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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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February 18, 2021
Start: 10:05 a.m.
Recess: 3:49 p.m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 2)

B E F O R E: Mark Treyger,
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Alicka Ampry-Samuel
- Inez D. Barron
- Joseph C. Borelli
- Justin L. Brannan
- Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.
- Daniel Dromm
- Barry S. Grodenchik
- Ben Kallos
- Brad S. Lander
- Stephen T. Levin
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- Farah N. Louis
- I. Daneek Miller
- Kevin C. Riley
- Ydanis A. Rodriguez
- Deborah L. Rose
- Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
- Eric A. Ulrich
- Adrienne Adams
- Robert Holden
- Helen K. Rosenthal
- Diana Ayala
- Public Advocate Williams

A P P E A R A N C E S

1
2
3 LaShawn Robinson
4 Department of Education Deputy Chancellor of
5 School Climate and Wellness

6 Mark Rampersant
7 Senior Executive Director Office of Safety and
8 Youth Development

9 Kenyatte Reid Executive Director Office of Safety
10 and Youth Development

11 Olufunmilola Obe
12 New York City Police Department Deputy Chief
13 Commanding Officer School Safety Division

14 Michael Clarke
15 New York City Police Department Managing Attorney
16 Legislative Affairs

17 Dariel Infante
18 Youth Leader Urban Youth Collaborative

19 Jazmin Morales
20 Youth Member from Youth Power Project at Make the
21 Road New York

22 Josh Melendez
23 Youth in Brothers Unite, the Urban Youth
24 Collaborative and Dignity in Schools

25 Brielka Rodriguez
Youth Leader at Make the Road New York and Urban
Youth Collaborative

Rosemarie Sinclair
First Vice President of the Council School
Supervisors and Administrators

Greg Floyd
Local 237

Oliver Cannell
Restorative Justice Coordinator at MS839 in
District 15 Brooklyn

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Mouskula Harisiasis
Teacher at LaGuardia High School

Isha Taylor
Served on Council Member on the Community
Education Council for District 10 in the Bronx

Yazmin Aquino
High School Senior from Brooklyn and Youth
Investor at Bushwick Campus

Mam Fatou Dukuray

Shadavia Lanee Burnett
Senior at Humanities and Arts High School and a
Training Manager and Leader at New York Civil
Liberties Union Teens Activists Project or TAP

Meril Mousoom
High School Student with Teens Take Charge and
Dignity in Schools

Dawn Yuster
Director of Advocates for Children of New York
School Justice Project

Quadira Coles
Policy Manager at Girls for Gender Equity

Smitha Varghese
New York City Campaign Coordinator for the
Alliance for Quality Education

Caitlin Delphin
Special Education Teacher at a High School in
Bensonhurst Brooklyn and a Member of Teachers
Unite

Madeline Borrelli
District 15 parent and a District 21 Special
Education Teacher

Jay Julio
23-year-old Educator living in District 7

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Alyssa Figueroa
Coalition Coordinator of the Urban Youth
Collaborative

Sandra Mitchel
New Settlement Parent Action Committee

Katherine Rojas
Product of Public Schooling

Nuala O'Doherty Naranjo
Mother of Five

Michael Perez

Robert Malik

Althea Eboh
working in New York City schools for the last 17
years

Kim West
Parent and Teacher and a Retired School
Administrator

John Felci
Former School Safety Officer

Diana Paloma
Bigs Program Manager for Big Brothers Big Sisters
in New York City

Sandra Sanchez

Kaiser
Teacher at MS50 in District 14 in Brooklyn

Kim Famous
Parent Advocate and the current Bronx Borough
President Appointee for CEC 11 in the Northeast
Bronx

Hope Newton
Center for Family Representation

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Spring Dawson-McClure
Teachers Unite

Timothy Metzger
Social Education Teacher at Brooklyn Hunters High
School and a Member of Teachers Unite

Naomi Sharlin
Teacher in a high school in the Bronx

Bonnie Massey
School Social Worker

Nelson Mar
Attorney at Legal Services NYC

Anna Arkin-Gallagher
Supervising Attorney and Policy Council in the
education practice at Brooklyn Defender Services

Crystal Baker-Burr
Education Attorney with the Bronx Defenders

Anthony Singfield

Jasmilet Ortiz
Ya-Ya Network Committee

Melissa Clark
Youth Justice and Child Welfare Policy Associate
at Children's Defense Fund

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SERGEANT KOTOWSKI: Computer recording started.

SERGEANT BRADLEY: Cloud recording is up.

SERGEANT PEREZ: Backup is rolling.

SERGEANT BRADLEY: Thank you. Owen, you may begin with the opening.

SERGEANT KOTOWSKI: Good morning and welcome to today's remote New York City Council hearing on the Committee on Education. At this time, would Council staff please turn on their video. Please place electronic devices on vibrate or silent. If you wish to submit testimony, you may do so at testimony@council.nyc.gov. That is testimony@council.nyc.gov.

Thank you, Chair we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay, good morning. I am Council Member Mark Treyger, Chair of the Education Committee. I would like to thank everyone for joining today's hearing. As Chair of the Education Committee and a former educator, I strongly believe that any conversation about school safety must be coupled with an emphasis on school climate and social, emotional supports for students.

So, before getting into the city's transfer of school safety agents from the NYPD to DOE and the

1
2 package of legislation we will hear today, I want to
3 begin by making it absolutely clear we are continuing
4 to fail to do enough to meet the social, emotional
5 needs of our students. In our schools, there are
6 still more school safety agents than guidance
7 counselors and social workers combined.

8 At a time when our students are suffering from
9 trauma, social isolation and mental health issues.
10 With emergency departments reporting increases in
11 children presenting with severe suicidal ideation.
12 This is inexcusable. With increased trauma, mental
13 health issues and distance from the routine of
14 school, it is likely that we will see increases in
15 behavioral issues in schools when we are able to
16 return to in-person learning.

17 The Education Committee has heard from students
18 for years that Police Officers in schools do not make
19 them feel safe at school. Social Workers, Guidance
20 Counselors and appropriately trained staff make them
21 feel safe. Over my tenure as Chair, the Council has
22 taken this feedback seriously. We created an
23 initiative to ensure that every school has access to
24 a guidance counselor.

1
2 We have added hundreds of new DOE social workers,
3 funded Title 9 coordinators and created a dedicated
4 City Council initiative for social and emotional
5 supports for students. In Fiscal Year 2021, we
6 restored the Mayor's proposed \$4.8 million cut of 38
7 social workers positions. The proposed cut we stored
8 \$11.6 million to Single Shepherd program, which
9 provides guidance counselors and social workers at
10 appropriate ratios in two school districts. And most
11 recently, the cut to community schools and that's in
12 addition to restoring the cut of \$100 million in fair
13 student funding, which would have meant thousands of
14 educators and school staff losing their positions.

15 Our children cannot learn as effectively if they
16 do not feel safe, supported and welcomed at school.
17 At a time when students feel disconnected from
18 school, we need to make sure that every single adult
19 who they interact with in a building, is trained in
20 how to treat trauma, rather than exacerbate trauma.
21 We need to acknowledge that policing in schools has
22 historically disproportionately harmed the very
23 students who are most likely to have experienced the
24 most adverse impacts during the pandemic.

1
2 Data analyzed by the New York Civil Liberties
3 Union revealed that in the 2018-2019 school year,
4 Black and Hispanic students who represented about 66
5 percent of the student body accounted for 88.9
6 percent of police interventions in schools and out of
7 the 694 school-based arrests in 2019, Black and
8 Hispanic students accounted for 90 percent of those
9 arrests compared to just 5 percent for White
10 students.

11 It is also worth noting from the same New York
12 City Liberties Union analysis, school safety agents
13 were only responsible for around 20 percent of those
14 arrests. The transfer of the division of school
15 safety from the DOE to the NYPD in 1998 was a
16 reflection of the Giuliani Administrations aggressive
17 zero tolerance model which meted out severe
18 consequences for minor infractions. After many years
19 of this punitive structure, the Council was able
20 through budget negotiations to secure a commitment
21 from the Administration to shift the functions in
22 civilian staff of the NYPD School Safety Division
23 back to the DOE.

24 I do firmly believe that school safety personnel
25 should be under the jurisdiction of our education

1
2 system, not law enforcement. Despite their outsized
3 impact on the schools climate and culture, school
4 safety agents do not currently report to and are not
5 accountable to principals, which limits the ability
6 of schools to develop a unified approach to school
7 culture. However, we have much more work to do.

8 We need nothing short of structural change that
9 completely re-envisions the roles that school safety
10 personnel who are mostly women of color play in a
11 school. We could acknowledge the place
12 traditionally, traditional security functions like
13 protecting the entrance of a building have in school
14 safety, while also understanding that a time when
15 students are experiencing more trauma than ever, we
16 need to make sure that our approach to school safety
17 is aligned to meet the holistic needs of children and
18 to continue to shift from punitive policing based
19 interventions to restorative healing centered ones.

20 We have to listen to our students and ensure that
21 they are at the table when we are having these
22 conversations. I am painfully aware despite
23 assurances to the contrary at how far short we have
24 fallen of engaging students, advocates and
25 practitioners in a genuine non-informative way. This

1
2 Committee has received no information whatsoever on
3 how the Administration is maintaining its commitment
4 to having stakeholders at the table nor in any
5 progress towards moving school safety division
6 personnel from NYPD to DOE. Nor on any efforts to
7 reimagine what school safety means in 2021.

8 Let me be clear, this is unacceptable. This
9 Committee has always worked hard to develop policy in
10 partnership in consultation with those who are most
11 impacted by it. I am committed to the extent of my
12 ability to work to rectify the areas where the city
13 has fallen short of its promises and rhetoric and to
14 ensure that voices of all stakeholders including
15 students, parents, educators and advocates are
16 present in this effort to redefine the roll of school
17 safety agents and adopt plans to improve school
18 climate and make schools safe havens for learning.

19 Today's hearing is on four pieces of legislation.
20 The package of legislation we will hear today aims to
21 move our education system further in the direction of
22 a reimagined approach to school safety, ensure that
23 the transition of school safety division from NYPD to
24 DOE is not merely a clean transfer of functions in
25 personnel from one jurisdiction to another and help

1
2 develop a more supportive role for SSA's to play
3 within the school community.

4 I will now turn to two bills I have introduced.
5 I am proud to sponsor Intro. Number 2226 which would
6 require annual reports on employment turnover of
7 school safety agents and other school safety
8 personnel. The bill would provide much needed
9 transparency on the employment of SSA's including the
10 number of transfers between schools. How many SSA's
11 have been fired, how many have resigned in the
12 average length of employment.

13 While we already have existing reporting
14 requirements for complaints against SSA's, such
15 information is meaningless unless we know what the
16 consequences are for these complaints. Are we
17 shifting the problem from school to school? Or if
18 warranted, are we firing those who should not be part
19 of a school community?

20 Introduction Number 2226 will begin to bring
21 transparency to this. I am also proud to sponsor
22 Introduction Number 2227, which would require the DOE
23 to report on school principal evaluations of school
24 safety agents. When the DOE and NYPD were amending
25 the SSA MOU between their respective agencies, I was

1
2 adamant that school principals be given a role into
3 the evaluation of the SSA's assigned to their school
4 based on feedback that I had heard from school
5 communities and also based on what I witnessed as a
6 teacher myself.

7 I was extremely satisfied when the MOU was
8 eventually released that it included language to make
9 that into reality. However, it is very unclear
10 whether this commitment has ever been implemented.
11 Now that SSA's are being transferred to the
12 jurisdiction of the DOE, I want to ensure that
13 principals continue to have this important voice into
14 the evaluation of school safety personnel stationed
15 in their schools. And to be very clear, school
16 safety has an important role to play but they cannot
17 dominate the role on school safety and school
18 climate.

19 Introduction Number 2227 will require the DOE to
20 report on how this will be operationalized once the
21 transfer has happened. Today, we will also hear
22 Introduction Number 2211, sponsored by Council Member
23 Constantinides, which would ensure that the NYPD will
24 be fully removed from school safety no later than
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2 June 2022 except as necessary to address an imminent
3 risk to public safety or property.

4 The proposed bill would require significant
5 reforms to the program and the role of SSA's by
6 August 2021 so that SSA's no longer make arrests,
7 carry weapons or mechanical restraints or wear law
8 enforcement uniforms on school grounds.

9 Lastly, once under the jurisdiction of the DOE,
10 this proposed bill would mandate that school safety
11 personnel be retrained with a focus on areas such as
12 restorative justice, child and youth development and
13 de-escalation.

14 Finally, will hear Introduction Number 2188,
15 sponsored by my colleague, Council Member Diana Ayala
16 which would regulate the NYPD's response to children
17 in emotional crisis within public schools,
18 specifically the Proposed Bill establishes procedures
19 for department personnel responding to children in an
20 emotional crisis and limits the use of mechanical
21 restraints on children in emotional crisis.

22 I look forward to hearing the DOE's thoughts on
23 how SSA's will be transitioned from the NYPD and most
24 importantly, what the DOE will do to truly make
25 school safety personnel a part of the school

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2 community and support them in uplifting and
3 sustaining students and not as vehicles towards
4 punitive deterrence.

5 Importantly, I look forward to hearing feedback
6 from parents, from educators, students, school
7 leaders and other educational stakeholders. I want
8 to thank everyone who is testifying today. I want to
9 thank everyone who is testifying today. I want to
10 thank also the City Council staff, which is
11 extraordinary. Malcom Butehorn, Jan Atwell, Kalima
12 Johnson, Chelsea Baytemur, Masis Sarkissian. I also
13 want to thank my Staff Anna Scaife, Venessa Ogle,
14 Maria Henderson and we will now hear from Council
15 Member Ayala, sponsor Introduction Number 2188.

16 We need to unmute Council Member Ayala.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Thank you. Zoom, Zoom
18 everybody. Good morning and thank you Chair Treyger.
19 I am really excited to be here today. As was stated,
20 you know, we have introduced in my Bill, Intro. 2188
21 and I wanted to just give a little bit of context as
22 to you know how we arrived at this bill.

23 So, a little bit over a year ago, I was reading
24 an article where a recent report on the number of
25 children in schools who were handcuffed was

1
2 highlighted. This was a report that was published by
3 the Advocates for Children and it clearly broke down
4 right? What exactly was happening in schools when
5 children were suffering from some sort of emotional
6 distress.

7 So, for the year 2016-2017 the NYPD responded to
8 2,702 incidents in public schools involving a student
9 in emotional crisis that were being sent to the
10 hospital for psychological evaluation. 95 percent of
11 those interventions involve students of color and 12
12 percent or roughly 330 of such students incidents
13 resulted in the NYPD using handcuffs. Including on
14 children as young as five years old.

15 As a parent, I was horrified by those numbers. I
16 don't know you know how any of you feel about that
17 but the idea of you know, one of my children and I
18 happen to be the parent of a child, my oldest one
19 suffered from you know, ADHD when he was young and
20 you know had a propensity for having you know, fits
21 in school and I was horrified by the idea there was
22 so many. And I was further horrified by the data
23 that suggested that many of these cases were
24 happening in districts like mine.

1
2 So, Intro. 2188 would address this by regulating
3 the Police Departments response to children in
4 emotional crisis within the public schools.

5 Specifically, the bill establishes procedures for
6 Department personnel responding to children in
7 emotional crisis and limits the use of mechanical
8 restraints on children in emotional crisis.

9 Additionally, school safety personnel will be
10 required to receive training on identifying and
11 responding to children in emotional crisis. I want
12 to clarify that in the event of a true emergency, the
13 school staff would still have the ability to call
14 911. This would not prevent them from being able to
15 do that but rather it would set forth a few basic
16 steps that officers need to take before jumping in.

17 Steps that are also in the DOE's Chancellors
18 regulations governing emotional crisis and that any
19 officer should be trained to do already. Such as
20 conferring with members of the school crisis
21 intervention team and mental health staff if
22 available or applicable. Before intervening and
23 finding out what de-escalation strategies have
24 already been tried.

1
2 Third, the bill would make clear that the Police
3 can help deescalate students in emotional crisis in
4 ways after following these few basic steps. I look
5 forward to hearing to everyone's testimony today and
6 thank you for having us today. Thanks.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Council Member
8 for your leadership. Next, we are going to hear from
9 - an opening statement from our Public Advocate
10 Jumaane Williams.

11 PUBLIC ADVOCATE WILLIAMS: Thank you. Can you
12 hear me? Thank you so much Mr. Chair. As mentioned,
13 my name is Jumaane Williams, I am Public Advocate for
14 the City of New York. I want to thank Chair Treyger
15 and the members of the Committee on Education for
16 holding this hearing and Chair Treyger for his
17 leadership on this and so many issues when it comes
18 to education.

19 The Bills being heard today all center on the
20 role of the New York City Police Department and
21 school safety. Something that has been problematic
22 for several years now. Before the city budget vote
23 last year, I called for a commitment from the Mayor
24 and the Council for a just transition, away from the
25 current school safety model over the following year.

1
2 I am proud to see my colleagues in the Council trying
3 to do just that by bringing forth these pieces of
4 legislation. I am also proud of the larger package
5 that I know will be heard over the next few weeks
6 that I must say doesn't just focus on simple police
7 reform that people often bring up but I think we need
8 to begin to have a conversation to redefine what
9 public safety actually really is.

10 Discussions around school safety reform cannot
11 only focus on school safety agents. It must also
12 include the topics of psychological safety and
13 emotional safety in these conversations. One of the
14 points in my redefining public safety plan released
15 in September of last year aimed to provide thriving
16 environments for young people in our public schools.
17 We must maximize the number of social workers and
18 psychologists who work from a restorative justice
19 model and trauma informed approach.

20 Implementing this change will empower students,
21 prevent violence and resolve conflicts before they
22 cause harm. We cannot ignore that there are
23 instances and issues that we have to deal with that
24 sometimes fall in the categories of violence or
25 others. This is not to ignore that but what we know

1
2 is that there are people apologizing for the way they
3 have tried to approach this 30 years ago. It didn't
4 have the impact that folks wanted and caused
5 cascading effects on these communities.

6 In an effort to protect our students emotional
7 safety, Council Member Ayala has introduced a bill
8 which would regulate the NYPD's response to children
9 emotional crisis in public schools. At the crucks of
10 Intro. 2188, the provision that school safety agents
11 can only intervene at the request of an onsite
12 clinical school staff, are the schools crisis
13 intervention team. The same rules would apply to
14 precinct officers.

15 I support these efforts to regulate the
16 intervention of school safety agents, as it will
17 significantly limit unnecessary interactions with
18 students in mental health crisis. I also fully
19 support the provision prohibiting any NYPD personnel
20 from using mechanical restraints on a student in
21 emotional crisis. Putting a student in handcuffs or
22 any other restraints, devices, only adds trauma to
23 what is likely to already be a horrible encounter
24 with Law Enforcement.
25

1
2 I grew up in a public school system. I have
3 Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder and Tourette
4 Syndrome. I can only imagine if my school trajectory
5 took a different turn. Some of these impacts and
6 these traumas, I might have also experienced.

7 Council Member Constantinides Bill Intro. 2211,
8 seeks to ensure that NYPD be fully removed from
9 school safety from and after June 2022, except as
10 necessary to address to address an imminent risk to
11 public safety of property. I deeply respect and
12 commend all of my colleagues in their efforts.
13 Though I believe there are a few areas where the
14 transition plan must go further.

15 First, there is often one voice and experience
16 that is often missing from this discussion. It's
17 that of the young people. Students to be exact and
18 the traumas of feeling surveilled and policed from
19 the moment they wake up to when they go to sleep.

20 Often it seems there is more law enforcement
21 structure than any other resource that are needed for
22 healthy and safe growth. In addition, many students
23 report verbal, physical and sexual abuse that have
24 been committed at the hands of school agents. Even
25

1
2 more troubling is that neither the NYPD know the DOE
3 have a clear scope of the abuse.

4 Both are unable to produce the number of officers
5 in school who committed these egregious acts because
6 there is no way for a young person to report the
7 misconduct outside of IEB. A process even adult New
8 Yorkers have a hard time navigating.

9 Additionally, it is time that the application to
10 become a school safety agent is not through a process
11 that begins with intent to work in education or even
12 with young people. More often than not, it begins
13 with an interest in law enforcement. This is the
14 framework that we are working from.

15 Having said that, I also want to be clear that I
16 have worked with many SSA employees and I need to
17 make clear that we can't paint everyone with the same
18 brush. I have worked with them personally back when
19 I was Council Member to create programs and
20 environments to enrich young peoples lives. We have
21 to be clear about that. Still, we cannot ignore the
22 context that brings us here today. To that end, a
23 true discussion must begin to address the existing
24 amount of current police infrastructure in schools
25 including the high number of currently NYPD trained

1
2 school safety agents in schools that are simply
3 transferring jurisdictional control over SSA's with
4 nothing else that can complicate restorative justice,
5 training and practices.

6 While removing school safety personnel from the
7 jurisdiction of NYPD is absolutely necessary, we must
8 commit to a true, just transition from the current
9 SSA structure. We must also think about the
10 potential employment impact that can have on school
11 safety agents. Many of whom are people of more
12 color, many of whom are women. These individuals are
13 some of our city's most marginalized employees. We
14 need to ensure they can maintain their livelihoods
15 and their family.

16 If we are going to remove them from our schools,
17 we need to make certain they will receive job
18 placements elsewhere for those that cannot work in
19 the new restorative justice model. That is why it is
20 imperative that we pass Chair Treyger's Bill, Intro.
21 2226. This legislation will require the NYPD and the
22 DOE to report on the employment turnover of the
23 school safety personnel after the transfer of
24 jurisdiction. The data will tell us if this change
25 will be contributing to our city's already high

1
2 employment rate of 11.4 percent. Job security for
3 people of more color is essential, especially during
4 this pandemic.

5 Council Member Treyger's other bill Intro. 2227
6 is also important as transition. This bill will
7 require the DOE to report on the policies and
8 procedures developed between the agency and the NYPD
9 with regard to school principals. Providing input on
10 the performance of school safety agents. It also
11 mandates principals are made aware of deployment
12 change to the school safety personnel assigned to
13 their schools.

