,  
11 creativity, growth, and success. The young people of  
12 New York City know what they need and have been  
13 calling for the same thing for years. They should be  
14 the ones asking the questions. when is the City  
15 going to recognize what they need isn't policing in  
16 their schools to keep them safe, but the true safety  
17 of having the resources that address their needs,  
18 trauma and academic goals needed for them to  
19 graduate. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you very much.  
21 You may begin.

22 KEITH FULLER: Hello, my name is Keith. I  
23 am currently a college student and youth leader at  
24 Make the Road New York and the Urban Youth  
25 Collaborative. Recently, the Urban Youth

1 Collaborative released a report that detailed  
2 evidence based strategies to ensure schools are safe  
3 and supported using our personal experiences in New  
4 York City schools and over 30 years of research in  
5 school discipline and safety. As a recent former high  
6 school student, I can attest to the validity of the  
7 information found in this report. Like most of the  
8 youth in my neighborhood, I went to school with the  
9 exception from my family that I must be the very best  
10 I can be in order to one day break the cycle of  
11 living paycheck-to-paycheck. None of my parents had  
12 the opportunity to obtain higher education because  
13 they had my brother when they were still in high  
14 school, and I came shortly after. I had a goal to go  
15 to school and graduate, then move onto college, and  
16 the climate of the school made my four years in high  
17 school a tumultuous ride. What I also remember about  
18 high school was how fortunate I was to have a good  
19 relationship with my guidance counselor and how much  
20 it helped my school career. Conversations we had  
21 always provided clarity when I was going through  
22 stuff at home and when I had questions about the  
23 college application process. I knew that she was  
24 always someone I could sit down with and make sense  
25

1 out of any situation I was dealing with. The only  
2 problem was the ratio of guidance counselors to  
3 students in my school did not allow her to be  
4 accessible often. We only had one guidance counselor  
5 for hundreds of students in my school that she was  
6 responsible for helping. However, on any given day  
7 there was always at least 20 School Safety Agents at  
8 the front desk at running or roaming the building.  
9 There are twice as many police officers in school as  
10 there are guidance counselors. What does that tell  
11 us about how people think about us about our future?  
12 School Safety Agents served as agitators with the  
13 sole purpose of making my day worse, and as a student  
14 I felt that the day-to-day harassment and zero  
15 tolerance policies in place created an atmosphere of  
16 criminalization and caused self-doubt in students.  
17 Circumstances like this should never exist in any  
18 setting and I appreciate the fact we are here to talk  
19 about it, but understand that more needs to be done  
20 besides talking about the issues. I'm here to state--  
21 I'm here today to say that we do not need cops or  
22 School Safety Agents in our school because they do  
23 not keep us safe. Instead we are calling for more  
24 guidance counselors, mental health services and  
25

1  
2 restorative justice practices that will create an  
3 environmental in schools and help us be successful.  
4 Thankyou.

5 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you. You may  
6 begin.

7 ONYX WALKER: Good morning everyone. My  
8 name is Onyx Walker, and I'm a Youth Organizer at  
9 Future of Tomorrow and the Urban Youth Collaborative.  
10 Last month, the Urban Youth Collaborative released a  
11 report around strategies to ensure that our schools  
12 are safe and supported, supported by evidence based  
13 priorities. The report polls from 20 years of  
14 experiences of young people in our organizations  
15 attending New York City Schools, and research  
16 analyzing school safety and discipline. After  
17 decades of increasing police presence in school and  
18 the criminalization of black and Latinx youth. There  
19 is no conclusive evidence. Police officers and  
20 dehumanizing security measures including metal  
21 detectors and/or scanning are effective in making our  
22 schools any safer. In fact, there is evidence that  
23 says the opposite. School policing disproportionately  
24 harms black, Latinx, LGBT, and students with  
25 disabilities turning mindful youthful behavior into

1  
2 crimes. In relation to that, in NYC black and Latinx  
3 students makes up 67 percent of the student body that  
4 account for 92 percent of all arrests, 89 percent of  
5 summons, and 88 percent of all juvenile reports in  
6 schools; 78 percent of all arrest summons and  
7 juvenile reports are for misdemeanors and/or  
8 violations. When schools have police officers,  
9 students are more likely to be funneled into the  
10 criminal justice system for minor offenses and mental  
11 health issues. Criminalizing students of color  
12 through policing normal youthful behavior and  
13 invasive safety measures are barriers to creating  
14 truly safe, supportive and nurturing learning  
15 environments. Students are not going to look for  
16 support to resolve conflict or share their issues  
17 when they can't find a guidance counselor and are  
18 handcuffed and arrested for mental health and  
19 emotional issues. The School Safety Division employs  
20 5,500 personnel, while we only have 2,800 fulltime  
21 guidance counselors. There is one guidance counselor  
22 for every 407 students and one School Safety Agent  
23 for every 207 students. What does it say about our  
24 priorities when studies show increasing the number of  
25 guidance counselors is linked with a reduction in



1 incidents of fighting and bullying? But we're not  
2 hearing any commit to the increasing number of  
3 guidance counselors and reducing the role of police  
4 officers in school discipline. We don't need police  
5 officers getting involved in more school discipline  
6 issues. We need to significantly increase the number  
7 of guidance counselors so it's one for every 100  
8 students in high-need schools, and immediately revise  
9 the MOU with the NYPD and DOE to ensure students see  
10 guidance counselors and social workers and not police  
11 officers and judges for school discipline issues.  
12 Guidance counselors and social workers are key to  
13 creating supportive and nurturing learning  
14 environments as well as other priorities. Fully  
15 implementing restorative justice, a mental health  
16 network, and creating safe spaces through culturally  
17 relevant education. The Department of Education has  
18 increased funding for restorative justice, but we  
19 spend 400 million dollars in policing students and 10  
20 million dollars for restorative justice. This is  
21 another example of misplaced priorities. School  
22 fully invested and embracing restorative justice have  
23 seen a reduction in suspensions, reductions in  
24 discipline incident and an improvement in school  
25

1  
2 climate and academic outcomes. Restorative justice  
3 will move us away from punishment and alienation and  
4 move the City towards a more just and fair approach.  
5 It keeps young people close to a supportive  
6 community. Just as we have learned that mass  
7 incarceration and broken windows does nothing to  
8 create safer communities, we have learned that  
9 similar approaches to discipline and school does  
10 nothing to create safer schools. Young people are in  
11 a unique position to provide solutions for creating  
12 truly safe and supportive schools, but we need people  
13 to believe in us and let us lead the way. Embedding  
14 police further into discipline issues will only push  
15 the City far away from criminal justice reform.  
16 Divesting from policing, including police officers in  
17 schools and metal detectors an arrests and summons  
18 and reallocating those funds for the social/emotional  
19 and mental health needs of young people is not only  
20 more effective, it is just and shoes the City is  
21 invested in the future of all young people. Thank  
22 you