14 We need to include principals as much as possible
15 in the process because they know the impact school
16 safety agents have on their schools and the areas
17 that could be improved upon. I believe we should
18 also include students themselves and as well as the
19 parents. The community should be instrumental. This
20 legislation will help to establish their
21 participation and their inclusion and transition.

22 Each bill being heard today represents steps
23 toward fully removing school safety agents from the
24 NYPD's jurisdiction and hopefully removing the police
25 infrastructure from these schools. That's it. I do

1
2 have concern that the advocacy and policy solutions
3 from and by young people who attend our schools have
4 not done enough to inform these bills and I hope as
5 the voices of young people who intend to testify
6 today will directly shape our next steps.

7 It is clear, we cannot depend on the
8 Administration to take the steps needed to make this
9 transition happen, so we have to use our legislative
10 powers of elected officials to do it ourselves.

11 I look forward to working with my Council
12 colleagues in getting these pieces of legislation to
13 where they need to be so we can get them enacted and
14 that we are not pitting one against each other but
15 are collectively moving toward true safety. Thank
16 you.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Mr. Public
18 Advocate. I just want to also just acknowledge the
19 members who are with us this morning. We have been
20 joined by Council Member Riley, Council Member
21 Grodenchik, Council Member Kallos, Council Member
22 Borelli, Council Member Louis, Council Member Ampry-
23 Samuel, Council Member Ayala, Council Member Holden,
24 Council Member Lander, Council Member Barron, Council
25 Member Brannan, Council Member Adams, Council Member

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2 Rosenthal and forgive me if we have missed any –
3 Council Member Barron, yes we got you as well.
4 Forgive me if I have missed anyone.

5 I do want to just uh, quickly add something to
6 kind of build in with what the Public Advocate said.
7 I am a former teacher and I appreciate working with
8 every member of my school community all the school
9 stakeholder, including the safety agents who I work
10 with. I want to just you know note for the record
11 that even during this entire pandemic where we lost
12 school safety agents you know, tragically to this
13 pandemic as well, school buildings, many of them have
14 remained open to help feed our families. School food
15 workers, school cleaners, school safety agents,
16 school crossing guards.

17 I want to add to this conversation that
18 fundamentally to me, this hearing has to answer a
19 question. Who is in charge of the school building?
20 Because I would argue that the current structure is
21 actually not safe and not ideal for kids and for
22 school staff. I have witnessed myself professionally
23 where principal and school safety would get into an
24 argument about decisions to keep kids safe. So,
25 quite frankly, it's not just a theoretical exercise

1
2 or just a quick policy debate. Do you fundamentally
3 believe that principals are in charge of a school
4 building? We run a school system. This is not a
5 police system. When you are in that school building,
6 every kid, every kid must feel safe, supported, loved
7 and that's what this is about and school safety
8 agents play a role, an important role but they cannot
9 dominate the role because to me, as a teacher and as
10 someone who actually has a license to be a principal,
11 I was taught that the principal is in charge. And
12 right now, the current structure doesn't really have
13 it that way.

14 With that, I will turn it over to the Committee
15 Counsel and to swear in our panel.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Treyger.
17 Good morning everyone and welcome to Educations
18 February hearing. I am Malcom Butehorn, Counsel to
19 the Education Committee.

20 Before we begin testimony, as with all Education
21 Virtual Hearings held to date, there are a few
22 reminders I would like to go over. I will be calling
23 on witnesses to testify in panels, so please listen
24 for your name to be called. I will be announcing in
25 advance who the next panel will be. Once your name

1
2 is called, a member of our staff will unmute you and
3 the Sergeant at Arms will give you the go ahead to
4 begin after setting the timer, so please listen for
5 that queue.

6 All public testimony will be limited to two
7 minutes. At the end of two minutes, please wrap up
8 your comments so we can move onto the next panelist.
9 Council Members present, for those of you who have
10 questions for a particular panelist, please use the
11 raise hand function in Zoom and I will call on you in
12 the order with which you have raised your hand after
13 the full panel has completed its testimony. We will
14 be limiting Council Member questions to three
15 minutes. This includes both questions and answers.

16 For purposes of this virtual hearing, there will
17 not be a second round of questioning. I will now
18 call on the following members of the Administration
19 to testify. From the Department of Education Deputy
20 Chancellor of School Climate and Wellness LaShawn
21 Robinson, Mark Rampersant Senior Executive Director
22 Office of Safety and Youth Development and Kenyatte
23 Reid Executive Director Office of Safety and Youth
24 Development.

1
2 From the New York City Police Department Deputy
3 Chief Obe Commanding Officer School Safety Division
4 and Michael Clarke, Managing Attorney Legislative
5 Affairs.

6 I will first read the oath and then I will call
7 on each of you individually to respond. If you could
8 please raise your right hands. Do you affirm to tell
9 the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth
10 before this Committee and to respond honestly to
11 Council Member questions? Deputy Chancellor
12 Robinson?

13 LASHAWN ROBINSON: Yes, I do.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Chief Obe?

15 OLUFUNMILOLA OBE: I do.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mark Rampersant?

17 MARK RAMPERSANT: I do.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Kenyatte Reid? Kenyatte, we
19 could not hear you.

20 KENYATTE REID: I do. I do.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and Michael Clarke?

22 MICHAEL CLARKE: I do.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Finally, for
24 question time, due to the large number of
25 Administration Officials present, anyone that will be

1
2 answering questions with the Deputy Chancellor and
3 Deputy Chief, if you could please state your name
4 before you speak, it will make it more clear in the
5 official transcript who is speaking.

6 Deputy Chancellor Robinson and Deputy Chief Obe,
7 whenever you both are ready.

8 LASHAWN ROBINSON: Thank you so much. Good
9 morning, Chair Treyger, Chair Adams, Public Advocate
10 Williams and Members of the Council. I am LaShawn
11 Robinson, Deputy Chancellor for School Climate and
12 Wellness at the NYC Department of Education. Joining
13 me today from the DOE are Mark Rampersant and
14 Kenyatte Reid and today is Mark's birthday. I would
15 like to say happy birthday to Mark and I am also
16 joined by Deputy Chief Obe and Michael Clarke from
17 the New York Police Department School Safety
18 Division.

19 I know the Council is holding several hearings on
20 public safety and I want to thank you for the
21 opportunity to discuss school safety and the proposed
22 legislation as part of this important process.

23 Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge Speaker
24 Johnson, Chair Treyger and the entire City Council.
25 You have continued to provide strong support and

1
2 attention to the DOE's critically important focus on
3 nurturing the whole child while building safe,
4 inclusive and affirming school communities. We thank
5 you for your continued leadership in this area.

6 Under this Administration, in strong partnership
7 with the City Council, the DOE has reimagined our
8 approach to safety in our school communities.

9 Schools should be places where all students, families
10 and educators feel safe, welcome and supported. That
11 fundamental priority has never been more essential
12 than throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and the
13 history-making protests for racial justice.

14 As part of this commitment, we have focused our
15 efforts on providing schools with the resources and
16 tools that they need to support students and
17 educators in proactively fostering trusting
18 relationships, strengthening student development of
19 social and emotional skills and responding
20 restoratively to de-escalate difficult situations.

21 For example, in June 2019, we announced our Resilient
22 Kids, Safer Schools plan. That was an effort
23 designed to expand key initiatives and programming,
24 such as our restorative justice programming, which is
25

1
2 now featured in approximately 300 of our high schools
3 and middle schools.

4 Additional components of this initiative include:

5 Access to social-emotional learning support for all
6 elementary schools through a partnership with a
7 national SEL program, that's Social Emotional
8 Learning called Harmony. Supporting educators and
9 administrators with expanded citywide training in
10 building positive school cultures based on practices
11 that teach emotional growth and problem solving.

12 Hiring School Response Clinicians who are social
13 workers specially trained in crisis response and
14 management who provide services for students in need
15 of intermediate clinical counseling while also
16 connecting students with long-term care. School
17 Response Clinicians support approximately 300 middle
18 and high schools.

19 The Resilient Kids, Safer Schools plan also
20 included measures to reduce the use of punitive and
21 exclusionary disciplinary measures, including changes
22 to the Discipline Code and the NYPD DOE Memorandum of
23 Understanding, along with the NYPD Patrol Guide.
24 Among other things, these changes significantly
25 limited interactions between schools and the police,

1
2 including stricter guidelines on arrests in school
3 and limits on the length of suspensions keeping our
4 young people in supportive school environment.

5 Additionally, early in this Administration, the
6 DOE issued a new Chancellor's Regulation addressing
7 crisis de-escalation and contacting 911 for students
8 experiencing behavioral crises. The regulation sets
9 forth the policies and procedures to be followed when
10 such situations occur. Under the regulation, schools
11 are required to develop crisis intervention plans
12 which identify strategies and interventions for
13 addressing students in crisis. The regulation also
14 requires that every effort must be made to safely de-
15 escalate a situation, drawing on strategies and
16 resources provided to schools.

17 If a student poses an imminent and substantial
18 risk of injury to themselves or others and the
19 situation cannot be safely addressed, the principal
20 or designee must call 911. In addition to the change
21 in policy, we increased the number of school staff
22 who have been trained in Therapeutic Crisis
23 Intervention for Schools. We are already seeing how
24 these initiatives are creating more supportive
25 climates in our schools.

1
2 Last year, which was the first when many of these
3 changes were in place, we saw a major drop in both
4 the use and length of suspensions. Our report on
5 suspensions covering the period of July 1, 2019
6 through December 31, 2019, shows a 19.8 percent
7 decrease in the total number of suspensions compared
8 to the same previous timeframe. EMS transports for
9 children with emotional and psychological conditions
10 decreased 13.1 percent during that period.

11 Those decreases follow an improving year-over-
12 year trend under this administration as a result of
13 rapidly increased investments and new initiatives
14 that give teachers and students the tools they need
15 to foster trusting, caring relationships while
16 directly addressing the root cause of behavior.

17 From 2013-14 school year to the 2018-19 school
18 year, suspensions decreased by 39 percent. Keeping
19 our children and school in classrooms. The work of
20 making our schools welcoming and supportive for all
21 students is also making them safer. Let me repeat
22 that. The work of making our schools welcoming and
23 supportive for all students is also making them
24 safer.

1
2 Even NYPD School Safety Data from January through
3 March of 2020 show a total decrease of interventions
4 in schools by 8.3 percent compared to the same period
5 in 2019. That includes arrests dropping by 33
6 percent, child in crisis interventions declining by
7 19.5 percent and school-based summonses falling by
8 67.4 percent. While we are very encouraged by the
9 results so far, we know there is much, much, more to
10 do.

11 We will continue to build on this work this year
12 as we begin the transition of our School Safety
13 Agents and School Safety Division from NYPD to DOE.
14 The transition of School Safety from the NYPD to the
15 DOE is a natural next step in this important work and
16 we are approaching it with the same vision. Schools
17 must be environments where children feel safe to be
18 themselves, all children feel safe to be themselves
19 and develop confidence by not being afraid to make
20 mistakes and having opportunities to explore,
21 understand and engage as community members. Complete
22 safety or true safety includes physical, emotional
23 and psychological safety. The core of this
24 transition is creating the intentional presence of
25 trusting relationships, equity, affirming young

1
2 people and educators, compassion, dignity and
3 respect.

4 We understand the significance and urgency of
5 this work and share the goal of the June 2022
6 timeline for the transition to be completed.

7 Fundamentally, a successful transition requires that
8 the roles and responsibilities of every member of our
9 school communities, including our safety personnel,
10 align with our shared vision for complete safety,
11 complete safety.

12 Although the transition will not be fully
13 effectuated until the summer of 2022, work is already
14 underway. We have created a School Safety Transition
15 team, led by representatives from DOE, the NYPD and
16 the Mayor's Office. The transition team comprises
17 four committees that are specifically focused on
18 identifying and addressing major policy issues of the
19 transition. Like operations, roles and
20 responsibilities of the reimagined safety personnel,
21 data systems and transparency and community
22 engagement.

23 The transition team will consult and welcome
24 feedback while monitoring progress and
25 implementation, hearing directly from students,

1
2 families and school community members. These
3 committees are in the very early stages of their
4 important work and are only just beginning the
5 process of engaging with the fundamental and
6 sensitive questions this transition and reimagining
7 of school safety requires. Our committees need to be
8 able to continue the work they are charged with and
9 need latitude, flexibility and discretion to consider
10 their input.

11 This is a complex process. I want to be clear.
12 And we are committed to it being organic, thoughtful,
13 and genuine. It should be driven by research, best
14 practices, models of success and community input.
15 The lived experiences of our young people and not
16 predetermined outcomes. This process is not just
17 about a transition from one city agency to the next.
18 It is about developing a system and structure that
19 will support and promote complete school safety.

20 So while we will not have the answers to every
21 question here today, the committees are focused on
22 all aspects that will go into making this transition
23 a successful one in the end.

24 More specifically, the Operations Committee is
25 focused primarily on the logistics of the transition

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2 and making sure this body of work flows smoothly from
3 one Department to the other. They will help us
4 ensure that the transition happens without disruption
5 to employee pay, benefits and other important
6 considerations, while also identifying changes needed
7 to budget, they will meet legal requirement or
8 contracts for any shifts we may want to undertake
9 regarding school policy.

10 Our Roles and Responsibilities Committee is
11 examining the role of school safety in schools and
12 working to align that role with DOE's vision of safe
13 and supportive schools and complete safety. School
14 Safety personnel, as fully integrated members of the
15 school community, will be expected to understand
16 their role and fulfill their responsibilities in a
17 manner that promotes a positive, supportive and safe
18 school climate. School Safety personnel will receive
19 through the DOE the necessary training in a number of
20 practices and will adopt these techniques to
21 holistically support students' social and emotional
22 well-being.

23 To that end, School Safety personnel will be
24 trained to support child and youth development and
25 community building. That training will begin during

1
2 this school year. The Data Committee is working to
3 ensure all necessary information and information
4 systems are properly transferred to DOE so that we
5 are prepared to report out all the information we
6 need regarding school safety post transition.
7 Transparency through this transition and going
8 forward is essential to the work of school safety and
9 I know how important these values and quality data
10 are to the Council in your oversight role.

11 Crucially, we have created a Community Engagement
12 Committee that is solely dedicated to creating
13 outreach and feedback opportunities for families,
14 students, educators, our school safety agents,
15 advocates and others across our school communities to
16 learn what those stakeholders want to see as part of
17 this transition. That group began their outreach to
18 various groups and we are continuing to work on
19 community outreach events across the city.

20 This transition is an opportunity for us to hear
21 from those on the ground about school safety. What
22 works, what doesn't work, what can we do better, what
23 changes will better serve our children. These issues
24 we want to hear about are wide ranging and connect to
25 the priorities of the other committees. What should

1
2 safety look and feel like in our schools? What roles
3 should School Safety personnel play in the school
4 community? What information do we need to look at to
5 figure out what is working and what isn't?

6 We believe firmly that community voice,
7 especially student voice, should play a significant
8 role in shaping what school safety looks like in this
9 transition. For this reason, we are remaining open
10 minded about many key issues the transition team
11 hopes to address, especially about the roles,
12 responsibilities and expectations for Safety
13 personnel. With our vision of supportive school
14 communities and complete safety as our guideposts, we
15 are eager to hear from our school communities and
16 come up with an approach to school safety that
17 ensures everyone feels completely safe and supported.

18 Let me now turn directly to the proposed
19 legislation under consideration today. As I
20 mentioned, we are in the process of engaging with a
21 lot of the issues and questions raised by these
22 bills, so it would be premature to respond to
23 specific provisions. With regard to Intro. 2211, we
24 are committed to the transfer of school safety from
25 NYPD to DOE and we are on pace for this transfer to

1
2 happen by June 2022. We need to make informed
3 decisions and be confident that the system we develop
4 ensures complete safety for our students and staff,
5 positively impacts school climate and carefully
6 considers the livelihood of the more than 5,000 civil
7 servants who are School Safety Agents and are mostly
8 women of color.

9 Finally, I would also note that I understand that
10 the Law Department is reviewing these bills and defer
11 to them with regard to any legal issues or concerns.
12 We look forward to further discussions on this
13 legislation. With respect to Intro. 2227 on the
14 topic of principal evaluation and assignment of SSAs.
15 We agree that input from principals in the evaluation
16 process of SSAs is key to creating safety in schools
17 because this is not a one size fits all model.

18 In addition, Intro. 2226 on employment turnover
19 data speaks directly to the work and goals of one of
20 our committees ensuring transparency, as well as our
21 systems allow, throughout this transition process and
22 beyond. We look forward to working with the Council
23 on both of these bills.

24 Thank you again for your time and attention to
25 these important matters. Getting this transition

1
2 right is critical and ensuring the success of our
3 shared goal of creating safe and supportive schools
4 for all students. We are continually appreciative of
5 the Council's consistent and thoughtful advocacy on
6 everything related to the safety and well-being of
7 our children.

8 Again, I invite you all to be part of the
9 community outreach we will be doing over the next
10 several months and I look forward to all of us
11 working together to listening to our community,
12 listening to our children and building on the success
13 we have been achieving in creating an approach to
14 school safety that is best for our children. Thank
15 you.

16 OLUFUNMILOLA OBE: Good morning everyone. Good
17 morning Chair Treyger, Public Advocate Williams and
18 members of the Council. I am Deputy Chief
19 Olufunmilola Obe, Commanding Officer of the New York
20 City Police Department's School Safety Division. In
21 addition to my colleagues from the DOE, I am joined
22 today by Michael Clarke, the Managing Attorney of the
23 NYPD's Legislative Affairs Unit. On behalf of Police
24 Commissioner Dermot Shea, I would like to thank you
25

1
2 for this opportunity to discuss the ongoing
3 transition of school safety agents.

4 In order for a student to meet their potential,
5 it is essential that they are able to learn in a safe
6 environment. Students cannot effectively learn if
7 they are focused on traveling the halls safely rather
8 than their math assignments or their art classes.
9 This has been at its core, the mission of the NYPD's
10 School Safety Agents, our SSAs.

11 We aim to ensure that students are provided the
12 freedom to learn by being free of fear in their
13 schools. We will remain committed to this goal as we
14 work with the DOE on transitioning the functions of
15 school safety to them. I also want to speak briefly
16 about our dedicated SSAs. These individuals,
17 approximately 90 percent of whom are Black and
18 Hispanic, about 70 percent of whom are women, are
19 consummate professionals. I am extremely proud to
20 have spent the last few months working with these
21 steadfast individuals. They routinely make the NYPD
22 proud and I am confident that they will continue to
23 serve this city, the schools and the students with
24 the highest levels of professionalism that we have
25 come to expect of them.

1
2 I do not believe that we will be experiencing the
3 successes we have seen in reducing enforcement
4 interactions in schools while also reducing crime
5 without the strong relationships our SSAs have
6 developed with school principals, school
7 administration, teachers, parents and most
8 importantly, the students.

9 The personal relationships formed with students
10 and staff are important to preventing conflict and
11 promoting a healthy learning environment. The over
12 5,000 SSAs have become beloved members of our school
13 communities. In order for SSAs to provide high
14 quality service for the school students, we must
15 provide them with high-quality training. SSA
16 recruits participate in a 17-week training program at
17 the Police Academy. This comprehensive program
18 includes training in the areas of Law, Police
19 Science, Behavioral Science, Physical Education and
20 Tactics, with a focus on topics such as bullying, the
21 LGBTQ community, tactical communication and defusing
22 hostility.

23 In order to assist in preparing SSAs for their
24 special role in the school community, DOE personnel
25 participate in our training sessions as instructors

1
2 and address specific areas such as special education,
3 school administration, school governance, adolescent
4 suicide, conflict resolution, bullying, child abuse
5 and substance abuse prevention.

6 Training also focuses on how to better work with
7 school administration and students in areas of
8 collaborative problem solving, restorative practices,
9 conflict resolution, de-escalation techniques and
10 working with special needs students. SSAs receive
11 further additional training throughout the year in
12 such important areas as problem solving, mediating
13 conflicts and responses to emergencies or dangerous
14 conditions such as an active shooter incident.

15 The NYPD and the DOE have made great progress on
16 reducing the number of students who are arrested in
17 schools. Pursuant to the memorandum of understanding
18 between the NYPD and the DOE, the NYPD, including
19 SSAs, does not respond to non-criminal minor
20 misconduct. These incidents are best handled by
21 teachers and other school staff. Additionally, the
22 NYPD agreed to utilize discretionary response and
23 protocols, such as warnings, in lieu of arrest or
24 summonses for many low-level criminal conduct. We
25 implemented Patrol Guide Procedure 215-17 which has

1
2 aided in reducing the number of arrests in schools.
3 Patrol Guide Procedure 215-17 introduces a layer of
4 checks and balances within the police department to
5 ensure that students are not being arrested inside of
6 New York City DOE buildings unnecessarily. If an
7 arrest must be made in a New York City DOE facility,
8 the Department's policy on handcuffing students is
9 strictly adhered to. These reforms were essential in
10 reducing police actions in schools and allowing
11 educators to do what they do best, educate.

12 The SSD, the School Safety Division has enhanced
13 relationships and developed greater trust with
14 students, teachers and staff by expanding its
15 Neighborhood Policing Initiative to the City's
16 schools. The goal of the Neighborhood Coordination
17 Model for the SSD, again, School Safety Division, is
18 to further decrease crime and violence in our City's
19 1,800 schools by approaching each school as a
20 neighborhood and involving students as community
21 members.

22 School Coordination Agents are tasked with
23 solving a variety of issues as an alternative to the
24 need for enforcement. Additionally, it is noteworthy
25 to mention that the 113 uniformed officers formerly

1
2 assigned to the School Safety Division Uniformed Task
3 Force who supplemented the security needs of our
4 school system have been reassigned within the police
5 department and the unit has been disbanded.

6 In the last full School Year, 2018-2019, school
7 arrests decreased 28 percent in comparison to School
8 Year 2016-2017. Additionally, there was an 11
9 percent reduction in the 7 major felony categories
10 when comparing the same period. Prior to the school
11 shutdown, we were on pace to have significantly fewer
12 arrests than in School Year 2019-2020. Beginning
13 last year, the NYPD has been engaged in conversations
14 with the members of City Hall and the DOE regarding
15 the transition of responsibility for school safety
16 from the NYPD to the DOE. The School Safety Division
17 has been working tirelessly to ensure that the NYPD
18 meets the established deadlines for the transition of
19 the SSAs.

20 I would now like to turn my attention to
21 legislation being considered today. I would first
22 like to discuss Introduction 2211-2021, which would
23 require the transfer of school safety functions to
24 the DOE and would prevent the NYPD from playing any
25 role in the safety of schools. The NYPD is committed

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2 to working with the DOE on the expeditious transfer
3 of SSAs to the DOE. The NYPD has fully engaged in
4 the transition planning and discussions and is
5 committed to a progressive and successful transition
6 of responsibility. The language in this bill,
7 however, is broad, overly broad and would potentially
8 prevent the NYPD from even so much as consulting with
9 the DOE on School Safety Plans.

10 Additionally, the Department opposes removing
11 school safety agent's peace officer status. This
12 status is important to help maintain safety in the
13 schools. Removing this status could have a negative
14 impact on the contractual labor agreements and
15 benefits that SSA's currently have.

16 Next, I would like to discuss Introductions 2226-
17 2021 and 2227-2021. Both bills require certain
18 reports related to school safety. The Department has
19 worked with the Council on numerous reporting bills
20 in the past and is committing to working on a
21 reporting bill that provides the Council with
22 necessary information.

23 Finally, turning to Introduction 2188-2020, which
24 would limit a school safety officer and the precinct
25 officer's response to a student in crisis. The

1
2 Department agrees that students in crisis should be
3 treated with the utmost sensitivity but the
4 department has concerns regarding the rigid nature of
5 the legislation's language that would delay the
6 NYPD's response to life or death situations. Any
7 legislation passed needs to take in account the
8 safety of the children.

9 In closing, the Department takes the
10 responsibility of providing a safe climate in every
11 New York City public school very seriously. Even
12 after the transition, the Police Department will
13 continue to work in partnership with the DOE,
14 parents, students, advocates, elected officials and
15 the community in furtherance of this goal and will
16 remain committed to ensuring a safe environment for
17 our students. Thank you for the opportunity to speak
18 with you today and I am pleased to answer your
19 questions. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Chief Obe. I
21 also just want to note that we have been joined by
22 Council Member Salamanca as well. I will begin some
23 questions. I want to just to kind of follow up Chief
24 Obe, if I may. Just also clarify, you had mentioned
25 in your closing that the police department has

1
2 cooperated with the Council on bills reporting bills
3 in the past. The Council still you know never
4 received information with regards to metal detectors
5 in schools, which was a law that we had passed and we
6 actually still have not received that information.
7 So, I will reup that request at the start of this
8 hearing as well.

9 I want to just ask this fundamental question
10 Chief Obe. I mentioned earlier in my opening that as
11 a former teacher and first of all, I want to
12 acknowledge and appreciate you service to the city
13 and I definitely, I do appreciate the value. That
14 they are part of our school community that school
15 safety agents play.

16 But my question Chief to you is, do you agree
17 with me in my assertion, in my opening, that the
18 principal of the school building is fundamentally in
19 charge of the school building?

20 OLUFUNMILOLA OBE: Thank you Councilman Treyger.
21 Uhm, my comment to that is currently, the principals
22 will confer with the SSA. This is the evaluation
23 process as it is right now. They will confer with
24 the SSA supervisor as appropriate when needed.

1
2 It's important to all parties involved that the
3 agents are fairly evaluated to ensure good order and
4 efficiency at the school community. I know that you
5 are probably alluding to the principals comment that
6 was established as a part of the 2019 MOU. It was
7 implemented, unfortunately it's been further delayed
8 and with the pending transition efforts with the DOE
9 it will be enrolled into the transition discussions.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And I appreciate the
11 acknowledgement that you know, that is a change to
12 the MOU that my office fought very hard for. That I
13 still firmly believe in but my question is kind of
14 deeper than that. Do you personally, professionally
15 believe that a principal is in charge of their school
16 building?

17 OLUFUNMILOLA OBE: I think that you know, when
18 you talk about in charge, I think of schools as
19 communities. I think that there are stakeholders in
20 the school environment. So, that's the school
21 principal. Of course, our SSA's, that school staff,
22 I believe in that collaborative effort. I don't know
23 about anyone you know, a sector or stakeholder being
24 in charge of schools. I think that's just my take on
25 it. I think that can all have voices and seats at

1
2 the same table and together, puts our heads together
3 to come to a sensible solution.

4 So, I will say that our SSA's work closely with
5 the school principals. I mean, I have been with the
6 School Safety Division about five months and
7 unfortunately I haven't enjoyed the relationship as
8 much with COVID but I look forward to schools opening
9 hopefully in the fall of this year and hopefully
10 reestablishing relationships with principals. But I
11 know that some of the relationships, some
12 relationships are better than others but we do have a
13 lot of resources space when you have issues with
14 principals who have concerns about school safety.

15 Certainly they could always tap into me as the CEO of
16 SSD. We also have ungrounded you know, every single
17 borough, there are borough commanders stationed in
18 the you know in the high schools and in the boroughs.

19 There is also the DOE also. We have a great
20 relationship - I know Mark is here I am going to blow
21 you up Mark. Mark, Kenyatte you know, for me that's
22 the DOE. I have been here five months, that's what I
23 know as the DOE and we have an amazing relationship.

24 So, I think all these voices at the table, I think
25 that's I think a proper response to that. I don't

1
2 know about principal – anyone being in charge really.
3 I think it just takes that effort.

4 I will tell you that Mark will reach out to me
5 and their concerns about school staff two or three in
6 the morning Mark?

7 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yes.

8 OLUFUNMILOLA OBE: So, it's about collaboration
9 more so than one person being in charge. That's my
10 answer to that.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, Chief, just to be
12 clear, I agree with you to the extent that you
13 definitely need partnerships and collaboration and
14 working together. I think that's healthy for any
15 place. I fully agree but I just want to just share
16 with you that you know, your response to my question
17 really contradicts my training when I – I have a
18 degree to be a principal. I was never a principal, I
19 was a teacher but I have a license from Brooklyn
20 College CUNY to be a principal and I was taught by my
21 professors and I have a degree, that the principal
22 actually is in charge of the building. And that, you
23 know, basically everything is observable except for
24 lunch and I think that this grey area because this
25 has been a grey area for many years in the City of

1
2 New York between DOE and NYPD has resulted in a lot
3 of problems. Problems that I have personally
4 witnessed during my tenure as a teacher.

5 So, if the NYPD cannot even clearly state that a
6 principal is in charge, just like for example, in New
7 York City, the Mayor is in charge of the city not the
8 NYPD Commissioner. It's the Mayor of New York. Is
9 there agreement on that?

10 MICHAEL CLARKE: Yes Council Member and I think
11 you know everyone has their different expertise's
12 that they bring to the table and the school safety
13 agents bring their expertise to the table and bring
14 that perspective to it but I also will say that part
15 of the whole you know agreement to bring school
16 safety agents over to DOE is to you know, bring that
17 more together and do we have more oversight in that
18 area. You know and I think that's something the NYPD
19 is working diligently with DOE to make that happen.
20 I think we do as a department have expertise in
21 keeping people safe. It's what we think about all
22 the time and there are sort of decisions that -

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, do principals and so do
24 educators and so do social workers and counselors.

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2 MICHAEL CLARKE: I understand that and I know
3 that you know, I have public schools that the school
4 staff are amazing. The principal at my school that I
5 couldn't adore more. Same with our school safety
6 agent at the school. I think we all have a role to
7 play in this and you know, collaboration is key and
8 essential but that's part of the whole conversation
9 we are having here today and the conversation that
10 NYPD is going forward is how do we keep schools safe
11 going forward and that's the Committee's that Deputy
12 Chancellor mentioned about is how do we re-envision
13 this? How do we look at school safety going forward?
14 And we are willing partners with the Department of
15 Education to make this happen in the best way for the
16 students, for the teachers, for the principals, for
17 the school safety agents going forward.

18 I think you are right; this is a conversation to
19 be had and that's part of the reason that the Council
20 pushed this and the Mayor agreed to make this change
21 and the Mayor is on board to make this change in
22 order to you know, have more of a seamless role in
23 the school.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Michael and Chief, would
25 you agree and confirm that historically there have

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been decisions made by NYPD with no consultation to the principal in the school community that impacted the school community?

OLUFUNMILOLA OBE: Just like you know, Mike just mentioned, I think it is something – I am a part of that transition team also. So, if that is the vision you know, that the Council has for you know for school moving forward, it is certainly – I have meetings – we have meetings twice a week. You know, I know that there was talk about the different Committees that part of you know the transition makeup. We can certainly move – you know, moving forward it is something that we could absolutely do if that is your vision for principals being in charge of schools, maybe that's the DOE's vision moving forward and we can certainly incorporate that into the transition talks that we are having currently.

So, I don't know if that is a good enough answer.

MICHAEL CLARKE: And in the past, you know, I know that Department of Education and School Safety Division consult a lot. I know on the ground; school safety agents are having interactions with the principal. In the last 20 years, 25 years has there every been a case? Probably, you know I don't know.

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2 I am sure you have examples in your mind of your
3 experience, so I am not going to discount that. But
4 I think especially under this Administration, there
5 has been a focus on collaboration and working
6 together and I know probably under the maybe previous
7 administration that I don't know if the relationship
8 you know, at the time when you were teaching under
9 the Bloomberg Administration if this was the case
10 then but I know the goal now is to have a lot more
11 collaboration as Chief Obe said and Mark Rampersant,
12 they speak all the time and there should be a lot
13 more collaboration on the ground.

14 So, I think we all bring our expertise to the
15 table but again, this is part of the conversation
16 going forward of how we keep students safe and what
17 the best way to do that is and the Department of
18 Education has numerous committees on how to do this
19 and we are willing partners in making this happen.
20 Our sole goal is really the safety of students. We
21 want to work with everyone to accomplish that goal
22 and going forward we are continuing to work with them
23 to do it is in the best way possible.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, Michael and Chief, I
25 appreciate your answer about committing to safety to

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2 students and I just share with you that historically,
3 and it's not just you know a decade ago, it's
4 certainly in recent years where for example, if there
5 was an iPhone that might have been taken blocks away
6 from the school and the police wanted to execute a
7 search warrant, they would enter a school building
8 without notifying anyone from the school that they
9 are coming in and go into a classroom during class
10 time to execute a search warrant, exposing a class
11 full of kids to a dramatic experience that they are
12 not going to forget to follow up on an iPhone case.

13 As a teacher, let me just say, I would be pissed
14 as hell to have police enter my class during
15 instructional time to do that. I can just imagine
16 how teachers and kids felt during this time. And
17 that's an example of why the MOU was also created an
18 amendment but that fact that we - I am going to move
19 onto my question but the fact that there is not even
20 a clear agreement about who is in charge of a school
21 building really just underlines the point why we need
22 to have a clear single accountability structure.
23 There is a role for school safety to play. There is
24 a role for them to play but I just want to say that a
25 school building, everyone cares about safety in the

1
2 school and it's not just physical safety, it's
3 social, emotional safety.

4 I have kids experiencing trauma for a whole host
5 of issues that a school safety agent cannot do
6 anything to keep them safe. Uhm, they needed food,
7 they needed a shelter, they needed counseling.

8 That's also safety issues that cannot be addressed by
9 school safety agents and even school safety agents
10 told me our schools need more social workers and
11 counselors. Chief, can you agree with me on that at
12 least? That our schools need more social workers and
13 counselors?

14 OLUFUNMILOLA OBE: I think our schools need
15 everything Councilman. I just want to just back
16 track a little to - so you are talking about the
17 stolen iPhone off school site but arrest made on
18 school grounds. Essentially disrupting the students
19 from study.

20 Also, going back to that MOU, 2019 MOU, the NYPD
21 put together policy and this is documented, you seen
22 Patrol Guide 215-17 that outlines steps to be taken.
23 We do not - are not supposed to go into schools to
24 make arrests. It's one thing when incidents happen
25 in schools and arrests are made in school. It's a

1
2 whole different ballgame when incidents happen off
3 campus, off school grounds, off DOE facilities and we
4 now you know going into schools to make arrests of
5 students.

6 So, this policy that you know, supports not doing
7 that and we have it under Patrol Guide 215-17.

8 MICHAEL CLARKE: But we limited times where we
9 could do it. It's not - it's not - you are right
10 it's not an absolute prohibition but our arrest
11 numbers in schools have declined and as part of this
12 MOU that we limit the circumstance in which an
13 officers make arrests in schools off campus conduct.
14 And we have rules in place about how it is supposed
15 to happen, right? We are supposed to be talking to
16 the principals I believe before we make the arrest.
17 We are supposed to speak to staff and hopefully take
18 them in a place that's outside the view of other
19 students.

20 And so, we tried to change our policies on that
21 to reduce that harm that you are discussing and we
22 agree that we need to take these proactive steps to
23 prevent the traumatic harm of the question being
24 interpreted by police officers coming in.

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2 So, that is the goal going forward over the last
3 few years and going forward is to limit the time it
4 happens to the most serious cases. When the officers
5 may have to do it. Where we know where we can find
6 the person who has committed serious crimes and to
7 limit the impact it happens once the arrest is made.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Chief, do you have data
9 from the year prior to the pandemic? Let's say the
10 2018-2019 school year. Do you have data with you on
11 how many school safety agents transferred whether you
12 know between schools? Do you have any information on
13 that?

14 OLUFUNMILOLA OBE: Uhm, I am sorry, just give me
15 just one quick minute. No, Councilman, I don't have
16 that on me. We could definitely get it.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Are you - yeah, I would
18 definitely appreciate it because we need that
19 information. Are you aware - can you speak to just
20 your own, from your own professional experience? Is
21 requesting - how often would you say school safety
22 agents request transfers from their school
23 communities and how often are they granted those
24 transfers?

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2 OLUFUNMILOLA OBE: I mean from my experience what
3 I have seen -

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I just want to interrupt, I
5 am sorry, Deputy Chief and Michael, your video is
6 out. I just wanted to let you know we just have a
7 blank screen. We can hear you though.

8 MICHAEL CLARKE: We will fix the video; I
9 apologize about that.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And whoever, I don't know
11 who is in charge of the caption for the screen, they
12 have to put, they misspelled NYPD. Sorry, that's the
13 teacher in me now.

14 MICHAEL CLARKE: Uhm, but I think we could
15 continue while you can still hear us while we work on
16 the video as we speak. On the video feed issue.

17 OLUFUNMILOLA OBE: So regarding transfers, my
18 personal experience has been, I work in Manhattan
19 North. I live in Staten Island. Can I possibly move
20 over to Staten Island. You know, just the hardship
21 concerns. That I have seen we do that.

22 Uhm, we also uhm, the transfer itself is based at
23 the end of the day on the needs of the Departments.
24 So, essentially reducing hardship, commuting type
25 issues. That's what I would say about my own

1
2 experience when it comes to transfer of agents
3 between schools.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Chief, so, you have never
5 heard of an experience where a safety agent requests
6 a transfer over a disagreement or an issue with a
7 school principal or school administration?

8 OLUFUNMILOLA OBE: That I haven't heard of
9 Councilman.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: You have never heard of
11 that issue?

12 OLUFUNMILOLA OBE: Well, again, I have been here
13 5 months. Schools have been out for the most part
14 so.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Oh, understood yeah. Yeah,
16 yeah, completely understand that. It's the pandemic.

17 MICHAEL CLARKE: It happens on – you know at
18 times that the working relationship between the
19 principal and the school safety agent isn't what we
20 want it to be and in that case, the appropriate thing
21 is to find a new spot for that school safety agent.
22 For either by their request or by our you know,
23 evaluations of what we are learning or what we are
24 hearing and there could be places that we understand
25 that that should happen.

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2 So, I am sure it does happen. We don't have the
3 data and Chief Obe has only been here for 5 months,
4 so in her experience not yet but it would be
5 surprising if it didn't.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And just think about what a
7 disagreement between a school safety agent and a
8 principal means. Not just between the two parties
9 but for the students and staff because I could speak
10 to personal experience what that meant as far as
11 dismissal during high school. Where there is
12 disagreement between creating a safe passage way from
13 the school to the nearby subway station to make sure
14 that our students were able to safely go home and
15 there was a disagreement about placement and so forth
16 and so, there was the adults disagreeing but really
17 we had to prioritize and center the students. Which
18 quite frankly was not really centered in that
19 conversation.

20 So, these disagreements have implications on
21 school climate and school safety and that's why I go
22 back to the central premise that you do need an
23 educator in charge of the school system and folks can
24 collaborate and talk but at the end of the day,
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2 someone has to make a decision on the best interest
3 of children and that's a licensed educator.

4 I want to just move on, a question about this
5 task force, uhm, will this task force include
6 students, parents, educators and advocates? Can
7 anyone speak to that?

8 LASHAWN ROBINSON: Yes, good morning again.
9 Certainly you know we see this an opportunity to
10 really lean and to a top priority of creating safe
11 and supportive schools and as part of the Committee,
12 we absolutely want to engage students in particular.
13 Their voices are key for us as part of this process.
14 Uhm, along with the engagement of educators, family
15 members, advocates, the school safety agents and
16 other key stakeholders and we look forward to
17 feedback from all interested parties. Uhm, I am
18 joined by Kenyatte Reid, he has been doing extensive
19 work around engagement in particular, so I would like
20 to invite him to share about that experience
21 momentarily.

22 But what we understand is that we have to do this
23 work differently. If we continue to do the same
24 thing the same way, we will get the same result.
25 This is an opportunity for us to genuinely and

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2 authentically engage the community and I just want to
3 emphasize genuinely and authentically engage the
4 community because so often we have these engagement
5 sessions that are not often – they are not genuine
6 and we want this to be authentic and genuine.

7 The community also has a vision for this work.
8 They understand the current conditions. They
9 understand what's working and what's not working and
10 they also understand the solution. They have to see
11 that we are listening in this moment, this moment in
12 particular and that we are actually implementing
13 their feedback as servant leaders. We are sensible
14 servants serving the community.

15 When we listen to what our communities say, they
16 tell us that they want counselors and not cops. They
17 tell us that they want supports and not suspensions.
18 They want jobs, internships, relationships with
19 trusting adults. They want their mental health needs
20 addressed. They want sports programming and not just
21 sports but equitable sports programming. They want
22 community schools and of course our young people,
23 they want an outstanding high quality culturally
24 responsive education.
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We have to keep all of these things in mind because they are very much related to safety. Having a young person connected to a caring adult. That's an important part of safety. Safety and having a young person, having an internship opportunity or a paid job opportunity. That's an important aspect of safety. Safety and engaging our young people in sports programming. We know that our young people who participate with the PSAL. They are less likely to be involved in incidents, more likely to be connected to a positive care group and a trusting adult.

These are the voices that I hear when I listen to the community and this has to be a genuine and an authentic engagement process. Outside of this uhm, engagement opportunity, we have also started to engage other municipalities in school districts that are engaged in this work. And I know Kenyatte, that team is phenomenal. Mark Rampersant and Kenyatte, they are part of my position for school climate and wellness with the Office of Safety and Development. And I would like Kenyatte to just talk about some of that work around engagement.

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2 KENYATTE REID: Thank you Deputy Chancellor
3 Robinson and good morning Chair Treyger and others
4 members of the City Council. I thank you for your
5 time.

6 Uhm, as stated before, we have four Committee's
7 that are working diligently to really facilitate this
8 transition. They are operations data roles in
9 training and then the last being which you have
10 mentioned Chair Treyger, community engagement.

11 And as our Deputy Chancellor stated, this is real
12 genuine transparent engagement and our first question
13 as we engage communities is how would you like to be
14 engaged? We are not setting the stage for our
15 community, we are going with an open question of what
16 is the best way for us to engage you and to bring you
17 into the fold, so we can hear from you. We can hear
18 questions, concerns, ideas that will all be infused
19 into the work of our Committee's. Our Committee's
20 are designed to get ongoing regular feedback from the
21 community and then provide that feedback back to
22 them.

23 They are the center of this work our communities.
24 As stated by Deputy Chancellor, we are civil
25 servants. Not only is that our stance but we also

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2 learn from researching other municipalities that that
3 is the way to do it. That is the only way. WE have
4 been in constant contact with folks in Los Angeles,
5 Oakland, Denver, Minneapolis, Toronto. Because all
6 of these cities are in the midst of this process or
7 have already gone through this.

8 And our Committees are in this research phase
9 right now. So that we can research best practices
10 and a core tenement that they all utilize was early
11 ongoing engagement and transparency with the
12 community. And that's just one of the many things
13 that were consistent across the board as we spoke to
14 our sister cities across the nation and also into
15 Canada.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And Mr. Reid, if I may just
17 quickly on that. Director, thank you for your
18 service by the way and I appreciate you being here.
19 You mentioned Los Angeles and I know that there was a
20 headline that they reduced there - I guess there
21 school safety or police force there but in an article
22 I read in the Los Angeles Times it states that they
23 are hiring people and there was a job description or
24 saying that folks with a law enforcement background.

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2 So, can you clarify for me what exactly are they
3 doing? Because there is some confusion there.

4 KENYATTE REID: So, I will do my best to clarify
5 what LA is doing. And again, I am an outsider.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I hear you because you
7 mentioned that you spoke to them, so I am curious to
8 know if they you that right.

9 KENYATTE REID: Right, uhm, so first and foremost
10 and starting with as of the cities is the removal of
11 police officers from schools. Utilizing that funds
12 to create different positions. Positions being RJ
13 coordinators, school climate coordinators. They are
14 investing in culturally responsive curriculum. They
15 are investing in professional development. They are
16 investing in literacy for our young people.