23 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

24 KATE TERENZI: Good afternoon Chairperson  
25 Gibson. My name I Kate Terenzi, and I work at the

1 Center for Popular Democracy. The Center for Popular  
2 Democracy is a national organization and our  
3 education justice campaign works in collaboration in  
4 solidarity with our partners and allies across the  
5 country including the Urban Youth Collaborative to  
6 dismantle the school-to-prison pipe line. Today's  
7 hearing asks the question what is the New York Police  
8 Department's role in improving school climate. The  
9 answer supported by the evidence is that there is no  
10 real form them in schools. Proponents of school  
11 policing and punitive disciplinary action often say  
12 its student safety as their primary justification for  
13 infusing schools with police officers. Yet, research  
14 has found that there is no substantial support for  
15 the proposition that police presence in schools  
16 create safer learning environments. To the contrary,  
17 several studies have shown that young people are no  
18 safer after years of punitive practices. Research  
19 illustrates that policing in schools does not reduce  
20 incidents of bullying or fighting and young people  
21 feel significantly less safe. These practices also  
22 put young people out of the very schools they're  
23 intended to learn from, and [inaudible] ineffective.  
24 Policing in New York City schools create extreme  
25

1 racial disparities, as you've heard about black girls  
2 are 14.4 times more likely to be arrested than white  
3 girls. Ninety-seven percent of the young people,  
4 middle school age or younger who were arrested last  
5 year are black and Latinx, compared to their share of  
6 the population at just 67 percent. These disparities  
7 are seen despite evidence that young people from  
8 different races do not misbehave at significantly  
9 different rates. Our schools can and must move away  
10 from policies and practices that are ineffective and  
11 criminalize young people. There are three immediate  
12 steps the City Council should make to move away from  
13 racist and infective policies. The first is to  
14 support the cause of these young people through the  
15 end of-- by calling for the end of arrests and  
16 summonses juvenile reports in schools for  
17 misdemeanors and violations. The second, institute a  
18 moratorium on the insulation of any new metal  
19 detectors and remove all currently installed creams.  
20 And three, invest deeply in transformative practices  
21 that have been proven to provide truly safe schools,  
22 including restorative practices, commission,  
23 comprehensive mental health care and significantly  
24 more guidance counselors and social workers. The  
25

1  
2 Urban Youth Collaborative and the Center for Popular  
3 Democracy released a policy brief: the Young  
4 People's Vision for Safe Supportive Schools, which  
5 we'll submit with our written testimony. Each of the  
6 solutions included there supported not only the  
7 experiences of young people, which should be guiding  
8 all of our thought, but also extensive academic  
9 studies. The City Council has the opportunity  
10 through the budget cycle to deeply invest in this  
11 youth-drive and research-backed solutions. Young  
12 people have long known the types of support they need  
13 to learn and thrive in their schools. The research  
14 proves that their solutions work. The City must head  
15 these calls and implement these practices in a  
16 transformational city-wide way.

17 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

18 ROBERTO CABANAS: Good afternoon  
19 Chairperson Gibson. My name is Roberto Cabanas and  
20 I'm the coordinator for the Urban Youth  
21 Collaborative. I have a brief statement and also  
22 here to submit our policy brief for the record. The  
23 City must stop criminalizing normal youthful  
24 behavior. The School is a place for young people to  
25 make mistakes. Seventy-eight percent of all arrests

1  
2 summons and juvenile reports are for misdemeanors and  
3 violations. Young people will continue to suffer at  
4 the hands of ineffective and racist practices so long  
5 as we rely on police rather than supporting systems  
6 to create safer and supportive school communities.  
7 The City must be bold enough to reimagine safety so  
8 that it's rooted in effective and humane practices of  
9 support rather than policing, and so in our  
10 conversations and meeting with young people, we meet  
11 with young people all across the city. They are the  
12 best people and the best resource to come up with  
13 policy to create those safe and supportive schools  
14 that we all desire for every child in the City, and  
15 we ask that you consider reading our policy  
16 recommendations because they came directly from young  
17 people themselves. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you all very  
19 much. I appreciate it. I'm sorry I won't be able to  
20 have more of a conversation with all of you simply  
21 because I have more panels behind you, but truly I  
22 thank you, Urban Youth Collaborative, Center for  
23 Democracy. We've worked together on many, many  
24 occasions, and I appreciate the opportunity to always  
25 hear from young people. I am not that far removed

1 from being young that I do not listen to our young  
2 people, because you really are living the work that  
3 we do every day, and certainly we appreciate the  
4 opportunity that you came here today to testify  
5 before the Committee. So, I really, really thank you  
6 for your efforts. I encourage you to continue to  
7 work with us so that we can continue to demonstrate  
8 our support through policy changes and through money.  
9 I think the restorative justice work that we've done  
10 in putting more money into schools for mental health  
11 and guidance counselors and social workers, school-  
12 based health centers, really is our commitment to  
13 everything that you're talking about, but I do  
14 recognize we have to continue to push. We cannot  
15 accept everything that we have now as being perfect,  
16 but we honestly have to continue to push the needle.  
17 So, I appreciate your presence today and look forward  
18 to our continued work together. Thank you for being  
19 here today. Our next panel is Nelson Mar from Bronx  
20 Legal Services, Keren Farkas from Brooklyn Defender  
21 Services, Nancy Ginsburg, and Kara Chambers from the  
22 Legal Aid Society, Joana Miller from NYCLU, the New  
23 York Civil Liberties Union, and Gianne Falvo from the  
24 New York Civil Liberties Union, New York Law School.  
25

1  
2 Yes, you can start. You may begin. Thank you for  
3 being here today. Is the button on?