17 Let me digress because I will say that it has
18 been brought to our attention recently that NYPD is
19 bringing in two new classes of SSA's. And you know,
20 and those two new classes account for almost 475 new
21 agents. So, when you ask me about LA, like, I see
22 this is our opportunity. 475 new agents account for
23 almost \$20 million. Imagine if Chair -

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, Dr. Reid, so are you
25 saying that the NYPD School Safety or the NYPD is

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2 hiring additional school safety agents after the
3 administration told us there was a hiring freeze on
4 school safety agents.

5 KENYATTE REID: Chair Treyger, there are two new
6 classes coming in right now. One in March and one in
7 June and what I will say to you, imagine if we use
8 that \$20 million. Imagine if we use that for
9 restorative justice court news. Imagine if we use
10 them for social workers or guidance counselors.
11 Imagine if we use them for a culturally responsive
12 curriculum development.

13 Literacy programs like, imagine if, like Chair
14 Treyger, you and I and other members of the City
15 Council, we know restorative practices work. We know
16 social, emotional learning is what is needed right
17 now. We are in the midst of a pandemic the likes
18 that none of us have been alive for before. I am
19 deeply concerned that our investment is in the wrong
20 place. And I will give you an example okay because
21 recently a principal reached out to us, Principal
22 Carland Washington of West Prep Academy in District 3
23 reached out, emailed myself and Deputy Chancellor
24 Robinson, really thanking our RJ team. And two in
25 particular, I am going to shout them out Brian

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2 Berriman[SP] and Carlos Munoz[SP?], they conduct
3 weekly Zoom sessions with families about social,
4 emotional awareness and development where parents and
5 community members can come together and just share
6 challenges and successes. Those are two of our 19 RJ
7 coordinators. I just, I just say, imagine if we
8 would actually invest in that. Like, really fully
9 fund restorative practices across the city.

10 The Department of Education, we can't even
11 backfill our position. I have three RJ positions
12 that cannot be backfilled and like I said in March,
13 we have 475 agents coming in. Imagine if, imagine if
14 we invested and fully funded Single Shepherd or
15 school response clinicians or community schools.
16 That's, I think we all say these things but when you
17 ask me about LA, that's what they are doing and we
18 can do that.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, no, I appreciate this
20 breaking news for me because this is the first I am
21 hearing about 475 new school safety agents after the
22 administration told us during our budget agreement
23 that there is a hiring freeze on school safety agents
24 as has been a freeze on many critical DOE positions
25 which you have stated and it is outrageous. It is

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2 outrageous that they first of all lied to this
3 institution and quite frankly did not invest the
4 resources where our kids need them the most. And so,
5 we are in full agreement with you Director Reid and
6 certainly this is going to be a major issue in our
7 budget season now. Quite frankly right after this
8 hearing, I will take it up as well.

9 I just want to get to a couple more because in
10 interest of time. Yes, anything you want to add Mr.

11 -

12 MICHAEL CLARK: Sorry, yeah, I just wanted to say
13 you know, that's something we were constantly looking
14 at attrition levels to see - I am not sure that you
15 know we had discussing this in previous days but I am
16 not sure that the final sign off has happened on that
17 but we have been talking about as attrition levels
18 drop of school safety agents, the conversation
19 continues. I just wanted to say I am not sure this
20 is officially, officially, officially been decided.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Respectfully, it was
22 decided at budget adoption, budget agreement that
23 there is a freeze on these positions. So, as far as
24 I am concerned, that was the agreement. If we are
25 hearing now and I trust Director Reid, this is

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2 unacceptable. Uhm, do you know how many principals
3 right now are in need to fill social workers or
4 counselors or special education teachers or folks
5 within our school systems. We can't even get folks
6 and related service providers to get basic contracts
7 and get payments.

8 Folks, our priorities are out of whack right now
9 and also, this is a co-equal branch of government.
10 This is the City Council. We had a budget agreement
11 adoption. This is unacceptable. So, this is
12 something that we are going to bring up certainly
13 right after this hearing, certainly during the budget
14 session. I do want to just ask some additional
15 questions then turn it over to my colleagues.

16 To Deputy Chancellor Robinson, who by the way I
17 want to just say for the record, is an outstanding,
18 outstanding education leader in New York City. We
19 are very fortunate to have Deputy Chancellor Robinson
20 in her role. I admire her patience. I admire how
21 much she tolerates quite frankly but just to note she
22 is a social worker and she climbed up the school
23 system to the top.

24 So, I truly appreciate your leadership and you
25 being here Deputy Chancellor. Can you just elaborate

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2 for us what structural changes do you foresee will
3 the DOE make to absorb – to its leadership structure
4 and chart as it prepares to absorb the jurisdiction
5 and responsibility for over 5,000 school safety
6 agents and who in DOE leadership will be directly
7 responsible for the oversight.

8 LASHAWN ROBINSON: Yes, thank you so much for
9 that question, which is very important and as I
10 share, you know, we are right in a process of you
11 know working within the community. We tend to hear
12 feedback from school communities on what the
13 reimagined school safety should look like. As of
14 right now, the Office of Safety and Youth Development
15 is taking the lead under the leadership of Mark
16 Rampersant. That's the office that has the current
17 partnership with school safety from the DOE and the
18 Office of Safety and Youth Development is also a part
19 of the division of school climate and wellness. And
20 they work with our sister offices to address the
21 needs of the whole child.

22 So, that's an important part of the work and it
23 is very much still in development but we should have
24 more on that from Council soon.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And Deputy Chancellor, from
3 your perspective and I know that you just mentioned
4 that this is still in development. What role do you
5 see and also, do you agree with my view at least that
6 principals should have a role to evaluate these
7 positions in their school communities.

8 You know, it's very you know, to give an example,
9 principals don't directly hire their custodians and
10 we certainly value and appreciate our custodians but
11 principals do evaluate them at the end of the year
12 and what that means from my colleagues and those
13 watching, what that means culturally in a school is
14 that the school custodian sits down with the
15 principal at the start of the school year to discuss
16 the vision for what a clean and nice building is
17 going to look like. And at the end of the year, the
18 principal sits down and says, let's see how
19 consistent you were with the vision and that's really
20 what's needed here as well.

21 Because of different accountability structures,
22 there is never an opportunity for school safety and
23 principals in school leadership to have that
24 collaboration. To discuss what is the singular
25 vision to keep kids safe and supported in a school

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2 community. The structure doesn't allow for that. If
3 anything, the structure almost prohibits that. They
4 go in different directions.

5 So, this is not just a theoretical conversation.
6 I am telling you as a teacher, I live this. Where
7 there were disagreements between school Admin and
8 NYPD about decisions that impacted our kids. Now
9 again, everyone has a role to play. High School
10 Deans, School Safety, Assistant Principals but if we
11 can't get on the same page, what does that mean for
12 children? If everyone is saying, this is all about
13 the kids and the adults can't work together, folks,
14 its not going to work and kids suffer the most.

15 I just, I really have to spell that out because I
16 lived through this and most importantly, our students
17 live through this every single day. And that's what
18 this is about, our children. Uhm, okay, I have to
19 say, I am infuriated that we got this news today,
20 especially at a time when we have to fight like hell
21 to get community school funding restored and we still
22 have to fight for LTW and PSAL equity but rest
23 assured, we are going to fight like hell for our kids
24 in this budget again. We are going to get funding,

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2 more funding for where our kids need it the most.
3 That is my top priority.

4 I am going to turn it over to Malcom.

5 MICHAEL CLARKE: Chair, I just want to add one
6 thing. I just wanted to – the hiring of the school
7 safety agents, that not, that has not officially been
8 approved. It is something that we have been talking
9 to OMB and the Mayor's Office about and not to
10 counter Dr. Reid, that was something that was said on
11 a phone call that he was on but I think at further
12 investigation, it was not approved. It has not been
13 approved yet. So, the discussions we are having, I
14 just want to –

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Chief, if I may –

16 MICHAEL CLARKE: It's beyond what we had talked
17 with Dr. Reid about, so I don't want to – I am not
18 saying.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: If OMB is watching, if the
20 Mayor's Office is watching, take that \$20 million and
21 we need more, restore the cuts to learning to work.
22 Restore the cuts to LTW. Get more funding to PSAL.
23 You want to keep kids safe and supported, these are
24 the people that during the pandemic have been
25 checking up on kids making sure that they are fed.

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2 That they have safety in home and that they are
3 counseling and services, being a mentor to these
4 children. Keeping connections with them.

5 So, that's safety. That is safety. Take that
6 \$20 million, restore the cut to LTW. I am going to
7 turn it over now to my colleagues for questions
8 because I have to gather myself a little bit right
9 now and just make sure I follow up with some more
10 information. Malcom, if you could please call -

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sure, I will now call on
12 Council Members in the order they have used the Zoom
13 raise hand function. We will be limiting Council
14 Member questions and answers to three minutes. The
15 Sergeant at Arms will keep a timer and will let you
16 know when your time is up.

17 So, in order, we will start with Council Member
18 Lander followed by Council Members Ayala, Rosenthal,
19 Miller and Levin. Council Member Lander.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you very much Chair
21 Treyger.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you very much Chair
24 Treyger and I really share your outrage here that
25 City Hall decided to - you know whether they already

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2 decided or think they have the authority without even
3 asking us to hire 475 new school safety agents even
4 as we are having this hearing.

5 Thank you Deputy Chancellor Robinson for making
6 clear that safe school communities for all our
7 students requires that we prioritize their social and
8 emotional and mental health needs. But our police in
9 schools approach is not doing that and I will give
10 you one very clear and painful example. On one of
11 the very first days of in-person school this past
12 fall, I joined students and parents outside John Jay
13 Educational Campus of high schools in my district
14 where students were forced by school safety agents to
15 wait in long lines outside to go through metal
16 detectors. To be treated as though they were
17 criminals as their very first experience of their
18 school after so many months away. After all the
19 trauma they have experienced in the pandemic, our
20 police in schools approach traumatized them at the
21 very door of their school as they came back in.

22 That is not in any way prioritizing the emotional
23 or mental or social health of our students. So, we
24 need a more transformative approach than the one we
25

1
2 are discussing here. The genuinely centered student
3 needs and the voices of young people themselves.

4 So, I support the Introductions by Council
5 Members Treyger and Ayala but like our Public
6 Advocate, I oppose Intro. 221 in partnership with the
7 dignity in schools and police free schools campaigns
8 and we are going to hear from those young people in a
9 few minutes. Simply transferring the school safety
10 agents from the NYPD with new uniforms and maybe a
11 little additional training. Although from the NYPD
12 testimony today, it sounds like the Administration
13 actually believes they are already getting all the
14 training they need. It's just not meaningful change.

15 Yes, we need a just transition. That means job
16 and pay security for school safety agents who are
17 overwhelmingly women of color. And many of those,
18 like the ones I got to know in my kids elementary and
19 middle school. So, wonderful people and may well be
20 appropriate to work in our schools but a real
21 transition must do more than change their uniform.

22 So, it was infuriating to learn today that in the
23 middle of the pandemic with a hiring freeze and so
24 many of our schools closed in person. The
25 Administration wants to hire 475 more. Instead of

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2 rushing through a bill folds the NYPD division into
3 DOE, we should work with these young people,
4 advocates and stakeholders on a genuine citywide
5 approach for safe and supportive schools. Free of
6 police and with the social workers and counselors
7 that we need.

8 Finally, for my question, I want to ask about
9 those metal detectors. What will it take to remove
10 them and how can you tell us that the goal is the
11 social and emotional health of our students when in
12 the wake of this trauma, we still tell them that we
13 think of them as criminals right at the door of their
14 school.

15 LASHAWN ROBINSON: Well, thank you so much for
16 that question and we are certainly seeing safety in
17 the context of being multidimensional and
18 encompassing the needs of the whole child. Not just
19 typical safety -

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 LASHAWN RONINSON: Uhm, psychological safety is
22 important for us to be able to speak to here.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Do you think that the
24 metal detectors do that though? Especially with no
25 policy, no data driven policy. We have been talking

1
2 about this for years in this Committee and yet, we
3 don't have clear data driven or safety driven or
4 student centered policy for where they are placed and
5 where they aren't. Corresponds overwhelmingly with
6 the race of the students. Do you think that our
7 current policy of metal detectors at the door of our
8 schools with school safety agents policing those kids
9 right at the door is in any way consistent with what
10 you are saying is needed? Because I sure don't think
11 it is.

12 LASHAWN ROBINSON: I think we are absolutely
13 grappling with these issues. The issues that you
14 just raised about scanning and metal detectors and
15 others. We have scanning protocols and procedures
16 and the policies that outline how to go about uhm,
17 changing scanning designation. Uhm and you know,
18 some schools who may request it. We can at this
19 point request changes. Principals can do that after
20 conferring with their school communities and gaining
21 support from various members of their school
22 community and working collaboratively with NYPD and
23 DOE. I am very well aware of the school that you are
24 referencing. We have been in close communication
25 with those principals. Uhm and the superintendent in

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2 that school community but these are the kinds of
3 issues that we are grappling with right now as part
4 of this committee work and think through how we are
5 viewing moving forward.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Respectfully Deputy
7 Chancellor and I am wrapping up. I am not going to
8 ask more questions and with deep regard for you. I
9 think what the Chair has said about what you care
10 about, what you want here, what you fought for. I
11 have seen it first hand but the answer about scanners
12 after a decade of grappling and asking the same
13 questions is what gives me confidence that what we
14 need are police free schools and the young people we
15 are going to hear are going to say that as well. And
16 they don't have confidence in this process because it
17 feels to tepid. Because it is going to keep telling
18 them we are grappling. But it is going to keep
19 making them go through scanners at the front door of
20 their schools and the uniforms of the people making
21 them do it. Changing is not going to help them feel
22 safe and whole and be the students that we want them
23 to be. Thank you, thank you very much Mr. Chair.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
25 Lander and for the record, we just want to recognize

1
2 that we were joined by Council Members Miller,
3 Rodriguez, Levine, Ulrich and Levin and next, if we
4 could unmute Council Member Ayala please.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Thank you.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Thank you. I think, you
8 know first of all, I want to recognize and I fail to
9 do this. I fail to recognize the advocates for
10 children [INAUDIBLE 1:42:32], John Kingley, Michelle
11 Cruz and Bianca for helping us draft the bill. But
12 you know, I need to recognize that you know, school
13 safety looks different for all students right?
14 School safety in the way that you know, that is done
15 in elementary and middle school and in high school is
16 very different and I have you know four children, all
17 of whom are already just about done with school and
18 you know have had that experience and it is
19 different, it is very different.

20 So, you know, I need that to be kind of
21 recognized. That children that are in high school
22 are you know twice as likely to come in contact with
23 you know, a police officer and that the school to
24 prison pipeline is a real thing. It is a real thing
25 and that many of our kids, Black and Brown kids are

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2 exposed unnecessarily to the NYPD. Simply you know,
3 for expressing themselves in the way that children
4 and young people are expected to express themselves.

5 I was wondering if there were any thoughts on our
6 bill? And also if someone could explain what the
7 current protocol for dealing with children with
8 disabilities who are suffering from some sort of
9 emotional distress is. I had a conversation with a
10 parent not too long ago who shared a story about you
11 know having to beg her school to please call her
12 first.

13 Her child suffers from severe autism and many
14 times has had 911 called for an ambulance and when
15 she has gotten to the hospital, her child has been
16 handcuffed to a gurney. And so, obviously this poses
17 more of a trauma than is necessary and so, I was kind
18 of curious to hear what the current protocols are for
19 dealing with children with disabilities that are
20 suffering from emotional distress.

21 LASHAWN ROBINSON: Thank you so much for that
22 question. Right now in schools, when young people
23 are - have a behavioral crisis, we have a chance of
24 regulation in place. That's chance of regulation
25 8411. It is the departments policy and guidelines

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2 for responding to and de-escalating situations.

3 Staff members are trained on strategies and
4 techniques and de-escalation. There receive supports
5 such as you know, school counselors and social
6 workers and positive behavioral intervention and
7 supports program, to be able to work to de-escalate
8 situations.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I am sorry Deputy
10 Chancellor but how is the DOE then ensuring that the
11 schools are following their own procedures because it
12 doesn't appear to be as though -

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 LASHAWN ROBINSON: I will just add that each
15 school is required to have a full crisis team and
16 this team assists in de-escalating crisis, like
17 behavioral crisis as you described and other types of
18 crisis situations.

19 And each school is required to provide in a
20 document called the Consolidated Plan. Their school
21 specific plan for addressing a crisis situation.
22 That's what happens in the DOE. Both to be
23 proactive, before crisis occurs, how do we organize
24 as a school community to prevent crisis and to de-
25 escalate when they occur. But when they occur, how

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2 do we get involved and start from a supportive lens
3 to address the needs of our young people.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I don't think that - I
5 don't think I am satisfied with that though. How do
6 you ensure that they are following their own
7 procedure though? Because you know we have
8 procedures for everything, it doesn't mean that
9 people adhere to them and if, you know, there seem to
10 be some but yet we are still hearing from parents,
11 especially parents of children with disabilities,
12 severe disabilities right. Uhm, that there children
13 are being handcuffed prior to you know, being taken
14 to the hospital. Which a practice which I find
15 really cruel and unnecessary.

16 So, I am just wondering then, what is the buffer
17 between the DOE and each individual school to ensure
18 that the schools are complying with their own rules?

19 LASHAWN ROBINSON: Uhm, so, we carefully track
20 and monitor data. I shared earlier as part of
21 testimony, the gains that we are seeing here.

22 In regards to the handcuffing of students, I am
23 going to defer to the NYPD. DOE personnel, we do not
24 handcuff or restrain students but we carefully
25 monitor this data and uhm really, you know, we expect

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2 to see declines and calls for EMS transports or 911
3 calls and we bolster supports to address the root
4 cause of what's happening with the child. But I
5 defer to NYPD to talk through the handcuffing
6 situation.

7 OLUFUNMILOLA OBE: Uhm, so the current procedure
8 on how to respond to children in crisis is the policy
9 is laid out on the Patrol Guide 215-13. The primary
10 fact that when determining whether to restrain a
11 student and how to do it, is safety to all persons
12 involved.

13 So, the minimum level restraint necessary should
14 be used in school environments. Our officers are
15 instructed to confirm with school staff prior to
16 putting any students in restraints. Absent
17 circumstances, handcuffs should not be used, placed
18 on the student while in the classroom.

19 As mentioned earlier, in the cafeteria area where
20 other students are located, if members of the service
21 should coordinate with school officials to have the
22 student removed to a semiprivate location, principals
23 office, school security office, etc. when possible.
24 Members of the service are also instructed to defer
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2 to school staff when the incident is not criminal in
3 nature but is instead related to school discipline.

4 We have also the procedure for students under 12
5 and metal handcuffs may not be used without prior
6 approval of the precinct school safety sergeant, the
7 sergeant of school safety supervisor. They may only
8 be used as a last resort when other means of
9 restraint have not been effective and the student or
10 others would face risk of bodily harm if metal
11 handcuffs are not used.

12 The metal restraints are used on a student less
13 than 12 years old. The precinct CO, XO or duty
14 captain must investigate and prepare report for the
15 Chief of Patrol and a copy to the commanding officer
16 school safety division as to why the use of handcuffs
17 were appropriate in that circumstance. A student
18 less than 12 years of age will not be handcuffed to a
19 restraining bar. I know you just mentioned that
20 Councilwoman, chair railing or other fixed objects
21 and must be kept on the constant observation by a
22 uniformed member of the service or the school safety
23 agent at all times.

24 I just wanted to just in speaking to the use of
25 restraints and I know you alluded to some of the

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2 numbers earlier. When we look at our data for child
3 in crisis overall, total interventions if we use
4 school year 1920, we have 2259 interventions in that
5 one school year. That's child in crisis
6 interventions. Of the 2259, there were 34 instances
7 in which no restraints were used.

8 When you look at the difference between that,
9 there were 225 out of 2259 where restraints were used
10 of which 131 - there were 131 incidents in which
11 restraints were used by SSA's and 94 by the
12 responding patrol officers.

13 I also wanted to mention that again, going back
14 to the school year 1920, the 2259 incidents are all
15 911 calls. So, it takes a whole response team. The
16 local police desk responding. The SSA on grounds
17 school staff in accommodating you know, in dealing
18 with the situation on hand. So, we have also seen a
19 reduction. When you look at the School Year 16-17,
20 it was 2702. You look at School Year 17-18, it went
21 up to 3547, all 911 calls again. And when you look
22 at 18-19 coincidentally, same number 3547. Again,
23 19-20 2259.

24 My point here is that if we look at 19-20, 90
25 percent of the cases, 911 calls 2259, there are no

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2 restraints used. It is the ten percent of cases
3 where we have our SSAs or we have the police officers
4 respond and use restraints.

5 So, I think that something is working here and it
6 is troubling. The one incident that you mentioned
7 that goes against PD policy but we are not to
8 handcuff children to hospital beds and stationary
9 objects.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Of the number of children
11 that were restrained, do you know what the average
12 age was and what the nature of the complaint was?

13 OLUFUNMILOLA OBE: Child crisis interventions -
14 we actually broke it - it don't have the ages. I
15 just have the, I have school type. Uhm, so you look
16 at uhm, yeah no, I apologize, I don't have that
17 broken down by age.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Okay, I mean I guess the
19 concern here is that even a child that is flailing
20 their arms right, would be considered a threat in
21 some instances and would be subject to some sort of
22 restraint and I think that the intent of the bill is
23 to ensure that there are other protocols in place and
24 that is the last, that's the only alternative and
25 that it will only be used in cases where there was a

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2 severe emergency where somebody was you know, going
3 to get seriously hurt.

4 You know, I appreciate that. I think that you
5 know, there is still a lot of conversation that needs
6 to be had. You know, again, as a parent of a child
7 who suffer from disabilities, you know that's pretty
8 alarming. You know, I would have expected, you know
9 and I expect that the schools at least would, you
10 know I would be the first point of contact and not
11 911 and I think that you know, the fact that we are
12 so readily available and willing to make that 911
13 call on young children and I am not talking about a
14 student with a knife or a student that is physically
15 threatening someone. That is not what I am referring
16 to. I am referring to a child that is obviously
17 behaving in a matter that it is consistent with
18 whatever you know, disability or challenge they may
19 be going through. Uhm, is restraining that to me, is
20 you know, unconscionable. Like, there is no way that
21 I can rationalize that in my mind.

22 And so, you know, I hope that this bill does you
23 know something to rectify that and we will be
24 exploring other ways that we can be helpful as well.

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And I welcome any feedback and appreciate the time.
Thank you so much Mr. Chair.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member Ayala. Next, we will hear from Council Member Rosenthal. If we could unmute Council Member Rosenthal.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much and thank you Council Member Ayala.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I share your you know outrage and horror. So, thank you for pursuing those questions and I to was disappointed at the answers. The first part of my disappointment was the answer to your question begins with well, in the Patrol book, in the Patrol Guide, here is what is says to do.

That should just not be the first three words of a response to how we are handling children in need. And with that, I really do want to thank the Urban Youth Collaborative for a terrific meeting that we had this week and from that meeting, I just want to share with you that you know, we have to think out of the box and so far, what we are hearing from the Administration is still inside the box and the box is NYPD.

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2 That's the box we have to get out of. You know,
3 I refer to this frequently, I think it's in Denmark
4 where corrections officers, so can you imagine your
5 corrections officer at a prison. They must first be
6 trained as social workers before they can even enter
7 the field of being a corrections officer. That
8 should be the norm, full stop. That's what makes
9 sense.

10 And you know, the police, the NYPD refer to
11 themselves as a paramilitary organization. So, why
12 would we want anyone who is part of a paramilitary
13 organization to be in our children's schools? How do
14 the changes that you have proposed address that
15 reality? That we want people who are trained as
16 social workers, not people who are trained in law
17 enforcement. And I share Council Member Treyger's
18 shock and outrage that there would even be
19 consideration of a new class of school safety agents.
20 How is that possible? When in terms of social
21 workers, we are still sending squads of social
22 workers to you know, a district of schools? We don't
23 even have one social worker for each building, let
24 alone one social worker for each school yet we would
25 contemplate training, more school safety agents.

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2 I really didn't mean this as a lecture. I really
3 want to hear from you.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I want to hear how -I
6 do want to hear your comments and thoughts. How the
7 approach is defensible. Why does it work?

8 LASHAWN ROBINSON: Uhm, I am happy to get started
9 and thank you so much for presenting the framing.
10 There is lots for us to consider here. And I know
11 earlier, you know my colleagues talked about what's
12 happening and other municipalities across the nation.
13 Strategies that you know they are taking. We are
14 learning from them. We are taking a look at their
15 practices, what they are implementing and looking at
16 uhm, opportunities to do this work at a high level.

17 We must think outside of the box. I agree with
18 that you know wholeheartedly and you know I know
19 earlier, the discussion was about whether new school
20 safety agents would be hired and of course, I do not
21 work for NYPD, I work for DOE. But from what I am
22 understanding, is that there hasn't been any
23 decisions made along those lines as of yet. I
24 believe there perhaps were some discussions about it
25 but I want to emphasize for the record that there are

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2 no decisions and I believe that you know my team
3 members are talking about the possibilities when we
4 see what's happening in other places.

5 Possibilities for you know, us to be thoughtful
6 about how we ensure more social workers in schools
7 for example. The possibilities of ensuring that we
8 have uhm, more restorative justice coordinators.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Deputy Chancellor I
10 appreciate that and I have heard that. So, I really
11 appreciate that. That's what we should be doing full
12 stop. Let me ask you a blunt question and I would
13 appreciate a blunt answer.

14 LASHAWN ROBINSON: I will do my best.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Is the issue here
16 resistance from the union?

17 LASHAWN ROBINSON: We have not uhm, experienced a
18 huge degree of resistance. I cannot speak to the
19 unions position. I am sure they will share their
20 position. I don't want to speak for them. I think
21 what we have done is that you know, we have started
22 the research and discovery phase as part of this
23 work. Reform the committees, we are hoping that this
24 you know, transition can be a positive experience for
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1
2 our school communities, especially our children.

3 Centering our student voices and educate –

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So, I mean, it sounds
5 to me like the unions are – is the union leader part?
6 Does anyone know if the union leader is part of these
7 discussions?

8 LASHAWN ROBINSON: Chief Obe would be able to
9 speak to the union.

10 OLUFUNMILOLA OBE: Yeah, I just wanted to just
11 mention that speaking bluntly, the NYPD Office of
12 Labor Relations has been tasked with engaging the
13 unions in the transition process.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Do we have someone
15 from that office here?

16 MICHAEL CLARKE: We don't but we – you know this
17 is something we reach out to –

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: This is the topic of
19 the conversation. How could you not? I mean, can
20 you call them in? Council Member Treyger is going to
21 be here for the entire time and he has prerogative.
22 I mean, I shouldn't speak for you Council Member. I
23 apologize but it would be good to have the people who
24 are doing the negotiations on behalf of school safety
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agents from the Administration represented on the Zoom, no?

MICHAEL CLARKE: I mean, we are talking, I mean Chief Obe is one of our primary members on the transition committee. We are going to work with the unions.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: But it sounds like Chief Obe is not part of the labor team.

MICHAEL CLARKE: No, right. We have an independent labor office who deals with our unions but you know our goal is to have the unions as part of this process. We are showing the early phases.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Early phases?

MICHAEL CLARKE: Well, in the research phase.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: We made this decision in June.

MICHAEL CLARKE: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: 2000— you know, what year are we? 2020. We are in early phases eight months later? Is this just not a priority of the Administration? I understand and have seen and worked my butt off on all the COVID related issues. I get that but as your Mayor regularly says, he can walk and chew gum at the same time.

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2 So, is this a priority or not? And I am going to
3 end there. I know that was an obnoxious question.
4 Thank you for your indulgence Chair Treyger.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Council Member
6 and I just – you know I heard very carefully the
7 answer from Deputy Chancellor Robinson that no final
8 decision has been made. I am going to be very clear
9 that if OMB and the Mayor's Office folks are
10 watching, we had a budget adoption agreement that
11 there was a solid hiring freeze and I want folks to
12 know that mid-year, in the middle of this Fiscal
13 Year, they cut money to learning to work LTW, which
14 works with many of our students who go to schools
15 that you know, quite frankly are trying to better
16 support their needs because they went through a
17 school system that was failing to meet their needs
18 and LTW case counselors and workers have been the
19 connections that these kids have relied on as a
20 safety net and support system during this entire
21 pandemic. I know because I have it in my district
22 and if you want to keep kids safe, you want to keep
23 kids safe? Invest money into LTW. Invest money in
24 PSAL because many of our communities of color don't
25 even have access to quality programming with PSAL.

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You want to keep kids safe and supported, that's where we should go. I have schools still that need a full time social worker. You want to keep kids safe? That's where we need to put the money in. OMB, Mayor's Office, I know you folks are watching because you have been texting me during the hearing. That's where that money needs to go. Malcom, please call next.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. Thank you Council Member Rosenthal. For the record, we want to recognize that we have been joined by Council Member Reynoso and next, we will go to Council Member Miller. If we could please unmute Council Member Miller.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Uh, good morning.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Good morning and thank you Mr. Chair. Let me just preference it by saying that I am a parent of five public school graduates including myself. South Jamaica, Cambridge Heights, East New York Brownsville, Brooklyn, no matter what, I think every child deserves quality education.

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I do want to — it wasn't my line of questioning but I do want to address the labor relation issue because I did have introduced legislation that would codify what this transition would like and we are not having that conversation really now. We are just talking about what the move looks like and so, if we can — I think that's what the committee was trying to talk about, what the Chief was trying to talk about but I did say that the Chief with all due respect, her herself is not qualified to have this conversation. Having arrived in five months, right? Having you know, spent my entire life in the public school experience. My mother being a school aid working her way through teaching and all these other things. Having all these experiences and when you talk to the young people in my district, uhm, in my household, in the community and you talk about a school safety agent, the mention of that, there is a glow.

There is a glow and then they talk about their experiences. Oh, Ms. So and So who did this or that and not just say that no one is not having a negative experience. But the most part, that's what they talk

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2 about. And then they also talk about being safe.
3 Then they talk about those experiences.

4 I witnessed myself with school safety agents
5 across from the office, stop a young lady at seven
6 o'clock in the morning, go to the trunk, pull out a
7 bed and clothes and say to her that only a Black and
8 Brown woman could say that young lady you know, your
9 attire is not appropriate and it is not fitting
10 right.

11 You know, maybe this is helpful. That - when we
12 walk into a building, we don't necessarily see that
13 blue uniform and the extension of the police
14 department but an extension of our community and
15 often times, the only extension of the community that
16 you are going to see.

17 I would submit that we can walk and chew gum at
18 the same time. That it is not - that we should not -
19 she should be investing in professional development
20 in these safety agents, whomever they are, to think
21 that we are going to remove these folks from the
22 building is just absurd. Whatever sense of safety
23 and security that these young folks have, often comes
24 more than not by virtue of these women from their
25 community.

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2 So, we need to address holistically the value of
3 what they are doing and you know, there needs to be –

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: There also needs to be a
6 real conversation about safety. I happen to have one
7 of those schools that have a high school that has
8 metal detectors and the children should not become
9 culturally sensitive or culturally norm that they
10 just go through this, right? That they have to go
11 through a detector and be criminalized in that way.
12 But we also have to have a real talk, a conversation
13 about weapons or whatever else that may have been
14 taken off of violence and how do we mitigate that and
15 that's what needs to be done in this period, right?

16 And it's very easy to say that – and I do believe
17 that principals should have a say so over everybody
18 in the building but I would also submit that above
19 everything else, what the administers, the principals
20 authority is collective bargaining agreements.

21 And if we are not talking about all of this
22 holistically, if we want to say that these women
23 often times are the pond of defund police and get
24 them out, the very people that we are looking to – to
25 support our children. Our single Black and Brown

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2 mothers are the ones that are going to be impacted
3 most.

4 So, let's not throw the baby out with the bath
5 water. Let's really address this holistically and
6 certainly, uhm, I would like to hear why 237 is not
7 involved directly in this negotiation if in fact that
8 is. I have spoken regularly to Office of Labor
9 Relations about this. I have spoken to 237's
10 leadership and there is no, there is no aspect of
11 policy in DOE that CSA and UFT is not involved in.
12 Why then dismiss this organization from having the
13 say so in what their transfer looks like as well.
14 That was the agreement during the budget that it was
15 going to be a committee put together and a committee
16 that does not include them is just not a just
17 committee and does not serve our young people.

18 I would like to hear someone from DOE really
19 speak to what the committee is doing and how in fact
20 we are codifying the services that transferring those
21 services and how we intend to keep our children safe
22 at the same time maintaining this work force because
23 they do have value.

24 I know what school safety was like, what schools
25 were like 20 years ago. What they are like now. I

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2 think that the Council has done tremendous work
3 around reporting and mandating certain things. I
4 absolutely support Council Member Ayala's
5 legislation. I am still traumatized from seeing a
6 young boy of nine in a straight jacket and he is now
7 a 21-year-old college graduate and I am sure he is
8 traumatized as well. But again, let's not throw the
9 baby out with the bath water and let's really hear
10 from what this process is really going to look like
11 at the end of the day.

12 Are we going to transfer folks out and our babies
13 aren't safe or our babies aren't given the tools.
14 The workforce aren't giving the tools to the young
15 people to really give them the educational experience
16 that they deserve. That's what I like to hear. I
17 don't want to beat up on anyone. I want to see what
18 that process looks like as we ask how do we codify
19 the move. If someone could speak to that, you know,
20 I would really be happy to hear.

21 Also, again, Chair Treyger and Rosenthal, my
22 labor relation expertise is always available to this
23 body in this process. We have you know; I would love
24 to be a part of this process wherever necessary.
25 Certainly something that we have experienced in my

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2 professional experience and I think that is important
3 that we give the work – and I know you acknowledge of
4 these agents, really the respect that they do.

5 And I will end with this, I have actually had the
6 privilege of walking through Brownsville with Ms.
7 Council Member Alicka Ampry-Samuel's mom, who was a
8 school safety agent and she was the mother for all of
9 Brownsville and how the young people responded to her
10 was absolutely amazing and we cannot dismiss the
11 value of the work that some of these folks have done.

12 So, thank you so much for the time. If we could
13 really talk about to the work of the transition team,
14 I think that that's really the right direction.
15 Thank you for your leadership Mr. Chair.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And I thank you for your
17 leadership Council Member Miller and for always you
18 know, centering working families and you are an
19 outstanding labor union advocate and you come from
20 labor. I was a union delegate during my time and I
21 certainly appreciate and understand the importance of
22 having labor certainly at the table and that should
23 be happening. If it is not happening, labor must be
24 but so do other stakeholders. Because this really is
25 about you know, if you signed up to work in a school,

1
2 regardless of your job title, you should be there for
3 children. That's what this is about and I, you know,
4 and I appreciate Council Member Miller and I also
5 emphasize the point that during this pandemic as
6 well, the physical buildings have been open with
7 school safety, school cleaners, school food workers,
8 crossing guards, helping our communities from across
9 the five boroughs and that must also be recognized
10 and appreciated.

11 School safety agents have also tragically passed
12 away because of the pandemic in the line of duty and
13 service and that has to be recognized. I think for
14 me personally, uh, you know, I just from my
15 experience as a product of public schools, as a
16 teacher in public schools, my family is from public
17 schools and my training is at schools are run by the
18 school system and we, you know, just like in New York
19 City, the government structure, the Mayor is in
20 charge, not the NYPD Commissioner. Same thing comes
21 in a school system.

22 You know, being a school leader is tough. It is
23 a tough job. You know, every time they Tweet out a
24 change about guidance, who do you think has to
25 operationalize everything? And it's the school

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2 leadership and they also undermine is, are their kids
3 okay? Not just whether they are okay academically,
4 it's are the kids safe? Are they okay? Do they have
5 food? Are they you know, school administration, you
6 know teachers, they also worry about the safety of
7 their kids and school safety of course plays a role
8 in this but to me, you know, we are school system and
9 that's why you know, I go back to my first questions
10 at the start of the hearing. You know, who is in
11 charge?

12 And if we are saying it's the school system,
13 educators need to be in charge of the school system
14 and work in collaboration, of course no question.
15 But to me and of course respecting labor and binding
16 agreements, I get this but end of the day, we have to
17 make decisions in the best interests of children.
18 And we are a school system.

19 So, thank you Council Member Miller, I really
20 appreciate you always.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you so much brother
22 Treyger and look forward to working with you guys.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Always, always.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Absolutely.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Appreciate you. Next
3 Council Member Malcom?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uh, yes, so next we will hear
5 from Council Member Reynoso followed by Council
6 Members Holden and Council Member Grodenchik. If we
7 could unmute Council Member Reynoso please.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you. First, I
10 just want to thank Council Member Treyger for all the
11 work that he has done really highlighting the issues
12 that continue to impact students in the Department of
13 Education.

14 So, thank you to my brother and colleague Mark
15 Treyger for that work. Uhm, I would rather take this
16 time to make a statement just because my history in
17 hearings with the NYPD tend to be a lot of you know,
18 not a lot of context comes from Department of
19 Education as to why they are not doing something
20 which is traditionally the case. Uhm, uh, I want to
21 thank the Urban Youth Collaborative for their long
22 standing advocacy to ensure safe and supportive
23 learning environments to students in New York City
24 public schools. The majority of whom are youth of
25 color. Today, I want to talk about the process and

1
2 outcomes. This bill impacts two large
3 constituencies, our students and our school safety
4 officers. Neither of these groups were at the table
5 when this bill was being drafted. We just can't
6 expect to achieve good outcomes when impacted
7 communities are not consulted in the process.

8 Our students want and need support. Our schools
9 need guidance counselors and social workers but it
10 seems our young people were never asked to provide
11 input to what a safe school community environment
12 looks like.

13 Our school safety officers just need a just
14 transition away from having to criminalize students
15 who look just like them. Changing the patch on an
16 officers arm and sending them to a couple of
17 retraining classes does not achieve this. It has
18 never achieved this. Retraining is not reform. We
19 need to focus on the outcomes we are trying to
20 achieve here and looking for a solution before we
21 identify and work through the underline problem isn't
22 the way to go about it.

23 Any solution that doesn't fully integrate
24 perspective, experiences and needs of those impacted
25 is hot measure at best. School safety must be a top

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2 priority and we know that police in schools fails to
3 achieve that. But we can't move forward until we
4 conduct a thorough review on how we got to this place
5 where we felt the need to put police officers in our
6 schools in the first place.

7 And when we remove officers from schools, we need
8 provide them real opportunities to pursue meaningful
9 careers that don't require them to criminalize
10 children and those officers need to be at the table
11 when we are having these discussions.

12 I look forward to working with my colleagues on a
13 more inclusive process as we seek to create a safe
14 and productive learning environment in our school.
15 Thank you Chair Treyger for giving me this
16 opportunity to make the statement.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
18 Reynoso and next, we will hear from Council Member
19 Holden. If we can unmute Council Member Holden
20 please.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you. Thank you so
23 much and thank you Chair Treyger for this great
24 hearing. I just want to echo Council Member Daneek
25

1
2 Miller's comments regarding the NYPD school safety
3 officers.

4 After I was elected to the City Council and I
5 toured every school in my district and I was amazed
6 uhm, what a difference in the schools that I
7 witnessed. My kids went to school probably I would
8 say starting in the 80's and 90's. And I hadn't seen
9 until I got elected the inside of a school until I
10 toured every school in my district and I couldn't
11 believe the difference. The principals were engaged.
12 The teachers were motivated and the students were
13 motivated but what struck me and again, I witnessed
14 this in every single school. That the school safety
15 officers knew every student. Knew - were engaging
16 with them.

17 We are actually telling them by their first name,
18 "you have been out in the hallway too much, you
19 better get back to you know, your room, your home
20 room or get back to your classroom." And it was done
21 in a nice way. It wasn't yelling. It wasn't
22 forceful. It was like they were either you know a
23 parent or they were a friend.

24 So, I again, going to my CEC meetings and PTA
25 meetings, remembering coming off Parkland three years

1
2 ago and Sandy Hook and the school shootings and I
3 think most Council Members remember that there was a
4 push to lock the school doors. To get police with
5 arms into the schools to protect our kids and I, you
6 know again, I wasn't sure about the armed officers in
7 the school but I did say that we should keep NYPD
8 engaged because they keep our kids safe, which is the
9 most important part of it. And knowing what I know
10 about the school safety officers, knowing my district
11 and again, I am not seeing what other districts are
12 seeing, I am seeing a school system light years ahead
13 of when my kids went there, went to public school.
14 All of them went to public school. All three kids
15 and I would go into the schools and I saw a marked
16 difference but I was most struck with the school
17 safety officers, how professional but yet how loving
18 I felt, they were.

19 And so, I am not seeing the same things some of
20 my colleagues are seeing with, "oh, they are NYPD."
21 No, they are human beings that are motivated by the
22 principal possibly or by the school staff but they
23 are engaged. So, I wouldn't be quick to just, like
24 Daneek said -

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Just to throw out the
3 baby with the bath water here. I would actually look
4 at this very carefully and it will cost a lot more
5 money to transfer the programs or to the agency.

6 So, I just think at this point, we have to tread
7 carefully but I have a totally different opinion than
8 some of my other colleagues that I have heard on
9 this, on this call.

10 And by the way, being a college professor for
11 over 40 years, I witnessed a shooting in my school,
12 in the college and I understood how it was very
13 important to have the police that responded very,
14 very quickly to really stop the shooting and to save
15 lives and two people were killed. Two, a technician
16 and faculty member.

17 So, I remember those days and that's why I think
18 safety should be the number one thing we are thinking
19 about. But obviously, we need more counselors in the
20 school, that's a no brainer. Thank you Chair.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
22 Holden. Next, we will hear from Council Member
23 Grodenchik followed by Council Member Levin. If we
24 could go ahead and unmute Council Member Grodenchik.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you. Thank you
3 very, very much. Like many of my colleagues today, I
4 am trying to do a lot of things at once.

5 I want to thank the Chair for the hearing today
6 on this very, very important topic and I want to
7 thank my colleagues who ask questions for their
8 questions and I want to associate myself with the
9 remarks made by the Chair of the Labor Committee,
10 Chair Miller and Bob Holden. I have made since
11 becoming a Council Member, at least 500 school
12 visits. I visit every single school every year
13 regrettably, like the rest of you, I am making my
14 school visits virtually this year.

15 I have become on a first name basis with my
16 principals and to a large extent with the school
17 safety officers and I can tell you Mr. Chairman and
18 to everybody who is listening that every single time
19 I have visited a school, whether it was to see the
20 principal, to go to a cultural event, to meet with
21 the PTA, to go to another community event, there was
22 not a single time, not one, not one, where I was not
23 stopped politely by the school safety officer. I
24 have found every single one of them in 35 schools to
25 be an utter professional doing what is a difficult

1
2 job first and foremost guarding that front door.

3 Because we know that there are people that should not
4 be in our public schools.

5 So, I want to thank all of them and I don't know
6 if we are going to hear from the president of the
7 union later but I want to thank him as well for the
8 work that they do on behalf of all of them.

9 Somebody said, it may have been several people
10 have said, one size does not fit all. New York City
11 spreads out over 300 square miles and it spreads out
12 over 1,800 school sites. And I am very concerned
13 that in this transition, we will be losing things or
14 leaving things behind. And so, I think this has to
15 be done with the upmost care. I was not in favor to
16 be honest with you because as Councilman Holden said,
17 we have witnessed the professionalism of the people
18 that are working in these schools. And by the way,
19 almost every single one of them is a woman of color.

20 I would say probably 80 to 90 percent of the
21 people doing this job uhm, are women of color and
22 they do it so professionally.