4 GIANNE FALVO: Good afternoon. My name is  
5 Gianne Falvo, and I'm a third-year law student at New  
6 York Law School, and I'm part of the Law School's  
7 Legislative Advocacy clinic working in conjunction  
8 with the New York Civil Liberties Union. Today, I  
9 speak on behalf of myself and my colleagues in the  
10 clinic about the school to prison pipeline and its  
11 detrimental effects on our City students. Due to the  
12 presence of law enforcement in public schools, minor  
13 behavioral infractions too often result in  
14 suspension, expulsion, arrest, or incarceration of  
15 the students involved. School discipline policies  
16 that rely on law enforcement and out-of-school  
17 suspensions increase the number of young people  
18 exposed to the Criminal Justice System at-risk with  
19 incarceration. Research shows that young people who  
20 have contact with police are significantly less  
21 likely to complete secondary school, experience less  
22 human capital development and diminished earning  
23 potentials and are more likely to be incarcerated as  
24 adults. In New York City we have the Lartet school  
25 police force in the nation, so more of our children



1 at risk than anywhere else in the country. The US  
2 incarceration rate has increase 700 percent sin 1970  
3 this increase is disproportionately due to the  
4 incarceration of black and Latino people. In the US  
5 black people make up only 12 precinct of the total  
6 population, yet they make up 38 percent of the prison  
7 population. Likewise, Latino-Americans make up 17  
8 percent of the total US population and 17 percent of  
9 the prison population. One of the main causes of this  
10 disparity is the impact of the zero-tolerance  
11 disciplinary policies employed by the nation's  
12 schools. Student of color are suspended and arrested  
13 at a rate more than two times greater than white  
14 students for the same offenses. Suspension,  
15 expulsion and arrestee are often the first steps in a  
16 chain of events that led to academic disengagement  
17 and trouble with the law. Over the past several  
18 years, several school districts in the US have had  
19 positive outcomes as a result of replacing zero  
20 tolerance policies with restorative justice policies.  
21 After eliminated zero tolerance policies for petty  
22 acts and misdemeanors and adopting restorative  
23 justices' policies. Broward County Public School  
24 district, the sixth largest school district in the  
25

1 US, and Miami Dade County public School district, the  
2 fourth largest district in the US, dramatically  
3 increased graduation rates and decreased arrests and  
4 suspensions. In 2009, Florida amended its zero  
5 tolerance statute and gave school districts the  
6 option of softening their disciplinary policies. As  
7 a result, Broward County and Miami Dade decided to  
8 adopt restorative justice disciplinary policies for  
9 petty acts of misconduct and misdemeanors. The  
10 students of the Legislative Advocacy Clinic provide  
11 the following recommendations to be considered it  
12 address this issue: Provide comprehensive guidelines  
13 for SRO interactions with the students through  
14 establishing limits on law enforcement activities in  
15 school and promoting a student bill of rights. Limit  
16 police presence in schools and empower educators to  
17 respond to disruption and misbehavior in a way that  
18 contributes to student's educational progress. The  
19 City Council can promote this through allocating  
20 funding for positive discipline alternatives and  
21 reducing funding for the School Safety officer.  
22 Reduce the number of young people subjected to  
23 criminal justice penalties because of misbehavior.  
24 The City Council can help accomplish this by using  
25

1  
2 its oversight power to promote the adoption of the  
3 NY-- of renewed Memorandum of Understanding between  
4 the DOE and the NYPD that limits students' exposure  
5 to criminal penalties and audit the DOE and NYPD's  
6 performance in reducing criminal justice penalties by  
7 reviewing data and exercising oversight authority.

8 New York City can and should follow in Miami's  
9 footsteps and begin to dismantle the school-to-prison  
10 pipeline, robbing so many of the City's youth of  
11 their chance at a positive educational experience.

12 New York City can set an example for the rest of the  
13 country to stop these practices. In turn, the City  
14 will reap the benefits of a better educated and more  
15 empowered population for generations to come. Thank  
16 you.

17 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

18 KARA CHAMBERS: Good afternoon. I'm Kara  
19 Chambers. I'm here with my colleague Nancy Ginsburg.  
20 We submit this testimony on behalf of the Legal Aid  
21 Society and we thank Chairperson Gibson and the  
22 Committee on Public Safety for inviting our thoughts  
23 on issues of school climate and the role of NYPD's  
24 School Safety in New York City public schools. We  
25 urge the Council and the Administration to resist

1  
2 pressure to respond to the troubling violence in our  
3 schools by increasing the number of metal detectors  
4 and law enforcement personnel in schools. While  
5 metal detectors certainly do screen out dangerous  
6 instruments and weapons brought to school, they don't  
7 address the underlying reasons that students feel the  
8 need to bring those weapons to school. Failure to  
9 address conflicts among students leads them to take  
10 matters into their own hands either inside or outside  
11 the school building. In our experience, metal  
12 detectors are flash-points for conflict between  
13 students and adults in schools. It can be a  
14 particularly difficult experience for students with  
15 special needs, mental health issues and trauma  
16 histories, and can create a negative school  
17 environment. While we recognize that metal detectors  
18 may be justified in schools with historically high  
19 rates of weapons recovery, there should be clear  
20 guidelines on the placement and removal of metal  
21 detectors in schools to provide transparency in the  
22 process for students and families and an opportunity  
23 for review and assessment. The same recommendation  
24 regarding the need for clear guidelines on the  
25 placement and removal of metal detectors was made by

1 the Mayor's Leadership Team on School Climate and  
2 Discipline. The NYPD testified today that they have  
3 developed protocols for the installation and removal  
4 of metal detectors in schools. It's unclear to us,  
5 however, whether those protocols have been adequately  
6 promulgated and whether the Department of Education  
7 has truly begun to follow them yet. In addition to  
8 examining policies related to the placement and  
9 removal of metal detectors in schools, the Mayor's  
10 Leadership team on School Climate and Discipline also  
11 look carefully at the role of School Safety Agents,  
12 precinct officers and educators-- and educators in  
13 maintaining school safety and discipline. The  
14 leadership team concluded that the existing  
15 Memorandum of Understanding between the NYPD and the  
16 Department of Education, which was drafted in 1998,  
17 is outdated and does not adequately delineated the  
18 respective roles of NYPD and Department of Education  
19 staff in responding to student conduct. We strongly  
20 endorse the leadership team's recommendation that the  
21 MOU be revised. A revised MOU would place primary--  
22 has to place primary responsibility for maintaining  
23 positive school climate on educators, not police,  
24 should limit law enforcement involvement in minor  
25

1 student misconduct, set forth protocols for  
2 handcuffing and searches, clarify responsibilities  
3 for parent notification after restraint summonses and  
4 arrests, and establish mandatory training  
5 requirements for School Safety Agents. We hope the  
6 NYPD and DOE will continue to work with the  
7 leadership team and other key stakeholders to draft a  
8 document that will provide meaningful guidance to  
9 school personnel and law enforcement. Raising issues  
10 of over-reliance on metal detectors and law  
11 enforcement personnel in schools does not dilute our  
12 concerns about violence in New York City schools. On  
13 the contrary, we share the distrust of the New York  
14 City community on these issues. Our concern primarily  
15 is that the only meaningful response to this crisis  
16 is that it needs to be-- there needs to be more  
17 comprehensive, funded, integrated services that will  
18 address the underlying causes of the violence. One  
19 of the working groups that was part of the Mayor's  
20 Leadership Team on School Climate and Discipline  
21 focused on coordinating the delivery of mental health  
22 services in the highest need schools with many of the  
23 highest needs students. Mental health professionals  
24 are best poised to improve the prevention of and  
25