23 And so, I just want to put that into the record.
24 These are our frontline employees. They are polite,
25 they are understanding and it has been my experience

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2 that every single one of them is an integral part of
3 the school community. And I have, in all my meetings
4 with the principals, uhm, I have not had a single
5 complaint about their school security, not once. I
6 haven't heard it from the teachers and I certainly
7 haven't heard it from the parents. That's not to say
8 that there haven't been - there have been a couple of
9 issues -

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: In my district.

12 Thank you very much. Uhm, but they were handled
13 professionally and I was satisfied with those
14 outcomes.

15 So, I wanted to put that into the record Mr.
16 Chair and I look forward to working with you through
17 this budget process with all my colleagues to get the
18 money where it does need to go and that of course
19 means more guidance counselors. So, I will put in a
20 plug because I know that's your number one priority.
21 Thank you, I will see you for the rest of the
22 hearing.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
24 Grodenchik and next, we will hear from Council Member

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2 Levin. If we could please unmute Council Member
3 Levin.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very much.

6 First off, I am very uhm, upset at this revelation
7 around the going back on the agreement around the
8 hiring freeze. First off, uhm, this Chair, I want to
9 note that this represents yet another example of
10 where OMB has this discretionary power to determine
11 policy in our city. It's a huge problem across
12 agencies because budget equals policy that OMB acts
13 as an independent actor unbound by agreements by the
14 Administration.

15 So, that needs to be addressed and should be
16 addressed at the outset of our budget discussions in
17 March. Secondly, this Administration needs to
18 publicly speak to the agreement that we made at the
19 budget around a hiring freeze and the entire
20 agreement around NYPD budget and where we are in that
21 process.

22 So, they need to publicly acknowledge that they
23 are not going to be hiring additional school safety
24 officers because there is a hiring freeze across New
25 York City. Let's be clear, this isn't going against

1
2 school safety officers. Just because there is a
3 hiring freeze for every other position in New York
4 City government and they should not be exempt from
5 that.

6 So, but my question here is where are we in the
7 process of reimagining and reassigning the division
8 of school safety from the NYPD to the DOE? Where are
9 we in that process? Who has been responsible for –
10 who is responsible for seeing that process through?
11 Uhm, whose jurisdiction is it under? And who is now
12 involved and why is – why are we not seeing student
13 representatives and 237 involved in this conversation
14 because obviously they need to be.

15 So, where are we in that process? What's that
16 process?

17 LASHAWN ROBINSON: Thank you so much for that
18 question Council Member. Uhm, I you know, I want to
19 start, a lot has been said about safety here and I
20 want to start by saying that when we talk about
21 safety, we have to talk about comprehensive safety.
22 That's physical safety, which a lot has been said
23 about that.

24 Uhm, there is also psychological safety. There
25 is social, emotional safety.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

LASHAWN ROBINSON: The question is, is everyone safe? We cannot have schools where some children feel safe and some children feel policed. They do not feel safe. And let me just say, that this is not about individual school safety agents. I was a high school principal and I had a very positive relationship with my individual school safety agent. But we also have to come to this conversation, fully understanding how communities historically have interacted with police in this country.

Failure to have our eyes wide open in this space will mean that we will not make the best decision here. We have to ask ourselves who benefits from the current structures and systems and who is placed at risk and that's an honest conversation. I believe that's the conversation that Council was grappling with during the historic protests and our city and across the nation also during COVID-19. So, first I will start there.

The second thing that I will reiterate is that there has been no decisions about bringing onboard new school safety agents from what I understand. I don't work for NYPD but that is what I am being told

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2 and what I am communicating her today. I think this
3 is an opportunity for us as a city to really think
4 about how we value our young people and how we make
5 decisions from you know, like you shared. Budget
6 decisions and other decisions that reflect our values
7 and what we want for the children of the City of New
8 York.

9 And then I will add that, we have been doing this
10 work for some time right? I really want us to think
11 about this work as a continuation of investments that
12 we have made. Investments in restorative practices
13 over the years. Investments in increasing the number
14 of social workers and counselors and Council has been
15 at the forefront of this and Chair Treyger in
16 particular.

17 Uhm, the work that we have done around changes to
18 the discipline code. The updates to the MOU and also
19 the Patrol Guide update that have yielded the
20 outcomes that we see. We have a long way to go. We
21 decreased suspensions but we know racial disparities
22 still continue to persist in this work.

23 We have done a lot and we are building upon that
24 work. So, we are not starting from scratch here in
25 this space and I want us to all keep that in mind.

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This is an opportunity to engage students first and

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foremost, educators, families and Council, all of you

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to create the vision for this work together. We see

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it as encompassing all facets of safety and we

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certainly want to continue to partner with you along

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with Local 237 who represent the school safety

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agents.

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There life is important here. They must be at

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the table. We know they have a relationship with

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NYPD. We look forward to developing a relationship

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with them and the DOE and charting this path forward

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together.

14

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very much.

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COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I am sorry. I do want to

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just ask where we are in the process of the structure

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of – because it was announced last July or June that

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it would be a two year process and I just want to

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know where we are in that process specifically.

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LASHAWN ROBINSON: Absolutely. As I shared –

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have the committee structures in place. We are

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working across agencies and with City Hall to

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continue to take these important steps forward. So,

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we have formalized those structures and I shared some

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of the committee's earlier and testimony.

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2 I also just you know, Chair Treyger I believe it
3 was the NYPD shared to opened when he talked about
4 how this work transitioned from the DOE to NYPD
5 during the Giuliani Administration. It took that
6 Administration four years to do this work, four
7 years.

8 Other municipalities, it takes them years to do
9 this work. We are working diligently and with great
10 speed to make this happen within the timeframe
11 established by Council and City Hall. We see it as
12 important. We see it as building upon investments
13 that we have made to date and we look forward to uhm,
14 continuing to work expeditiously to make it happen
15 but also, thoughtfully and fully engaging communities
16 and as I shared, all of Council to forge a path
17 together.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you Deputy
19 Chancellor. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Treyger, that's all for
21 Council Member questions. So, I will turn it back to
22 you.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you. I just want to
24 make a quick comment, then I do have just a couple of
25 questions and we will move on.

1
2 You know, to kind of echo what Deputy Chancellor
3 Robinson said, you know, we have to look at the word
4 safety holistically. Uhm, you know, I had students
5 in my classroom that discussed safety issues with me.
6 They shared with me that they needed help to get
7 food. They asked sometimes for financial assistance
8 to have a meal after school.

9 I had students that shared with me that they were
10 not sure if they were going to be in a safe housing
11 environment that night with heat. I had students
12 that shared with me that they were still coping with
13 the impacts of certain social issues in their
14 communities. Students that were impacted by domestic
15 violence. I know that some of my colleagues also -
16 Council Member Grodenchik who has been one of the
17 leaders in the Council as far as emergency food
18 assistance right? To make sure that we tackle food
19 insecurity.

20 What I tell my colleagues is that getting money
21 to a food pantry is really important but understand
22 that that is trauma that our kids are carrying not
23 knowing if they are going to have a meal to eat. Not
24 knowing what housing will look like. Not knowing how
25 they are going to cope with so many other traumatic

1
2 experience during the course of their life. And that
3 is why when they enter school, school is supposed to
4 be the great equalizer. School is supposed to be a
5 place where regardless of what's happening in the
6 world, that they come into the school building and
7 they are loved and they are safe and they are
8 supported and there is a whole support system there
9 to say that things are going to be okay. We are here
10 for you and we are going to do everything we can to
11 help you and support you.

12 School should not be adding to any type of trauma
13 that they might be already experiencing from the
14 course of their lives. Schools are about healing and
15 building and growing. That's also safety and I will
16 never forget the story of an educator who shared with
17 me that a 7-year-old child who is having a bad day in
18 school, that didn't have a full time social worker,
19 when the child had an episode, they called the cops
20 on a 7-year-old having a bad day.

21 A 7-year-old having a bad day is not a police
22 issue. That's a crisis for us as a city that we have
23 to – that is a failure on our part that the cops had
24 to be – 5 cops had to respond to a 7-year-old having
25 a bad day in school. That's outrageous. We are

1
2 better than this but because we don't have adequate
3 support structures in every single school. Because
4 we don't - we still have schools without full time
5 social workers. We still have schools that don't
6 have conflict resolution counselors and mediators.
7 Folks that can teach our young people to solve
8 problems without resorting to violence or physical
9 violence. People that could work with kids to heal
10 our kids and train all staff in restorative justice
11 practices because of this inadequacy, it falls to
12 this punitive structure that was packaged by the
13 Giuliani Administration.

14 Can anyone rationally tell me knowing who Rudy
15 Giuliani is, that that is the structure we should
16 leave our kids in right now? No. And so, we have to
17 have full faith in school leadership with educators,
18 with support staff, with parents and kids and with
19 folks from school safety. To work together to keep
20 our kids safe holistically. Because as Deputy
21 Chancellor Robinson mentioned, there are many things
22 that are compromising the safety of our children and
23 we cannot have one person or one group dominate that
24 role.

25

1
2 I want to just ask a question uhm, about with
3 regards to the youth. I support of course 100
4 percent labor at the table because this is going to
5 be a labor – this is a labor process as well. But my
6 question is, what youth led or youth centered
7 organizations are part of the transition team has the
8 administration engaged youth led groups? For
9 example, dignity in schools and other organizations
10 that have been working on school discipline and
11 safety issues for a long time?

12 LASHAWN RONINSON: We have started to engage
13 community groups including youth group and I look
14 forward to providing specific details to Council. We
15 can certainly share the list of everyone that we have
16 engaged to date and also those that we hope to engage
17 moving forward.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Deputy
19 Chancellor. I think it is really important that our
20 young people are very much centered in this
21 conversation. I know that you share that goal. It's
22 really important and also I know my colleagues you
23 know, I feel compelled to respond to this and also my
24 colleagues referenced some tragic and painful,
25 painful school shootings across the country. And as

1
2 a teacher, when I saw this headline, your heart
3 breaks and I want to note for the record also that
4 educators have actually died in this country
5 defending their students.

6 Educators put their bodies on the line defending
7 their kids and many of these schools actually had
8 school resource officers and school safety personnel
9 and the shooters still entered the building. It's
10 not to minimize their role and their importance but I
11 am just - I think if we really wanted to eradicate
12 school violence as far a shootings, let's pass
13 comprehensive gun reform in this country and make
14 sure that we pass universal background checks, so
15 guns don't get in the hands of very bad people.

16 Because many of the students, if you look at the
17 record, many of the students and folks who engaged in
18 this horrific and tragic behavior, this was not the
19 first symptom of a problem. There were just years of
20 built up untreated trauma. The impact of untreated
21 trauma should not be underestimated. We see it on
22 the streets of the city right now. Look what just
23 happened for example in our subway. Talk about years
24 of untreated trauma and what happens when we have a
25 system that breaks down. We fail people, people get

1
2 hurt but if we had those support structures in place
3 in our school all these years, just imagine, not just
4 the tragedies that we are preventing but the lives
5 that we are blossoming and turning around.

6 School social workers, school counselors, support
7 staff, their work is transformative. They don't just
8 see the fruits of their labor tomorrow, it's like
9 years of growth and transformation. That's what this
10 is about.

11 So, with that, I thank you Deputy Chancellor and
12 the Administration for your testimony. I want to say
13 again for the record, uhm, that the Administration
14 needs to hold true to the agreement of our budget
15 agreement and I am going to continue to push that \$20
16 million and I am going to fight for more money than
17 \$20 million but that \$20 million, learning to work,
18 PSAL, guidance counselors, social workers, let's get
19 our kids the support that they rightfully and
20 desperately need okay. And I thank you very much for
21 your time today.

22 LASHAWN ROBINSON: Thank you Chair.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Treyger and
24 next, we will move to begin public testimony. Just
25 reminding Council Members that if you have a question

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for a particular panelist, use the raise hand function in Zoom and I will call on you after the entire panel has concluded its testimony. I would like to remind members of the public that we are limiting people to two minutes for their testimony. A member of staff will unmute you after I call on you, please wait for the Sergeant at Arms to tell you your time has started and then you may begin. At the end of two minutes, we ask that you please wrap up your comments, so we can move onto the next panelist.

So, first, we will be hearing from a panel of students. Dariel Infante, Jazmin Morales, Josh Melendez and Brielka Rodriguez.

Following that panel, we will hear from Rosemarie Sinclair of the CSA, Greg Floyd of Local 237 and School Safety Agent Quinn Simpkins. So, we will first begin with Dariel.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

DARIEL INFANTE: Hello everybody. My name is Dariel Infante and I am a Youth Leader with Switch off Tomorrow and Urban Youth Collaborative. I am 17-year-old and an NYC student attending multicultural high school. As a youth leader, I take

1
2 responsibility in advocating for the rise and safety
3 of other students.

4 Today, I am here to oppose Bill Number 2211, in
5 telling the transfer of SSA's to DOE oversight. I
6 want police free of schools and investment in
7 guidance counselors, nurses and restorative justice.

8 As an immigrant student in NYC I was shocked
9 after I saw so many school safety agents on my school
10 compost. I remember my first day in school and how
11 anxious I was to see so many officers that work in a
12 school facility.

13 As I was in line to enter the school building, I
14 was told to notice that the school staff and teachers
15 didn't have to pass through the metal detectors.
16 Their experiences were different from my peers in
17 line. One major difference, does the DOE only view
18 students as criminals? Cops in our schools
19 criminalize students along lines at disproportionate
20 heights with zero consequences. More schools with
21 Black and Brown students have an increased police
22 presence in our environment.

23 In NYC public schools, there are more than 5,000
24 school safety agents but less than 3,000 guidance
25 counselors, 2,000 social workers and 1,500 school

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2 nurses. Mayor de Blasio states that he plans to
3 invest in mental health support staff in schools.
4 Why not just use the School Safety division for them
5 to do that instead of spending unnecessary funds to
6 police involvement in schools.

7 If the city plans to invest in the mental health
8 of its students and have more mental health support
9 staff, then we must invest from things that are not
10 immediate priorities.

11 I am asking the City Council representatives to
12 vote against the transfer of SSA's to the DOE and
13 invest in the needs of students. Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
15 hear from Jazmin Morales.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 JASMIN MORALES: My name is Jasmin Morales and my
18 pronouns are she, her. I am a Youth Member from
19 Youth Power Project at Make the Road New York. I am
20 here today because it is important to talk about
21 Intro. 2188 bill. This bill will change the way
22 youths are traumatized by schools, by police in
23 schools, especially when they are having a mental
24 health challenge.

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The bill would end the handcuffing of students during a mental health crisis. We support prohibiting school personnel from handcuffing or restraining students during a mental health crisis. Young people face stress and difficulties for so many different reasons. We need support when we are in school and going through a crisis. We don't need to be criminalized. In fact, this is exactly what happens in New York City schools if you are Black and Latinx.

The youngest students handcuffed during a mental health crisis are 5-years-old. Almost all of the students handcuffed during a mental health crisis are Black and Latinx. In our time of need, we are treated differently in our schools because of the color of our skin. This bill could be a significant step in removing police from mental health responses. However, the bill requires school safety personnel to be retrained on how to de-escalate situations regarding young people's mental health.

Not only is it time consuming but it's a misuse of funds and resources that should be used to hire professionally trained people such as social workers and therapists. The NYPD is not equipped to handle

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such situations and should not be first responders for youth mental crisis.

The NYPD has a history for harassing Black and Brown youth. We need personnel that do not have a history of policing students. I went to a high school that encouraged the school to prison pipeline and there were more school safety agents than guidance counselors and therapists.

Teenagers were constantly getting into fights and suspended. The majority of the students that attended my high school were Black and Brown students. A social worker or therapist were never called.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

JAZMIN MORALES: It's always security or dean. We want police free schools. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will hear from Josh Melendez.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

JOSH MELENDEZ: Good afternoon. My name is Josh Melendez and I am in 7th grade. I attend James Kenan High School. I live in Council District 8 in the Bronx. I am a Youth in Brothers Unite, the Urban Youth Collaborative and Dignity in Schools.

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2 I am here today because as a young Latino boy, I
3 feel scared and unsafe in my school when SSA's are
4 around. And I know that my school will feel safer
5 without them. I remember a time when I was walking
6 to the bathroom and an SSA stopped me and asked to
7 see my hall pass, which I did not have since my
8 teacher lost it. The SSA immediately started yelling
9 at me and scolded me like I did something awful and
10 sent me to detention. Although he said he could do a
11 lot more worse if he wanted to.

12 He terrified me and my friends and made me and my
13 friends not want to attend school, as he made all of
14 us feel unsafe.

15 I also remember a classmate of mine arrived to
16 school late and an SSA started screaming at him and
17 saying that he should have not been late and
18 threatened him, which led him to crying.

19 Everyone from the City Council, the DOE and the
20 city and the Mayor continue to fund and expand on
21 SSA's in our schools. Thinking that they can make me
22 and my other students and peers feel safe when in
23 reality, they make us feel like we are their next
24 target and they are ready to take us down for
25 anything.

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2 Data shows that the Black and Latinx students of
3 New York has consistently represented around 90
4 percent of all youth arrests. Court summons and
5 juvenile reports issued by school police. Intro.
6 2211 is yet another way to retain policing personnel
7 in our schools by another name. But more
8 importantly, it continues to expand on -

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 JOSH MELENDEZ: And I and my peers face another
11 day. Feel fear on a day to day basis. This is why
12 it is important to know - this is why it is important
13 to vote no on Intro. 2211. It seems like the Council
14 is looking to just save \$5,000 plus policing jobs
15 while sacrificing the social and emotional needs of
16 students and police in schools.

17 I believe students mental, social and emotional
18 health is important but we lack the resources to
19 guidance counselors and social workers in our school.
20 And now, that we are in a pandemic, we also need more
21 nurses in our school. Police free schools means
22 attending to school that prioritizes young peoples
23 wellbeing as a whole. It means students feel safe
24 and welcome in schools and it does not mean feeling
25 like they might be - that we will be their next

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2 target of an SSA or whatever you hope to name them as
3 a disguise.

4 While Intro. 2188 is a great start to how we can
5 further remove police from entering our building is
6 not enough.

7 It is time to really care, value and support
8 students who are Black, Brown, Queer and trans and
9 students with disabilities. Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
11 hear from Brielka Rodriguez.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

13 BRIELKA RODRIGUEZ: Hi, my name is Brielka
14 Rodriguez. I live in Staten Island. I am in 9th
15 grade. I am a Youth Leader at Make the Road New York
16 and Urban Youth Collaborative. I am here today
17 testifying because I am concerned about the school
18 safety agent bill Intro. 2211. This bill is not what
19 students want. When we say police free schools, we
20 do not mean transferring SSA's from the NYPD to the
21 DOE. I was excited to be in high school but my
22 freshman year was not how I imagined it to be. When
23 the pandemic hit, it made me realize that my school
24 and all the schools across New York City were not
25 equipped to deal with a situation like this one.

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2 My first day of high school was disorganized just
3 because I was not informed about my staff or school
4 schedule. No emotional support was available to deal
5 with my anxiety from the pandemic. Immediately, I
6 became aware that there is a lack of funding for
7 social, emotional and mental health support for
8 students.

9 To me and probably to many students, the lack of
10 resources is a nightmare. My school is located a
11 couple blocks away from where Eric Garner was killed.
12 It's unbelievable to know that those same police from
13 the precinct are in my school. It's more frustrating
14 that close to \$450 million is spent on police in
15 schools and even more so that all they are doing is
16 now policing empty buildings.

17 Transferring SSA's from the NYPD to the DOE is
18 not what young people like myself want. For years,
19 we have been extremely vocal about removing police
20 out of schools. We have been demanded to reallocate
21 the funding from policing students to social,
22 emotional and mental health supports. There are more
23 school safety agents across New York City schools
24 than social school work, social workers, guidance
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2 counselors and school nurses available for 1 million
3 students.

4 Every time students of color like myself, walk
5 inside a building, we have to go through metal
6 detectors. We get treated like criminals and
7 different from others. Transferring SSA's to the
8 Department of Education will not be raced to harm.
9 The NYPD has inflicted on Black and Brown students
10 for like the last 20 years. This transfer will not
11 undo the trauma that many have experienced.

12 I have a little sister who is 9-years-old and is
13 in elementary school and because of her, I am
14 committed to keep fighting so she does not have to
15 experience police in schools. Now more than ever we
16 need City Council to listen and stand by us. We need
17 guidance counselors that can help us be on track. We
18 need college success centers that can make the
19 process easy, less stressful and scary. We need
20 staff on our side that will make us feel safe and
21 supported. And I want to go back into school
22 buildings that prioritize students and well beings.
23 Not that criminalizes just because of our skin color.
24 Thank you.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Chair Treyger,
3 that concludes this panel. I will turn it to you for
4 question and Council Members, please remember if you
5 have a question for any panelist, please use the
6 raise hand function in Zoom.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, I always want to thank
8 our students for taking time to testify and remind
9 them that this is about them. Just, it's an open
10 question to any of the students for them to answer.
11 I know that you know, schools have school safety
12 agents. I am curious to know if any of the students
13 in their schools, do they have a – and how many? Do
14 they have a full time social worker and how many do
15 they have? Do they have someone – a restorative
16 justice coordinator? Do they have a full time
17 counselor? How many? I am just curious if any of
18 the kids can speak to us about what does their
19 support system look like? Because we certainly hear
20 their concerns about other school stakeholders.
21 Thank you.

22 JAZMIN MORALES: I can go first. I am sorry.
23 From my knowledge, there was only one therapist out
24 of the seven schools in my campus. There was only
25 one therapist and in my school, there was only two

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2 guidance counselors and there were like tons more of
3 school safety agents. There was like a whole – I
4 think there was like a whole floor dedicated to them.
5 A piece of the first floor dedicated to them. So,
6 yeah.