1 response to challenging and disruptive behaviors in  
2 schools because of their training and their focus on  
3 the social and emotional wellbeing of children,  
4 youth, and families. We encourage the DOE and other  
5 city agencies to re-evaluate and implement the  
6 recommendations of the Leadership Team to improve  
7 mental health delivery to our City's school children.  
8 We also encourage both agencies, the NYPD and the  
9 Department of Education, to follow the Leadership  
10 Team's recommendations regarding comprehensive  
11 strategies to address the needs of students who  
12 exhibit challenging behaviors. The School Safety  
13 Division of the NYPD has actually dedicated a  
14 significant portion of its training budget to teach  
15 collaborative problem-solving and de-escalation  
16 techniques. We have observed a significant impact  
17 from this training. There's been a drastic reduction  
18 in conflict between students and School Safety  
19 Agents, both verbal and physical. Unfortunately, the  
20 Department of Education has not engaged in similar  
21 efforts to train their staff and provide  
22 comprehensive instruction on collaborative problem-  
23 solving and de-escalation techniques. We would  
24 encourage the Department of Education to mandate  
25

1 similar training for all of its staff. It cannot be  
2 optional. This is a pervasive problem. It requires a  
3 comprehensive response that is consistent among all  
4 adults in the building, both NYPD and school staff,  
5 and without adequate training the DOE school staff  
6 cannot be expected to respond appropriately. In sum,  
7 increasing the law enforcement presence in use of  
8 metal detectors as the sole responses to violence in  
9 schools is akin to putting a Band-Aid on a broken  
10 bone. Instead, New York City must build a meaningful  
11 continuum of mental healthcare to help support  
12 students, families and schools. The City has to  
13 commit to pay for and support those practices that  
14 have demonstrated success if we truly expect  
15 communities to heal. Thank you for the opportunity  
16 to speak today.

18 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

19 KEREN FARKAS: My name is Keren Farkas.  
20 I am the Supervising Attorney in BDS, Brooklyn  
21 Defender Services' Education Unit. BDS shares the  
22 Council's deep commitment to supporting positive  
23 school climates and increasing school safety. While  
24 we appreciate the New York Police Department's  
25 efforts to train school safety agents in mental



1 health first-aid and de-escalation techniques, we  
2 firmly believe that even the most well-intentioned,  
3 well-trained School Safety Agents or police officers  
4 is ill-equipped to positively address student  
5 misbehavior. Why are we investing in training School  
6 Safety Agents to be more like educators than train  
7 mental health clinicians, especially when studies  
8 show that a police presence in school can actually  
9 decrease a student's perceptions of safety and lead  
10 them to make unsafe choices to protect themselves?  
11 Likewise, a strong law enforcement presence can set a  
12 tone of distrust in a school that is not conducive to  
13 learning and is linked to poor academic achievement  
14 and school disengagement. Our clients' experiences  
15 mirror this data. We regularly meet with young  
16 people grappling with the harmful cumulative impact  
17 of punitive discipline and police interaction at  
18 school. These repeated experiences, often for non-  
19 violent adolescent misbehavior, have damaged not only  
20 their attitude towards school but their attitude  
21 about themselves and their potential. Young people  
22 can sense when they are no longer wanted in a school  
23 community. One way our clients repeatedly hear that  
24 message is when instead of responding to adolescent  
25

1  
2 misbehavior with trained mental health clinicians and  
3 evidence-based approaches premised on reconciliation,  
4 relationship building and conversations to address  
5 the impact of their behavior. Law enforcement takes  
6 the lead. When our kindergarten and first grade  
7 clients with known behavioral needs, tantrum, and  
8 they are restrained by police or school safety  
9 agencies, they get a message we do not want to send.  
10 When our teenage clients test boundaries and  
11 authority, act impulsively and escalate typical peer  
12 conflict, and no caring staff member sits with them  
13 in earnest to have a conversation and give them the  
14 opportunity to confront their behavior, make amends  
15 and take responsibility, they get a message we do not  
16 want to send. We also lose the opportunity to  
17 instill these young people with the problem-solving  
18 and coping skills needed to lead productive lives.  
19 Many of our clients have experienced trauma or  
20 poverty that has also complicated their development.  
21 Some also have emotionally disabilities. Using  
22 punitive or law enforcement responses rather than  
23 positive, preventative, restorative approaches, we  
24 not only fail to get at the root of behaviors, we  
25 risk exacerbating the underlying behavioral and

1  
2 circumstantial challenge. We know that this real is  
3 real for our clients. And Advocates for Children  
4 recent that nearly 29 percent of incident where  
5 police or School Safety are called are for children  
6 in crisis experiencing emotional support. This is  
7 not only inappropriate and harmful, but it displays  
8 the disparate impact on students of color. In short,  
9 we need to foster a school culture that presumptively  
10 approaches all students' misbehavior teachable  
11 moments. To do so, there needs to be a financial  
12 shift away from law enforcement in schools and a  
13 strong investment in resources that can actually help  
14 educators identify issues early and teach young  
15 people conflict resolution, emotional regulation and  
16 critical thinking which they can draw upon in the  
17 future. We need to follow the roadmap developed by  
18 the Mayor's Leadership Team on School Climate and  
19 Discipline and instill resources in school-based and  
20 school-linked mental health services, expand our  
21 investment in whole school approaches to positive  
22 behavior such as collaborative problem-solving,  
23 restorative practices in TCIS, an increased school-  
24 based staff with the training and time to oversee  
25 implementation of these approaches and ensure access

1  
2 to ongoing coaching such as trained guidance  
3 counselors, licensed social workers and restorative  
4 justice coordinators. These are the investments our  
5 students deserve that will improve school climate.  
6 Thank you for your time.

7 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

8 NELSON MAR: Good afternoon, Chairperson  
9 Gibson. It's a pleasure to see you here today. My  
10 name is Nelson Mar. I'm an attorney at Bronx Legal  
11 Services. I'm here to give testimony on behalf of  
12 Bronx Legal Services. In the course of our work in  
13 the Bronx on education issues over these years, it's  
14 become very clear that there has been a significant  
15 seat change in how schools are functioning with  
16 regards to public-- with School Safety Agents. When  
17 I first started, School Safety Agents definitely were  
18 a bigger part of the problem, and now they're--  
19 they've moved towards being part of the solution, and  
20 this sort of reflects the ongoing tension in many of  
21 the communities that I work in around policing, and  
22 School Safety has the unviable [sic] task of trying  
23 to balance their responsibilities to ensure safety  
24 and sometimes being called to pull in to maintain  
25 order. And I think that that underlies the bigger

1 issues here. In order for us to really move forward  
2 on improving school climate, just passing these  
3 approaches and edicts without really resources is  
4 going to undermine these efforts. We are at a  
5 pivotal point here where there is this amazing  
6 commitment and the Deputy Director Brian Conroy  
7 should be applauded for all the efforts that he's  
8 taken to try to improve the training amongst School  
9 Safety Agents, but in order for us to move further,  
10 there needs to be more resources, and I echo  
11 everything that's been said so far by both my  
12 colleagues here at this table and also by the  
13 students and youth organizer before me, that there  
14 needs to be more resources, and part of the reason  
15 why School Safety Agents has been put in this  
16 position for so long is because the schools often  
17 times did not have any other tools in their tool box.  
18 They couldn't go to a mental health person on their  
19 team, so instead they called the School Safety Agents  
20 to restrain a child when the child was having a  
21 crisis, and I think if the City can commit to  
22 providing resources, both in terms of training,  
23 whether it be restorative practices, but also in  
24 terms of services, actually providing capital  
25

1  
2 resources in terms of individuals like guidance  
3 counselors, social workers, and mental health  
4 providers, then we would see a greater shift and an  
5 improved school climate without relying on school  
6 safety. There is an additional issue with regards to  
7 data that I did want to bring up. I think that the  
8 City has come a long way in terms of transparency  
9 with regards to data and that was through significant  
10 efforts from yourself, Chairperson Gibson, in terms  
11 of passing the amendments to the Student Safety Act;  
12 however, it appears that more needs to be done,  
13 specifically there needs to be greater coordination  
14 between the data that's being issued by the NYPD and  
15 the DOE. Form our analysis of some of that data,  
16 there seems to be inconsistencies, and we would  
17 encourage that there be efforts taken to address  
18 that. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you very much.

20 JOHANNA MILLER: Good afternoon. I know  
21 it's been a long morning, so I'll be really quick.  
22 My name is Johanna Miller. I'm the Director of  
23 Advocacy at the New York Civil Liberties Union. I  
24 just want to make three points today. The first one,  
25 as you correctly pointed out, 100,000 or maybe a

1 little more than 100,000 New York City public school  
2 students walk through a metal detector every day, and  
3 as you pointed out, more than 90 percent of those  
4 students are black and Latino. We cannot stand by  
5 and let the DOE and the NYPD get away with this  
6 unbelievably racially biased use of this tool. If  
7 you just break it down, let's just say for argument  
8 sake that there's 90,000 black and Latino young  
9 people who spend four or maybe seven years of their  
10 life standing in line for a metal detector every  
11 single day. It's mind boggling. The effect, the  
12 impact of that on their school climate, their  
13 experience of the educational environment and their  
14 sense of belonging in our city is so beyond being  
15 able to describe in this room. I'm sure that the  
16 young people here would be more than happy to take  
17 you to wait in the line with them. I think it would  
18 be very valuable for members of the Council, I think  
19 you probably have done this already, but for other  
20 members of the Council, members of the DOE Executive  
21 and administrative staff to actually go stand in that  
22 line when it's 30 degrees outside and kids are taking  
23 their shoes off and standing wrapped around a  
24 building for an hour, and then to go in and be told,  
25

1  
2 "Oh, you have to back through because you have a--  
3 you bought silverware in your lunch box. I mean,  
4 that kind of stuff every day, and the demoralization  
5 of it is so enormous it's really quite offensive for  
6 the NYPD and the DOE to minimize that and say, "Oh,  
7 we walk through metal detectors all the time." That  
8 is not the case here. This metal detector, you fly  
9 through it. That's not what's happening at these  
10 high schools. I think it's really, really important  
11 that we think about the hugely disproportionate  
12 impact there. The second thing I just want to raise,  
13 is I think the City Council has a role to play in  
14 breaking down the false dichotomy that's presented by  
15 the DOE and NYPD on these issues. The fact that the  
16 DOE insists that school safety is not their  
17 responsibility doesn't mean that the City Council has  
18 to buy into that. School Safety, School Climate, the  
19 whole kit and caboodle is the responsibility of the  
20 DoE. They have paid money to bring in the NYPD.  
21 That's a tool in their toolbox, but we cannot be  
22 pushing these responsibilities off on the NYPD and as  
23 was remarked by several of my; here, the NYPD is  
24 actually leaps and bounds ahead of the DOE which is a  
25 shame. It's shameful. So, why-- I'm just going to



1 copy from Kara because she said to so beautifully.  
2 Why are we training cops to act more like educators,  
3 when we could be investing more in our educators? We  
4 should be putting that money into the restorative  
5 practices. It doesn't matter how much you train a  
6 cop, they're still going to be a cop. So, we need to  
7 move away from that, and the City Council has an  
8 important role to play in breaking down that  
9 dichotomy, and frankly, forcing the DOE and the NYPD  
10 to solve these problems together, and to come before  
11 you together and talk about them. it was heartening  
12 to see the DOE was here today and working with the  
13 NYPD, but so, so much more needs to be done in that  
14 regard. The third thing I just want to raise is  
15 about the standards for the use of metal detectors.  
16 We cannot add one new metal detector into this system  
17 until we find out more about how they are doing--  
18 making decisions about metal detectors. So, the  
19 Chief, and I give him a lot of credit, he's done a  
20 lot of good work in this area, but he very vaguely  
21 alluded to these standards about when they would add  
22 a metal detector and when they would take them away,  
23 but frankly even educators don't understand what  
24 those standards are. As far as we know from  
25