7 DARIEL INFANTE: I am going to go next. We do
8 have in my personal, in my personal experience, there
9 was a time I needed someone to help me. I needed to
10 someone to help me on that issue. But they called
11 them because they had so many kids. I had to make an
12 appointment and at the end of the day they couldn't
13 help me because they had so many kids and there are
14 only three of them.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: That's the other issue.
16 Even if you have a full time counselor or social
17 worker in a school with a thousand or so more
18 children, you have very big case loads and you know,
19 it's painful to hear the student cannot just walk in
20 and get services right there and then but they have
21 to now schedule appointments and that's a challenge.
22 That's a breakdown in our system folks. That is a
23 breakdown, especially and I want to emphasize this
24 point because educators know what I am talking about.
25 It takes courage for a student to speak up to go

1
2 speak to an adult in a building. To share a
3 challenge or a problem that they are having in their
4 lives.

5 Don't assume that that happens just by snapping a
6 finger. If a student is sharing something, it
7 really, really is important for the school to
8 immediately intake that and respond immediately. And
9 if a student shares something and we don't help and
10 there is no adequate support system, that is the
11 beginning of, that already is the failure but that's
12 when things continue to spiral down.

13 How many kids we know shared with someone but
14 didn't have an adequate support structure to respond.
15 So, I thank the students for sharing that very
16 important testimony. Thank you Malcom. We will move
17 on.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Uhm, next we will
19 hear from Rosemarie Sinclair of the CSA and Greg
20 Floyd of Local 237. After this panel, I will be
21 calling Oliver Cannell, Mary Hemmings, Mouskula
22 Harisiasis and Isha Taylor. If we could please
23 unmute Rosemarie Sinclair.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.
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2 ROSEMARIE SINCLAIR: Good afternoon. My name is
3 Rosemarie Sinclair and I am the First Vice President
4 of the Council School Supervisors and Administrators.

5 The labor union represented in New York City
6 school leaders. Thank you Chair Treyger for today's
7 critical hearing. The health, welfare and safety of
8 our children is every school leaders first priority.
9 Thus we have many questions and concerns regarding
10 the decision made about nine years ago, nine months
11 ago, to transition the oversight of our school safety
12 agents from NYPD to DOE.

13 First, the oversight was taken from the DOE over
14 20 years ago due to its inability to manage the unit.
15 What gives us any reason to believe that the DOE is
16 better positioned to take this opportunity and
17 responsibility on today?

18 Secondly, in the nine months since this two year
19 transition began, we have seen no sign of progress,
20 nor have we been informed of the plan and process.
21 Who will be creating the protocols and providing the
22 training? Who is providing the funding for this
23 transition? What is the plan for ongoing training
24 and staffing? What will the role of the principal be
25 in the hiring, supervision and evaluation of school

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2 safety personnel? Under what circumstances will
3 police involvement be warranted and have just what
4 the DOE will coordinate? Will they coordinate and
5 maintain a working relationship with the NYPD? What
6 assurance do we have that the number of safety agents
7 assigned in each school is adequate? What will be
8 the process for securing substitutes and area there
9 plans for added additional supports?

10 Despite our questions and concerns, CSA's
11 committed to making this a successful transition. In
12 fact, we have been trying to stay ahead of the issue
13 during the contract negotiation that we had, we
14 advocated to have an assistant principal in every
15 school to help with school climate and the DOE
16 agreed.

17 We ask for the City Council's support in assuring
18 the contract provision is utilized by the DOE and we
19 feel that it will greatly help the transition.

20 Finally, our members will do everything in their
21 power to improve safety procedures and protocols in
22 their school to create optimal learning conditions
23 for our students. We humbly ask that the City
24 Council's help ensure that the voices and experiences
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2 of school leaders are regularly heard on these
3 matters. Thank you very much.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
5 hear from Greg Floyd of Local 237. If we could
6 unmute Mr. Floyd please.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

8 GREG FLOYD: Thank you. 288, that is the number
9 of major crimes in public schools ranging from rape
10 to grand larceny in 2019 to 2020. 976, that is the
11 number of crimes for the same period ranging from
12 assault to petty larceny. Some would say, "wow",
13 that's an improvement from the previous years, in
14 which the numbers were even higher. I'd say, No,
15 that's not an improvement. It's just the result of
16 the Mayor's new math on what constitutes crime in our
17 public schools.

18 And that's not where the problem begins. This
19 Administration has changed the definition of crime in
20 public schools so fewer incidents are reported,
21 thereby giving the public a false picture on how
22 really dangerous many schools are.

23 Parents, beware, your children are not safe and
24 they will be even less safe if the City Council's
25 proposed legislation goes through. This legislation

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2 is filled with misinformation. For example, school
3 safety agents do not carry weapons and on the first
4 day of school in 2018, school safety agents
5 confiscated 9 knives, 4 box cutters, 3 razors, a
6 broke up hair pick stabbing and evacuated 2 schools
7 that received bomb threats. That was only on day
8 one.

9 In fact, between 2018 and 2019, 2,701 weapons
10 were confiscated by school safety agents. We have
11 all read the headlines. An 8-year-old brings a
12 loaded 380 caliber gun into a classroom at PS91. 11-
13 year-old 5th grade student brings a loaded semi-
14 automatic into PS40. A 14-year-old has a loaded
15 Smith and Weston in his backpack. 16-year-old
16 student brings loaded 22 caliber gun into John Adams
17 High School and how could we ever forget the bullying
18 that led to a fatal stabbing of a 15-year-old student
19 at the Urban Assembly of Wildlife Management. This
20 was a tragedy that left one life lost, another
21 ruined. 30 parents immediately requested transfers
22 of their children and that's only 55 percent of the
23 students and 19 percent of teachers saying that they
24 felt safe in schools and that school closed down.

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2 Over the years, school safety agents have been
3 both hero and victim in countless ways. To name a
4 few, the students safety terrorists at Stuyvesant
5 High School in Lower Manhattan. They saved students
6 from a vicious stabbing by four rival gang members
7 outside of PS35. It was school safety agents whose
8 quick response to an amber alert in Staten Island who
9 saved a youngster from being kidnapped. School
10 Safety agents are mentors of the Explorer program and
11 local students who are interested in careers and law
12 enforcement.

13 As school safety agents are also the driving
14 force behind many community outreach programs, where
15 they believe their own time – they give their own
16 time and their own money for such worthy programs.
17 Free backpack schools filled with notebooks, Toys for
18 Tots. Providing turkey dinners, homeless families,
19 knowing that one in ten students live in the shelter.
20 With breast cancer being the highest among Black
21 women wearing pink throughout the month of October.
22 Providing free prom gowns and makeup. Advice for
23 high school student seniors, school safety agents do
24 these things and much more.

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2 But school safety agents have been victims of
3 physical and verbal attacks by both students and
4 parents and some agents were even left with broken
5 arms, broken fingers, torn eye socket and assortment
6 of bruises.

7 My concern here is two-fold. For the 5,000
8 school safety agents, 70 percent who are women and
9 mostly Black and Latino's and many of them single
10 parents, a local community whose livelihoods are in
11 jeopardy and 1 million school children who would be
12 in danger. I can't understand the logic which most
13 and much of the world is having chaos at the time
14 when racism and social justice have reached a boiling
15 point in our country at a time when so many of our
16 government leaders, our healthcare professionals and
17 even next door neighbors have failed up, disappointed
18 us and mislead us and betrayed us. Why do some
19 people think the solution lies in knee-jerk,
20 political correct reaction that ultimately harms the
21 very population they want to protect?

22 School Safety Agents are not a part of the
23 supposed pipeline to prison. It is quite the
24 opposite. They do not create criminals; they help to
25 protect the children.

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2 They wear a uniform as a beacon; a sign of
3 authority to let students know who to run to in time
4 of need and potential troublemakers. Legislation to
5 take School Safety Agents out of public schools is
6 wrong. It is phony. It does not do what we need. I
7 urge all Council Members to talk to parents and talk
8 to students and talk to the each and every
9 stakeholder before making such a drastic decision.

10 And I also urge us to remember the Parkland Sandy
11 Hook shootings. They are not some far away places.
12 They occurred right here in the United States. Thank
13 you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That concludes this
15 testimony. Chair and after your questions, Council
16 Member Rosenthal has questions for this panel.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Sure, I want to just begin
18 by you know, as a former member of labor and a union
19 delegate, I certainly appreciate CSA. I also
20 appreciate your service Mr. Floyd and you know; labor
21 is really very important and I think we are going to
22 try to seek clarity about how much they have engaged
23 labor because I think there is concerns about labor
24 has not been adequately engaged.

1
2 I just, my experience and I am just adding my
3 voice as a school stakeholder, someone who taught in
4 the public school system and the family came from the
5 public school system.

6 Students don't really respond to authority, they
7 respond to relationships and I think we don't do
8 enough as a system to build positive, healthy
9 relationships in our school communities. And the
10 school safety agents that I have worked with and I
11 want to say for the record, I work with extraordinary
12 school safety agents in my school. They shared my
13 opinion and views that we need more social, emotional
14 supports in our school. They understood that they
15 were not licensed to provide therapeutic services.
16 They were not licensed to provide direct help. And I
17 just, I really think it's important because with the
18 word safety, it's critical but it is the holistic
19 point to this. And many times we are not meeting the
20 needs of kids and things fall on a particular agency
21 and that's when I think we continue to fail them
22 quite frankly.

23 A 7-year-old having a bad day is not an NYPD or
24 really it should be a school safety issue. A child
25 hungry is experiencing trauma and having an episode

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2 resulting from that trauma, that's really not an NYPD
3 or a school safety issue.

4 I could also share with you stats where we have
5 750,000 students in our school system out of 1
6 million that qualify for free and reduced lunch.
7 Which means that three quarters of a million kids in
8 our school system live at or below the poverty line.

9 If folks don't think that that has an impact on
10 their social, emotional wellbeing and I don't think
11 you really understand children and communities. And
12 I again repeat respectfully, those school shootings
13 were painful, tragic. I think every single person
14 that's ever worked in a school or gone to - it hit
15 all of us really hard. Continues to hit us very
16 hard.

17 Those schools did have school resource officers
18 and we appreciate their work. The shooters still got
19 in. Educators died, students died, educators
20 actually put their bodies to defend their kids. When
21 you unpack what happened after the tragedy to learn,
22 where the system fails, again, case after case of a
23 person who exhibited signs of trauma and impacts of
24 trauma, untreated trauma, no one intervened. No one
25 stopped. It was inadequate supports to stop the

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2 tragedy from happening years before it actually
3 happened. And I think that that's what we really
4 need to have centered here is a holistic approach to
5 school safety and school climate. But I do want to
6 recognize again just to go back, I completely
7 appreciate and understand and support the critical
8 role that labor must play at this table and that must
9 happen.

10 So, I just would like to – if I could hear both
11 from CSA and from Mr. Floyd who represents the school
12 safety agents. And again Mr. Floyd, I want to note
13 for the record, that during this pandemic, I have
14 gone around to many of our grab and go meal sites.
15 It is your members, school safety agents. It is
16 school cleaners, school food workers that are keeping
17 our schools open to our families, helping feed
18 families, even putting their lives on the line in
19 doing so.

20 I want to publicly acknowledge and appreciate
21 that service. Because when people say schools are
22 physically, you know, there is virtual learning going
23 on and some hybrid but the physical buildings have
24 always been open during the pandemic and we
25 appreciate every single city worker who has put their

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2 lives on the line, including school leaders who go to
3 their buildings quite frankly to make sure that
4 things are operating you know well. We thank all of
5 you for that.

6 But if I could just hear both from CSA and from
7 Mr. Floyd to what extent has the administration
8 engaged to you about this transition. What do you
9 know about it and are you satisfied with what is
10 happening so far as far as the level of engagement
11 and collaboration?

12 GREG FLOYD: Thank you and I want to say for the
13 record, it was the City Council who first didn't
14 engage us in the discussion. You had these
15 discussions without involving labor. I had to read
16 about it in the newspaper. So, it wasn't the
17 Administration, it was you and your colleagues. The
18 City Council who didn't engage us.

19 So, you know, you could look and point to
20 somebody else but look at yourselves, at the City
21 Council. Because it is you and Corey Johnson who
22 first came up with this idea in July and I had to
23 read about it in the paper and we weren't given the
24 respect as other labor leaders would have been given
25 and other unions would have been given on your

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2 thoughts, on this process before we even got to this
3 point.

4 Secondly, as far as 7-year-olds being handcuffed
5 and the police being called, that's the school
6 administrators. The police aren't responding because
7 somebody didn't call them, they have a call to that
8 building. You didn't need to call the police. You
9 are blaming the police for responding to something
10 that you called them to respond to.

11 So, I listen to it and I keep hearing it. My
12 heart goes out for you but the school should have
13 been able to handle that problem without calling the
14 police in there. They weren't involved in that
15 situation.

16 The next thing is, we are going on a two year
17 study, we haven't even been engaged in the study.
18 You are all transferring them. No one said that they
19 would be transferred. It was supposed to be a two
20 year study to see the feasibility of moving school
21 safety from the Police Department to the Department
22 of Education. Where is that study? Where are your
23 statistics?

24 So, I think we are all being disingenuous when
25 you want to say, where is the Administration because

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2 the agreement was supposed to be a study. I am still
3 waiting for that study to be conducted because no one
4 has any data on if you can move the school safety
5 division from the Police Department to the Department
6 of Education. What is the fiscal impact? What is
7 the operational impact? What is the feasibility?

8 So, you asked me, there is my answer.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Mr. Floyd, I would say
10 respectfully, I actually myself and my staff, we met
11 with you during the time when I was pushing for
12 school leaders to have a chance to align vision with
13 school safety agents with regards to evaluation. We
14 met in your office and this is prior to the transfer
15 discussion, but we met to discuss my concern about
16 the current structure where school safety agents
17 don't report to principals and there is really no
18 structure in place to even verify that there is a
19 meeting in place to make sure that there is alignment
20 on school climate and school vision.

21 And I remember hearing your concerns and I took
22 time to hear them out and we even discussed the issue
23 where I shared with you what I had witnessed with
24 regards to a disagreement between the administration
25 and school safety about safe passage ways during

1
2 dismissal. You had mentioned about the safety issues
3 that your members faced outside and I heard you
4 respectfully.

5 I have heard but I fundamentally believe and I
6 respect everyone's you know, personal views on this
7 but I believe that a school building is run by a
8 school leader. That is my fundamental belief and
9 because there has been a grey area in this for years,
10 to the fact that they had to make an MOU, speaks to
11 this grey area and respectfully it was really uhm, I
12 think insulting to the institution that after we got
13 the MOU amended between NYPD and DOE to have school
14 leaders to have a chance to sit down with school
15 safety agents at the start of the school year to say,
16 let's find a way to build a shared vision of what
17 positive, safe, supported school kind of looks like.

18 So, we could see if that's going to be followed
19 consistently during the course of the school year.
20 They never did it. The NYPD and DOE they never did
21 it and if you speak to them privately, they point
22 fingers at each other and as I shared before Mr.
23 Floyd, principals in my view should have a chance to
24 sit down with safety agents to say, this is what I
25 think and I want to hear from you as far as safety

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2 agents collaborating, what does safety and positive
3 school climate look like?

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5 I have heard more than once that school safety
6 agents and principals sometimes don't see eye to eye
7 and I think during the meeting we had together, you
8 had mentioned that there are transfers at times
9 during the course of the school year because of those
10 disagreements.

11

12 I heard from principals who tell me that they
13 don't support and I don't support firing school
14 safety agents but they said to me, how can I build a
15 sense of community if they keep transferring the
16 safety agent every two or three months? And I can
17 recommend a number of school principals. That how do
18 I build a sense of community if it's a new face, a
19 new name every other month?

20

21 So, this is you know, this is a part of the
22 challenges that we have faced in terms of getting
23 answers. In terms of us getting basic information.
24 But I hear you and I respect your opinions and views
25 Mr. Floyd. If I could now turn it to please CSA.

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GREG FLOYD: One thing -

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CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes.

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GREG FLOYD: I want to clear up something.

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CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes.

GREG FLOYD: Your meeting with me was an introduction meeting. It was not to discuss policy. In that meeting, we did discuss policy. So, I don't want anybody on this call to think that you and I met over policy because we didn't. We didn't know each other. That was our first and only meeting.

So, I think it is disingenuous for you to outline that as that was a step toward where we are today.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Mr. Floyd, I agree with you as an introductory meeting but at the meeting, mostly policy was discussed.

GREG FLOYD: Oh, stop right there because it wasn't a policy meeting. Because in a policy meeting, you call me up and you say we are going to discuss policy. It is disingenuous for you to use an introduction meeting for your own purposes of moving forward and I reiterate, we were not conferred with.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I will respectfully just disagree on the purpose - you were disappointed about my view about evaluation of school safety agents.

GREG FLOYD: I read the views in the paper. I wasn't disappointed and you read my views in the paper. It was no mystery to me where you stood but

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2 we are not going to tell anybody we had a policy
3 meeting when we didn't

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: We discussed policy at the
5 meeting Mr. Floyd.

6 GREG FLOYD: But it wasn't a policy meeting.
7 This is an official policy meeting.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Mr. Floyd, look, I respect
9 your views. I want to be respectful here but I also
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11 GREG FLOYD: I want the record to be straight
12 because I am not going to sit here in silence and
13 listen to this information and misinformation and my
14 silence would be agreeing with it and I am not going
15 to do that.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And we have an honest
17 disagreement and that's what I am saying. I didn't
18 come there to drink coffee. I went there to discuss
19 students and the issues that I shared with you.

20 GREG FLOYD: Wait, you asked for a meeting, an
21 introduction meeting. Whether you drank coffee or
22 not is not up to me. If you said, I want to discuss
23 policy with you, then that's what the meeting would
24 have been about.

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2 So, I want to preference, the meeting was an
3 introduction meeting that you asked for.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I think – look, I want to
5 move on. I want to hear from CSA to extend
6 collaboration information please. Thanks.

7 ROSEMARIE SINCLAIR: Hello, thank you. Uhm, as
8 far as collaborating with CSA, that did not happen.
9 We were not informed of even when the plan started,
10 nor were we informed of the plan in process. That's
11 why I was asking those various questions.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very much and
13 CSA, can you just speak to some of the criticism or
14 concerns about moving the school safety division over
15 to DOE and reimagining, there were some folks who
16 shared the opinion and views that somehow – going
17 back to the "bad days of the BOE" and there is no
18 more Board of Education, it is now the Department of
19 Education. It's an entirely different structure now.
20 There is no more school boards that make hiring
21 decisions. It is now centralized by DOE.

22 Can you respond to those concerns that some folks
23 feel their principals are not best suited to evaluate
24 or oversee school safety?

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ROSEMARIE SINCLAIR: It's not a matter of if we feel that we can evaluate or supervise school safety. We just want to know what the role of the principal in this process because we have not heard anything. So, we want to know what will be the role of the principal?

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CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And can you just speak to me from your angle point from CSA? During your experience and during your time in tenure? Were there moments when transfers had to be made and I saw that you were kind of nodding in agreement when I mentioned that sometimes there are transfers so often that it's hard to build a sense of community. Can you speak to the level of turnover or transfers that happens during the course of the year and what that means for a principal?

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ROSEMARIE SINCLAIR: So, I will definitely speak to as I was a former principal to if a safety agent is transferred or when you come into the building that morning, they are redeployed somewhere else that definitely affects the whole operational process during the day.

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You need to make sure and you know, as we look to safety agents, I personally from my experience with

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2 safety agents, they were a part of our community
3 right? You know, so we definitely feel that when
4 they come in, they are the individuals that when
5 individuals come into the building, they proceed
6 them. They are the ones that look at your
7 identification to make sure that the school is safe.

8 So, when I look at safety agents, I look at them
9 as being safeguards in the school, not policing
10 children.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right and you mentioned
12 that if there was a change in turnover, it impacted
13 operations for you, is that correct?

14 ROSEMARIE SINCLAIR: Yes, it does. It does
15 because you definitely want to have someone at the
16 desk who had the credentials to really safeguard the
17 school.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And did you ever get
19 reasons why they transfer them out of your school?

20 ROSEMARIE SINCLAIR: Well, as a principal there
21 are times that they were redeployed to another school
22 because they didn't have enough agents at that
23 particular school or there is something that came up
24 and then we always will say, well, what about our
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2 school. We feel that we need someone at our school
3 also.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And did you, I don't know
5 if you overheard in my testimony where I had
6 witnessed a disagreement between my school
7 administration and school safety agents in regards to
8 safe passageway. Have you heard of these types of
9 disagreements on policy in the school and what that
10 means for kids?

11 ROSEMARIE SINCLAIR: To tell you the truth, I
12 have been a CSA for now, I just turn 4-years-old at
13 CSA and prior to that, I don't, I mean, definitely
14 there are times that there are disagreements but I
15 haven't really heard of like a policy discussion or
16 intense discussion concerning children.

17 You know, in my time being a principal, working
18 with the safety agents, there may be times that were
19 discussed where safety agents are going to be at
20 particular exits and so forth and we meet with the
21 level 3 to discuss various things but as far as
22 having - I didn't experience that.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very much.
24 Thanks for your testimony today.

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2 I will turn it over to my colleagues for further
3 questions.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, if we could please
5 unmute Council Member Rosenthal, she has some
6 questions.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much.
8 Thank you and if there is noise, background noise, I
9 apologize. I just stepped in somewhere in order to
10 ask these questions.

11 First of all, I want to let both union leaders
12 know how much I respect them and appreciate the work
13 they do on behalf of the workers. And I guess I am
14 going to join in the chorus of my colleagues to say
15 that of course, I visited all the schools in my
16 district and of course, the school safety agents are
17 lovely and I always feel warmly welcomed. So, you
18 know, this is not a discussion of how the individuals
19 who are school safety officers and I want to make
20 that clear.

21 I mean, I am very proud of the fact that one of
22 the school safety officers in my district won the
23 Sloan Public Servant Award and I understand why. She
24 is an extraordinary public servant.
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2 You know, this is not about – Mr. Floyd, I just
3 want you to know how much I appreciate and actually I
4 was the one in asking questions to the Administration
5 about what your involvement in the process has been
6 because you have to be involved in this. We are
7 talking about the workers in your union.