1 participation in the Mayor's Leadership Team, there  
2 is no standard for when they decide to take something  
3 out or put something in. There's no mathematical  
4 formula. There's no review process. There's no  
5 committee that makes that decision. Secondly,  
6 there's no standard for how the metal detectors are  
7 constructed or how they're set, the sensitivity level  
8 for the metal detectors. So, one building to another  
9 the experience is completely different which is why  
10 you hear from young people that they're getting  
11 stopped for hair pins, which is frankly absurd. So,  
12 they're not using this tool to the effect that they  
13 claim to be. They're not even using it in a  
14 standardized way across the City. The third thing  
15 is, there's no ongoing or consistent training  
16 whatsoever for either school personnel or cops on how  
17 to use these things. They put them in and then they  
18 walk away, and if the thing is not working, nobody  
19 knows. There's nobody in the school who would know  
20 that this machine is malfunctioning. So, putting our  
21 trust in that machine to maintain the sanctity of the  
22 school environment is frankly even more inane than  
23 putting our trust in a bunch of cops to maintain the  
24 sanctity of the school environment. Neither of those  
25

1 tools is going to do this job. Those tools need to  
2 be used in minimal, emergency basis when there's a  
3 really compelling reason, and then they need to go.  
4 And right now, we're not setting up any structure  
5 that allows the DOE to reduce that reliance. We're  
6 setting up a structure where they increase, increase,  
7 increase reliance. So, I think the Council has a  
8 really important role to play on the oversight, on  
9 your oversight power there, too, particularly where  
10 the NYPD says there's certain information they can't  
11 reveal publicly. They actually could reveal that to  
12 you privately if there is a compelling safety reason  
13 why it can't be revealed. That's the kind of thing  
14 that the City Council could be working with them on  
15 and finding out more how is this impacting-- how is  
16 this impacting kids, and making sure that they're not  
17 hiding behind a safety exception when what they  
18 really don't want to tell you is that police officers  
19 are concentrated in the schools that have the least  
20 resources and the least support from the DOE. So,  
21 with that, I will stop. I know there's lots of other  
22 people who need to testify, but thank you so much for  
23 your focus on this issue.  
24  
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1  
2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Absolutely. Thank  
3 you all for being here today. We really appreciate  
4 it. Thank you. Our next panel is Ashley Sawyer from  
5 Youth Represent, Kadeesha Hudson [sp?] from Girls for  
6 Gender Equity, Dawn Yuster from Advocates for  
7 Children of New York, Brittany Brathwaite [sp?] from  
8 Girls for Gender Equity, and Charlotte Pope from  
9 Children's Defense Fund of New York. Okay, you may  
10 begin. Thank you.

11 ASHLEY SAWYER: Thank you, Chairperson  
12 Gibson. My name is Ashley Sawyer. I'm an attorney  
13 at Youth Represent where we provide holistic legal  
14 representation to young people ages 16 to 24 who have  
15 had contact with the criminal system, including in-  
16 school suspension, which is often the first step into  
17 the school-to-prison pipeline. For many of my  
18 clients, their first contact with the criminal legal  
19 system came from their experiences with School Safety  
20 Officers. In fact, some of the young people that  
21 I've worked with, their decision to drop out of  
22 school altogether came from altercations with School  
23 Safety Agents. They are often the entry-point into  
24 the criminal legal system. As an attorney providing  
25 support for youth in New York City schools, I've seen

1  
2 School Safety Agents with my own eyes yell at, berate  
3 and curse out students all before 9:00 a.m. just for  
4 not going through the morning metal detector routine  
5 correctly. For many students, SSAs represent the  
6 criminalization of their academic experience and the  
7 presence of school police increases the likelihood  
8 that a student will have a juvenile or criminal  
9 record and increases the drop-out rate. So, I want  
10 to share a story with you of a young person. I'm  
11 going to call her Rita. She's my client. Rita is  
12 black, masculine presenting, queer, teenage girl who  
13 currently attends a New York City public school.  
14 Like many other youth of color, particularly queer  
15 youth and gender non-conforming youth, her  
16 interactions with School Safety Agents have been  
17 tense, degrading and sometimes violent. In a very  
18 recent incident, just last month, Rita was grabbed by  
19 a male School Safety Agent, thrown to the cement  
20 ground, and pinned down by five additional School  
21 Safety Agents. The School Safety Agents made no  
22 attempts to de-escalate the situation, no attempts to  
23 talk rationally or kindly with Rita. They instead  
24 used physical brutality to subdue this 17-year-old  
25 girl. Rita is short in stature and could have easily



1 often hear that quality interventions like  
2 restorative justice and mental health support are  
3 expensive, but if we divest resources away from law  
4 enforcement, our children can thrive. The research  
5 shows that police presence increase the likelihood  
6 that our youth will have contact with criminal  
7 systems. You head folks from CPD and Urban Youth  
8 Collaborative share that we have 5,000 New York  
9 Police Department personnel in schools, 113 patrol  
10 officers compared to just 2,800 school-based  
11 counselors. School-based mental health services can  
12 encompass a broad array of preventative  
13 interventions, assessments, counseling, referrals to  
14 community programs, and special education services  
15 where needed. The resources we often invest toward  
16 training School Safety Agents to respond to crisis  
17 including building and interpersonal conflict could  
18 be better spent training educators and school  
19 professionals. School climate can be enhanced by  
20 investing resources and doing what works and what is  
21 backed by evidence, in particular school-based mental  
22 health services. What Rita suffered is appalling. I  
23 watched the video of what happened, and it is only  
24 indicative of what happens when schools begin to rely  
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1  
2 on law enforcement for safety instead of looking at  
3 what ways we can providing support for our students.

4 I want to echo the remarks of CPD, Make the Road,  
5 Urban Youth Collaborative, and encourage that we  
6 divest from School Safety Agents, metal detectors,  
7 and other tools of criminalization. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

9 DAWN YUSTER: Good afternoon. My name is  
10 Dawn Yuster, and I'm the Director of the School  
11 Justice Project at Advocates for Children of New  
12 York, AFC. AFC School Justice Project advocates for  
13 families with students facing emotional and  
14 behavioral challenges, school discipline or court  
15 involvement to help these students get the support  
16 they need to succeed in school. AFC serves hundreds  
17 of students each year who come in contact with law  
18 enforcement officials and their schools. Based on  
19 AFC's experience and NYPD data, a substantial portion  
20 of what the NYPD does in schools falls outside of law  
21 enforcement. Of the reported 9,385 interventions by  
22 School Safety Agents and police officers during the  
23 2016/2017 school year, 40 percent were so-called  
24 "mitigations," incidents where the NYPD came involved  
25 and then released the student to the school for



1 discipline without taking further police action.  
2 Mostly students of color are the subject of NYPD  
3 mitigations. About 95 percent of these interventions  
4 involve students of color. Moreover, 61 percent  
5 where black students, even though black students make  
6 up only about 27 percent of overall student  
7 enrollment. Earlier this month, AFC released a data  
8 brief showing that 28.8 percent of all police  
9 interventions in schools for the 2016/2017 school  
10 year were what the NYPD calls "Child in Crisis  
11 Interventions," incidents where the police became  
12 involved when a student displayed signs of emotional  
13 stress and was then taken to the hospital for  
14 psychiatric evaluation. Nearly half of these  
15 interventions involved children 12 years old or  
16 younger. Hereto we see startling over-representation  
17 of children of color. About 95 percent of child in  
18 crisis interventions by police in schools involved  
19 students of color, half were black students. Again,  
20 vastly disproportional to their 27 percent share of  
21 the students population. The scope of law  
22 enforcement's role as defacto mental health  
23 responders in school is likely much larger. For  
24 example, this reported data fails to capture the  
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1 students in emotional distress where the NYPD  
2 responded and then made an arrest or issued a summons  
3 for a juvenile report. It is not that white children  
4 never experience episodes of emotional distress, or  
5 that they are never involved in disciplinary  
6 incidents requiring adult intervention, but they're a  
7 conspicuous scarcity in the NYPD's reporting suggests  
8 that when these situations do involve white students,  
9 they are more often addressed by someone other than  
10 police. This disparity matters. Contacts with law  
11 enforcement often have a negative impact on  
12 individual children directly involved as well as the  
13 overall school climate. In particular, students who  
14 are handcuffed during police interactions may suffer  
15 lasting effects from trauma. About 61.8 percent of  
16 children handcuffed during child in crisis  
17 interventions were black, and 100 percent of children  
18 12 and under who were handcuffed during this type of  
19 intervention were students of color. Likewise, not  
20 one of the 73 students handcuffed during mitigations  
21 were white. Law enforcement's mission creep into  
22 matters of mental health and school discipline is  
23 cause for serious concerns, and that this overreach  
24 and impact primarily affect New York City's children  
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1  
2 of color as cause for immediate reform. Mental  
3 health professionals with appropriate training and  
4 skills are best positioned to assess and address the  
5 needs of students in emotional distress. School  
6 staffed with appropriate training, resources, and  
7 support are best positioned to prevent and de-  
8 escalate incident that might otherwise lead to police  
9 intervention. Law enforcement plays an important and  
10 irreplaceable role in keeping our city, including its  
11 children, safe, but in matters of school discipline  
12 and student mental health, New York City should  
13 unambiguously place responsibility in the hands of  
14 the professionals whose lives and careers are  
15 centered on supporting the growth and well-being of  
16 the people in their charge. We recommend that the  
17 City collaborate with the Administration to realign  
18 city resources to reflect the critical need to  
19 appropriately support student's social/emotional  
20 needs and address the striking racial disparities and  
21 police interventions. As an initial step, the City  
22 Council should work with the Mayor to fund a mental  
23 health services network in 20 high need schools.  
24 This mental health continuum pilot program  
25 recommended by the Mayor's leadership team on school

1  
2 climate and discipline would include school  
3 partnerships with hospital based mental health  
4 clinics, call-in centers to assist schools with  
5 students in crisis, mobile response teams, school-  
6 based behavioral health consultants to help students  
7 get direct mental health services, collaborative  
8 problem solving, and program evaluation. Second, and  
9 I'm almost done, the City Council should work with  
10 the Administration to invest in a long-term plan with  
11 necessary funding to develop and expand school-wide  
12 and district-wide positive inclusive and supportive  
13 approaches to address student behaviors and improve  
14 school climate. Research shows, as you know, that  
15 positive evidence-based alternatives to policing  
16 students in school such as restorative practices,  
17 collaborative problem solving and trauma informed  
18 approaches supports schools in building the skills  
19 and capacities of students and adults to  
20 constructively resolve conflict and de-escalate  
21 behavior. Third and finally, the City Council should  
22 urge the NYPD and the Department of Education to  
23 enter an information sharing agreement that comports  
24 with privacy laws. In order for the NYPD to publicly  
25 report data disaggregated by whether the student is

1 receiving special education services. Reporting this  
2 data by disability status is required by the School  
3 Safety Act amendments and will allow changes where  
4 they are desperately needed. Thank you very much for  
5 the opportunity to speak today. We look forward to  
6 working with you, the City Council, the  
7 Administration as the budget process moves forward.

8 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Next, you may begin.

9 KADEESHA HUDSON: Good afternoon,  
10 Council Member Gibson. My name is Kadeesha Hudson  
11 and a community organizer at Girls for Gender Equity.  
12 Girls for Gender Equity is an intergenerational  
13 organization committed to the advocacy and  
14 development of girls and women. Through education  
15 and organizing, GGE encourages communities to remove  
16 barriers and create opportunities for girls and women  
17 to live self-determined lives. As an organizations  
18 we are also active members in the Dignity in schools  
19 campaign. Thank you for convening this hearing on  
20 the NYPD School Safety Agents' role in efforts to  
21 improve school climate in New York City schools.  
22 Girls for Gender Equity has been at the forefront of  
23 community-led initiatives working alongside young  
24 people to highlight racial and gender barriers and  
25

1 improving school climate. Our collaboration with  
2 young people has indicated that the presence involved  
3 of New York City School Safety Agents foster-- in  
4 school foster and environment that makes them feel  
5 unsafe and criminalized. In 2016 we conducted  
6 participatory action research with over 100 New York  
7 City girls and transgender and gender non-conforming  
8 young people who attend school. In this research,  
9 young people overwhelming inly express negative and  
10 oppressive experiences with NYPD School Safety  
11 Agents. A young person in our study stated, "We have  
12 Safety Agents everywhere in the building, and it  
13 makes me feel like a prisoner. Other young people in  
14 our study have expressed similar sentiments. In New  
15 York City public school there are 5,200 NYPD School  
16 Safety Agents, but only 2,850 social workers, and  
17 1,093 guidance counselors in all New York City Public  
18 Advocate. The large presence of NYPD School Safety  
19 Agents in New York City public schools are not an  
20 indicator of safety. In our study young people still  
21 experience various forms of violence in their school  
22 despite the number of School Safety Agents. This is  
23 because NYPD School Safety Agents do not actually  
24 create a safer school environment. Historically, the  
25

1 presence of police, including school safety agencies  
2 and communities of color create a more hostile  
3 environments. Research from the African-American  
4 policy forums states that the presence of school  
5 safety agents in New York City has led to daily  
6 exchange and interactions with law enforcement and  
7 greatly expanded the surveillance against abuse of  
8 color and a normalization of prison culture in school  
9 settings. NYPD School Safety Agents recreate the  
10 harsh policing and surveillance practices that police  
11 officers do in communities of color inside of  
12 schools. In our report, the school girls deserve  
13 youth-driven solutions for creating safe, holistic  
14 and affirming New York City public school. Youth  
15 express a strong desire for a complete removal of all  
16 police from public schools. This recommendation is  
17 consistent with findings from other young people  
18 surveyed across New York City and other states,  
19 including New York City advocates such as Dignity in  
20 Schools Campaign New York and the Urban Youth  
21 Collaborative, which recommend that School Safety  
22 Agents be removed from all schools and funding be  
23 redirected to counselors, social workers and  
24 restorative justice programming. NYPD School Safety  
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1  
2 Agents are not beneficial to the learning or safety  
3 of young people in New York City public schools.  
4 Young people deserve to go a school where they do not  
5 feel like criminals, but rather feel safe and  
6 affirmed so that day may thrive. I encourage you to  
7 collaborate with young people to create the best  
8 learning environments for them that keeps them safe,  
9 but does not criminalize them, and work to remove  
10 School Safety Agents from all New York City public  
11 schools. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

13 Good afternoon, Chairperson Gibson. My  
14 name is Britany Brathwaite. I am the senior  
15 organizer at Girls for Gender Equity, and I'll be  
16 reading testimony on behalf of a young person,  
17 Christina Powell [sp?] who I work with who is in  
18 school right now. I will also submit her written  
19 testimony for the record. "Hi, my name is Christina,  
20 and I'm 17 years old. My pronouns are she, her and  
21 hers. I am a Sister in Strength Youth Organizer and  
22 a member of the Young Women's Advisory Council at  
23 Girls for Gender Equity. One way we do this-- one  
24 way we fight the school that girls deserve is by  
25 highlighting the problem of school push-out and



1 presenting the vision of the schools that we want.  
2 School push-out is when a young person is forced out  
3 of school because of several reasons that are rooted  
4 in racism, sexism, islamophobia, homophobia and  
5 transphobia. Some of the manifestations of school  
6 push-out are harsh discipline codes, metal detectors,  
7 and absence of school curriculum. Most students that  
8 experience school push-out are black and Latinx.  
9 Here is my personal story. Every day I have to go  
10 through a metal detector in order to enter my school.  
11 There are times in which I have to make multiple  
12 trips through the metal detector because I have on  
13 too much metal like a bracelet or necklace, and it's  
14 made me late for class. According to a participatory  
15 action research project, girls for Gender Equity  
16 Reform and did on how girls and transgender youth of  
17 color experience school-push out. Nearly half of the  
18 girls of color had experience going through a metal  
19 detector. Every once in a while my school invites  
20 other police officers from surrounding precincts into  
21 the school to perform scanning. On these days when  
22 I'm on my way to school I'm approached-- one day I  
23 was approached by a police officers, and he asked me  
24 to take off my coat, put it in my bad and then sent  
25

1  
2 me to the lunch room. Then other police officers  
3 told me to put my hands up so that she could can me.  
4 And then other officer told me to put my hands on a  
5 table and raise my foot so that he could check my  
6 feet. Do I look like I'm trying to hide something in  
7 my feet? It's like they're trying to find an excuse  
8 to arrest me or persecute me. I believe in my own  
9 opinion that it is unfair because even if I didn't do  
10 anything, they're criminalizing me. Kids come to  
11 school to learn, not to be scanned. Kids come to  
12 school to learn, to get an education. Kids what to  
13 be safe and not criminalized. Instead of policing us  
14 when conflict or fights happen, we should be able to  
15 have conversations without offending each other and  
16 ending it on a good note. I want to eliminate metal  
17 detectors, blood they do more harm than good, and if  
18 you said that they're protecting me, I feel that  
19 you're pushing me out of school and making feel for  
20 like a criminal. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

22 CHARLOTTE POPE: My name is Charlotte  
23 Pope. And I'm the Youth Justice Policy Associate of  
24 the New York Children's Defense for young. Thank you  
25 for the opportunity to testify. In our work we

1 understand that police responses to student behavior  
2 in school fall short in preventing conflict and harm  
3 from happening, disrupts students' engagement in  
4 school, and do not provide the structure or support  
5 that influence students' feelings of safety. We urge  
6 the City to shift policy and resources towards  
7 positive, affirming approaches by expanding our sort  
8 of practices with the ultimately goal of citywide  
9 implementation and increasing mental health support  
10 and the number of full time guidance counselors and  
11 social workers. While we support the goal of  
12 reducing potential student contact with court through  
13 the warning card program, this tool must be available  
14 to all schools for all schools for all behavior, and  
15 must not be subject to individual School Safety  
16 Agents. To take a step further, with our Dignity in  
17 School Campaign partners, we're calling on the City  
18 to end the use of summonses in school and instead  
19 prioritize meaningful school-lead accountability  
20 process. While most pieces of the Student Safety Act  
21 data are alarming including the reliance on patrol  
22 offices, it does show that most schools in New York  
23 City handle behaviors without reporting to the police  
24 intervention, and there's a small number of school  
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1  
2 campuses that are in need of support. We know that  
3 police intervention patterns are less a result of  
4 student behavior than result in the adult response.  
5 We know what school staff train to ensure safe and  
6 positive school climates such as the community  
7 intervention workers, peace builder and transform  
8 restorative justice coordinators can and do prevent  
9 address safety concerns, harm and conflict. I also  
10 have a comment from a student advocate who could not  
11 be here today who had this add. Starting my freshman  
12 year of New York, I attended a school that had metal  
13 detectors, but the school that I currently attend  
14 does not. I feel free. I don't have to worry about  
15 stepping to the side and getting searched and patted  
16 down every day. I don't have to feel uncomfortable  
17 like my personal space is being violated. I don't  
18 have to feel dehumanized. When I think about what my  
19 first school didn't have, they didn't have a sense of  
20 unity. Students at my current school support and  
21 another in everything and it's a safe space. We live  
22 in a world where there are limited expectations for  
23 students at certain schools. Where I am now we talk  
24 about need and we understand each other's struggles.  
25 We are family. Safety means talking with students

1  
2 about what they really heed, helping people be are of  
3 one another and supporting one another to be unafraid  
4 of being who they are. Thank you again.

5 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you very much,  
6 everyone. Thank you for coming today. We really  
7 appreciate your support and your input and all that  
8 you're doing to make our school safe. Thank you so  
9 much. I also want to recognize that we have  
10 testimony submitted for the record from the UFT, the  
11 United Federation of Teachers in regard to today's  
12 hearing.

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

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 December 26, 2017