8 So, you know, my hope would be that you are
9 engaged in this and a part of the discussion because
10 you bring the experiences of your workers. You bring
11 great value to the discussion. What I would argue
12 for the people who are saying, "my goodness, guns
13 come to the schools and knives and if our school
14 safety agents weren't there, these wouldn't have been
15 caught."

16 I think with people, I just don't you know, after
17 the Parkland shooting, there was a call for you know,
18 principals having guns, school safety agents having
19 guns, lockdowns. You know, I think that's the exact
20 opposite response I had. The exact opposite
21 response. The response I had was let's have some
22 honest conversations with our kids about why this
23 happened and what led up to the shooter feeling a
24 need to do that. Because as I mean, Chair Treyger

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2 again, I think just nailed it when he said, that's
3 why we need comprehensive gun reform, right?

4 But this is something similar to comprehensive
5 gun reform. What we are saying is, if our model was
6 not a model that had the word uhm, uh, like, uh, or
7 let me say it is like, we have to change the entire
8 dynamic so that my school safety agent and the one
9 that Council Member Grodenchik mentioned who brought
10 up clothes for the students. That those individuals
11 are lauded for those traits and those are some of the
12 traits that would be great to have in a school as
13 somebody who greets children when they walk in the
14 door.

15 I mean, that's not a joke. You know, my
16 principals who stand outside and greet children on
17 the first day of school and then at least once a
18 month thereafter are sending a message of respect.
19 And I think we have to have room in our ken that
20 having restorative justice might have been a better
21 response for the young man who felt the need to bring
22 a knife to school because he was being relentlessly
23 bullied by someone.

24 My goodness, if we had had social workers,
25 guidance counselors in the school that were

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2 sufficient to know those young men, there would have
3 been no razor brought into the school, right?

4 Because when we address anyone's problems head on,
5 that's how we overt it. And the people who are
6 qualified to do that are social workers, right?

7 So, I just, I want to, I just want to make it
8 clear on my part anyway, is that this has nothing to
9 do with Mr. Floyd with your leadership. I think you
10 know; you are representing your union as best you can
11 and saying to CSA. The important thing is that your
12 voices be part of the discussion but the outcome
13 might be very, very different. It might look very
14 different. It may look like having people there who
15 don't wear blue. Uhm, people there who come with a
16 different premise. Frankly, much of the premise that
17 as everyone points out, you know, 80 percent of the
18 school safety agents are Brown and Black women. My
19 goodness, I am sure their hearts are full for these
20 students.

21 So, let's not set them up to fail, right?
22 Because if the system says, go to your Patrol book in
23 order to get guidance about a situation, from the get
24 go we are setting them up to fail.

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2 So, I guess that's my two cents. I guess there
3 wasn't a question in there. Although if either union
4 leader would like to respond, I of course am
5 interested in what you have to say. Thank you.

6 GREG FLOYD: I have two points to make.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Sure.

8 GREG FLOYD: One, why is everybody concerned
9 about the union being involved when you weren't
10 concerned when you cooked up this scheme of
11 restorative justice? You didn't involve us. You
12 made your announcement.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Right, I hear you and
14 that's horrible. Full stop, that's horrible. You
15 are right.

16 GREG FLOYD: Right, right, it was the City
17 Council who did that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah, no, you are
19 right.

20 GREG FLOYD: That young man who stabbed that
21 child to death, they would go to the authorities of
22 the school and was ignored for three weeks. Why do
23 we know this? His mother said that.

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2 So, that process could have been stopped if
3 someone from the school would have stepped in on that
4 child's behalf.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Hmm, hmm.

6 GREG FLOYD: So, it failed. Not because of
7 school safety, not because of anything. He was
8 ignored and I feel horrible for them. There was a
9 death, there was another child who was maimed and now
10 there is one in jail. Why? Because that child was
11 ignored. Not because there wasn't a guidance
12 counselor because the teachers, the principals,
13 assistant principals, no one came to that child's
14 defense. He was bullied and he responded the only
15 way he thought he had to. He killed his bully and
16 his attacker. That's what happened there.

17 ROSEMARIE SINCLAIR: So, let's be clear that -

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So, I mean, if I can -
19 well, please, I don't want to lay blame on anyone's
20 feet.

21 ROSEMARIE SINCLAIR: Thank you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So, that's now what's
23 going on here. I didn't ask you why did the knife
24 get through. I did not ask you that. What I said
25 was exactly what you just said, which is had the boy

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2 gotten the attention he needed right? Which means
3 integrating restorative justice into the workings of
4 a school under the leadership of a principal, perhaps
5 there would have been a better outcome and sir,
6 honestly, I don't speak for the Council. I am just
7 one member but from me to you, I think it's fair, I
8 think personally its fair for you to be saying and
9 upset about not being consulted. But I would also
10 say you know; I mean I have slighted every day of my
11 7-years in the Council. That's part of leadership.
12 You get slighted and the question is, how do you deal
13 with it and how do you move forward? That can't be
14 the end of the discussion.

15 You know, so today's day one and we want to have
16 a constructive conversation but I just want you to
17 know I appreciate what you said.

18 GREG FLOYD: You have this plan and now you want
19 me to engage to help you get this plan instead of
20 engaging me from the beginning, right?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Sir, I am not -

22 GREG FLOYD: Is that what I am hearing? Is that
23 what I am hearing?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah, my bad. I
25 shouldn't have said anything because I have no role

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2 in this, so I shouldn't open my mouth. I am just
3 sharing with you personally as somebody who is
4 empathic that I see where you are coming from.
5 That's all, sir.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Council Member Rosenthal,
7 Council Member Rosenthal, with all due respect. You
8 are dully elected official. You work for the City
9 Council. We are co-legal branch of government with
10 the Administration. You have constituents that
11 elected you more than once. You have every right to
12 share your thoughts and words and experiences. No
13 one should silence or minimize you.

14 I think CSA wanted to say a few words. Please
15 CSA.

16 ROSEMARIE SINCLAIR: Yes, I just wanted to say
17 that uhm, before we say, I am just going back to the
18 incident that happened. Before we say that
19 Administration, teachers and everyone ignored
20 someone, the people are not here to defend
21 themselves, so we cannot say that and uhm, we saw
22 that it was just something that we felt very saddened
23 by this incident, right? But to say well, this one
24 did it, that one did it. That's not a good place to
25 start.

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you, I am done.

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Thank you Chair Treyger.

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CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah and I want to just build on what the CSA just said. When there are neighborhoods in New York City that are experiencing crime, that are experiencing gun violence, uh, does anyone go out and say you know, let's shut down the police precinct because they are not doing their job? No, they say, well, how can we address the roots of the violence? How do we make sure that it doesn't happen in the first place?

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And so, what we are sharing here is that there were systems that were inadequate to begin with because let me repeat some data for folks. We have 1 million kids in our school system. Three quarters of a million of them live at or below the poverty line. We have over 110,000 students who live in temporary housing. We have over 200,000 kids with IEP's, over 130,000 plus students, multilingual learners. Kids who I met with prior to the pandemic.

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I will never forget in Council Member Dromm's district in Queens, who are scared to go to school because they were afraid of encountering an authority figure because they were afraid of compromising their

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2 families immigration status. And that impacted their
3 attendance in the school.

4 Those kids told that to me to my face. To my
5 face. So, when we discuss safety, children were
6 afraid to go to their own neighborhood school because
7 they were afraid that somehow that would lead to
8 deportation of their family. That's real. Don't
9 minimize them. That's real and they miss school and
10 their grades suffer. Their lives were impacted and
11 do you know what turned that school around? Not that
12 its finished as far as the turnaround.

13 When they got community school money and 100
14 percent of their fair student funding money and they
15 were able to hire a bilingual social worker that
16 speaks Spanish and English and the first thing she
17 did was, she visited the kids in their home to say,
18 "I am going to make sure that you safe." "I am going
19 to make sure that you are okay." "No one is going to
20 hurt you and your family."

21 They then went to school. Attendance picked up.
22 The school was removed from renewal and became a rise
23 school. So folks, let's have a real comprehensive
24 conversation about the safety needs of our children.
25 Yes, there is a role. There is an important role for

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2 school safety and I am not minimizing it because I
3 value and appreciate them. But it's not the entire
4 role. Our kids are suffering from many crisis during
5 the course of their lives.

6 I want to turn next to any other – Council Member
7 Grodenchik I think, is next, has questions.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, if we could unmute
9 Council Member Grodenchik please.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Well, I uhm, that was
11 something and I appreciate –

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I appreciate the
14 discourse Mr. Chairman. I just want to uhm, I want
15 to thank Ms. Sinclair and Mr. Floyd. Uhm, the Chair
16 knows and we have had many personal discussions about
17 the state of our schools and I share his desire,
18 which I know is sincere and heartfelt for every
19 single one of the children in our schools. And I
20 think he has made quite clear today that there are
21 many aspects to safety and that children need places
22 to turn to, especially at school because they spend
23 most of their lives at school. And I have mostly
24 fond memories from my New York City public school
25 education.

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2 It was interesting, I had a discussion sometime
3 back with the Chancellor of CUNY who is
4 affectionately known to us as Falo and he was
5 President of Queens College at the time, which my son
6 just graduated and I attended for a while. And one
7 of the problems he said to me is that young people
8 don't go for counseling and that really is something
9 that we have to work on.

10 I do want to say to both of you, who I want to
11 thank you for being here today and there is no
12 question in this city, I live in a union household.
13 My wife is a member of NYSUT. She is a professor at
14 Nassau Community College and the unions must be at
15 the table and if they haven't been, then that is
16 certainly a mistake that I am certain our Chair and
17 the leadership of the Council will work to rectify.

18 I thank you and I know Ms. Sinclair; we have been
19 in several meetings and I have enjoyed a fine
20 relationship with all your members in my district and
21 I have many of your retirees residing in my district.

22 And Mr. Floyd, as I said before, the
23 professionalism of your members that goes without
24 saying as far as I am concerned and we have heard
25 that from other members here today. And everybody,

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2 everybody has a role to play in this school system.
3 So, that's really what I wanted to say. I wanted to
4 thank you. I can't thank each and everyone of your
5 members. I have been visiting my schools virtually
6 as I said before but I haven't been able to see my
7 school safety officers and I enjoy them very much and
8 I know as I said before, I have made approximately
9 500 school visits and I know they don't care that I
10 am the Councilman. They like me personally but every
11 time, I have to show my ID and that is important and
12 that is where it starts. Where it ends, we have work
13 to do obviously.

14 So, that's all I wanted to say Mr. Chair and I
15 know the day has been long and we have a lot more
16 people set to testify and I want to thank all of you
17 for your professionalism and for being here today
18 because ultimately, this is not about us. It is
19 about the children of New York City.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Council Member.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Alright, thank you. The next
24 panel that we will hear will be Oliver Cannell, Mary
25 Hemmings, Mouskula Harisiasis, Isha Taylor.

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2 Following that panel will be Yazmin Aquino, Mam Fatou
3 Dukuray, Shadavia Lanee Burnett, Meril Mousoom and
4 Mariam Shardo[SP?]. So, we will start with Oliver
5 Cannell.

6 OLIVER CANNELL: Good afternoon. My name is -

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

8 OLIVER CANNELL: My name is Oliver Cannell. I am
9 a Restorative Justice Coordinator at MS839 in
10 District 15 Brooklyn and a member of Teachers Unite.
11 I am here today to urge the City Council to reject
12 Intro. 2211, a bill that would codify the transfer of
13 the NYPD school division to the DOE.

14 For the last five years, I have had the privilege
15 of working to build a restorative program at a young
16 middle school. Our school was an early member of the
17 diversity and admissions pilot and we now have a
18 districtwide diversity plan. I bring this
19 perspective knowing that we are building momentum to
20 dismantle racist exclusionary practices and fully
21 integrate our schools.

22 In order for that to work, we need to make a
23 meaningful culture shift and this bill is not it.
24 The proposal to transfer and retrain all existing
25 SSA's entirely ignores that fact that the culture of

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2 policing in schools is entrenched and damaging,
3 specifically to Black and Brown young people.

4 We don't need police by another name. What we
5 need is investment in the supportive staff positions
6 that our students demand. Let me tell you about my
7 colleagues. Black and Brown New Yorkers who
8 graduated from our public schools who are dedicated
9 to our schools restorative mission and to our young
10 peoples health and wellbeing. They are
11 paraprofessionals, youth advocates, guidance interns.
12 They form meaningful relationships with our most
13 vulnerable students. They go above and beyond
14 regularly to hold circles, follow through on
15 accountability processes and show our young people
16 love. Making the restorative justice program work.

17 They are also among the most poorly paid staff
18 members at our school. They deserve better. In
19 contrast, to quote a student, interacting with school
20 safety agents makes them feel as if they have done
21 something wrong. When all of these people I
22 referenced earlier in addition to our one guidance
23 counselor, feel as overwhelmed and undercompensated
24 as they do even in pre-pandemic times. How can we
25 contemplate such a superficial yet expensive move.

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2 I am asking you to truly divest from police in
3 schools and invest in young people. It's the only
4 way to build the schools that our young people and
5 their families deserve and demand.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Not seeing Mary
7 Hemmings, next we will go to Mouskula.

8 MOUSKULA HARISIASIS: Hi, my name is Mouskula
9 Harisiasis. I am a Teacher at LaGuardia High School.
10 I am working with Teachers Unite, an organization of
11 New York City public school educators working to
12 dismantle the school to prison pipeline. I am here
13 to urge Council Members to reject Intro. 2211. We
14 are calling for New York City public schools to
15 divest from policing and practices of student control
16 and invest in quality education that respect the
17 dignity of all students and pursues restorative
18 approaches to conflict and harm.

19 As a teacher, I see my students struggling with
20 mental health issues. We have 1 full-time social
21 worker for almost 3,000 students. However, we have
22 many more school safety agents. We need more
23 counselors and social workers to support our
24 students. We don't need police by other name. We
25 are calling for funding to hire Black and Brown New

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2 Yorkers into jobs that support young peoples social,
3 emotional and mental health.

4 At LaGuardia, I have seen how positions like
5 restorative justice counselors, para professionals,
6 youth advocates, community outreach coordinators and
7 para coordinators and more can support students. We
8 used to have students help out at our attendance
9 office and be paid for their work but we lost that
10 funding.

11 The attendance office is one the places in the
12 school where Black and Brown adults are leaders. It
13 is a place for students to work together, support
14 each other and receive support from adults.

15 Marianna, one of my students who was struggling
16 academically found the attendance office a place that
17 supported her and her academics and her personal
18 life. We need more investment in places like this.

19 Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Mouskula, I a just have to
22 say very quickly, you are a highly effective educator
23 because I know many folks would have probably lost
24 their train of thought. You have a beautiful cat
25 with you but I just wanted to say, that is skill and

1 that's work and thank you for your testimony today.

2 Thank you so much.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will hear from Isha
4 Taylor.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 ISHA TAYLOR: Hello Chair Treyger, NYC Council
7 Members, NYC School Safety Leaders, Deputy Chancellor
8 LaShawn Robinson, Kenyatte Reid and other community
9 leaders and advocates.
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11 My name is Isha Taylor and I had the opportunity
12 to serve as a Council Member on the Community
13 Education Council for District 10 in the Bronx. I
14 advocate the support of our 62 schools and over
15 55,000 students. I also serve as a member of the
16 Education Council Consortium which unites districts
17 and citywide education leaders across all 32 NYC
18 school districts.

19 I am also hearing collaboration in standing with
20 the Teachers United to dismantle the school to prison
21 pipeline. As a CC member, I advocate for over 9
22 schools in my district and I would like to encourage
23 the Council Members to reject Intro. 2211. I would
24 like to recommend instead that our schools be fully
25 funded. That we reallocate the \$451 million annually

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2 spent on police to hiring more social workers, school
3 nurses and adequately train all DOE staff from
4 custodial engineers to the principal. It is time
5 that we stop only speaking the language. It is time
6 that we stop playing pass the blame and point the
7 finger.

8 Our students and the community that serves them
9 deserve action, accountability and implementation.
10 Not just empty promises and feel good policies. I
11 would also like to highlight the school safety agents
12 who are dedicated to meeting the needs of students
13 and families. School safety agents are not the
14 problem. The system that does not bridge the gap and
15 processes that holistically and strategically address
16 the needs of our individual school communities are
17 the problems. It's time that we stop using the
18 pandemic as a crutch. It's time that we stop
19 declaring war on our students and their families. If
20 COVID-19 hasn't taught us anything, we should learn
21 that we need a new normal. We are tired of the empty
22 promises without actual implementation.

23 I am tired of scripted answers. The issues is
24 not the school safety agents and I want to say that
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2 again because we keep bringing them up. But we need
3 to address the lack of training.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 ISHA TAYLOR: The lack of investment. Everyone
6 should be training conflict resolution, mental
7 health, first aid, social emotional coping skills and
8 alternative holistic health methods. Transferring
9 school policy to another department is like putting a
10 band aid on an open wound. It's time for action.
11 It's time that we stop addressing the symptoms and
12 dismantle the root cause. It's time that we fully
13 fund our schools and see our students as assets and
14 not statistics.

15 We heard the students speak loud, clear and
16 unapologetically about what they need. Students have
17 demanded investment that further their development.
18 I am a retired Combat Airforce Veteran and I am tired
19 of feeling like I am sitting by allowing domestic
20 terrorism to take place by our government, on our
21 students in our communities. New York City Council
22 Members, I would like to ask that you connect with
23 your respective community education councils within
24 your districts and get a real account of what's
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2 happening and support your fellow Council Members and
3 constituents. Thank you so much for your time today.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That concludes this panel
5 Council Member Treyger, I will turn it to you if you
6 have any questions.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I just want to say thank
8 you to our CSE's, parents and education stakeholders,
9 educators. You are at the frontlines of this very
10 much as well. I mean, we are all about the kids here
11 and our students but certainly, we must absolutely
12 have parents, educators at the table and as you see,
13 we already had quite of bit of spirited conversations
14 and I am going to do the best that I can to always
15 center this about the students and not just a
16 transfer but reimagining these positions and
17 investing in greater social, emotional supports for
18 our kids because we are failing to do that at this
19 time. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you to this panel.
21 Next, we are going to call Yazmin Aquino, Mam Fatou
22 Dukuray, Shadavia Lanee Burnett, Meril Mousoom and
23 Mariam Shardo. The panel after this one will be
24 Jazmin Delvia[SP?], Dawn Yuster, Quadira Coles and
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2 Smitha Varghese. If we could please unmute Yazmin
3 Aquino.

4 YAZMIN AQUINO: My name is Yazmin. I am 17-
5 years-old.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 YAZMIN AQUINO: My pronouns are she, her. I am a
8 high school senior from Brooklyn and I am a youth
9 investor at Bushwick campus. I am here today because
10 young people have been fighting for police free
11 schools for many years and have been ignored or
12 pushed to the side and today we are here to say it is
13 time to listen to the youth leaders. During my time
14 in high school, I have witnessed students
15 experiencing oppressive moments from school safety.

16 One morning there was a group of English language
17 learners being told to speak English. This happened
18 inside our school, a place where we are supposed to
19 feel safe. At that moment, none of us did. I felt
20 extremely uncomfortable. The NYPD trains the school
21 safety agents that have caused many of my classmates
22 harm. It is an allusion to think that transferring
23 the SSA's under the supervision of the Department of
24 Education is the solution we need and it is not.

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2 We are here for immediate removal of police
3 officers for our schools changing the title or
4 supervision of these workers does not restore or
5 change what has happened in our school environment.

6 I do not want us to invest our limit funds in
7 something that brings hurt, anxiety and hate into a
8 place where we are supposed to learn, grow and be
9 supported.

10 At the school I attended, safety would follow us
11 around during our free period. It made me feel like
12 I was doing something bad as if I was a problem.
13 What they were doing was criminalizing youth
14 behavior. This is no reason we should have SSA's in
15 our schools. It insists fear in our school
16 community. Every day during scanning, students would
17 get patted down and our belongings are searched
18 carefully. It was noticeable how students were
19 portrayed in a negative light. They treated some
20 students differently, especially when they selected
21 only specific students to search and pat down. I
22 feel like the school safety are not there for our
23 safety. If anything, they make us feel unwelcome. I
24 want to make it clear that at first to retrain cops
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will not address harm and has been caused in our school.

Our city cannot pretend that taking off a uniform and adding training will address the trauma that students have experienced. We need to prioritize school social, emotional and mental health professionals -

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

YAZMIN AQUINO: And create a safe of supported school climate beyond police. Police don't create safety. They respond and punish, funding support and create safety.

To be clear, I am here asking you to listen to the youth and vote no on Intro. 2211. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will hear from Mam Fatou Dukuray.

MAM FATOU DUKURAY: Hi, my name is Mam Fatou -

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

MAM FATOU DUKURAY: Police reform is divest in money from NYPD and invest in things that make our community better and to explicitly remove both police and policing culture from school. Failure to do so is not at all what our community has demanded. Our city continues to fail our youth.

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Today, New York City is far from where it needs to be to ensure students success as our school face troubling reality. NYC has the most segregated school system in America. According to the New York City Council, in our public schools, 74.6 percent of Black and Latinx students attending school with less than 10 percent White students. Additionally, 34.3 of White students attending school with more than 50 percent White students.

School segregation leads to chronic underfunding of school in New York City, New York State, which has negative and disparate impacts for Black, Latinx and low income students, given subsequent results to disparities.

At least 77.3 percent of the 1.1 million children in the DOE system will graduate on time and only 55 percent of New York City high school will graduate college ready. One in ten NYC public school students is houseless. Additionally, in the nation in which 40 million students are in school with police with no guidance counselor, no nurse, no psychologist or social worker. New York City has more school safety agents than any other school district in the US. The presence of police -

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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MAM FATOU DUKURAY: In our school has negatively impacted students who are low income, Black and Latinx. Who are more likely to be subject of executional disciplined and police response of school than their White peers.

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Everyone in the City Council, however, has the power to shift this. Beginning with meaningful shifting from the police reforming their responsibility and reinvesting in our community. Our vision for education in New York City includes safe resources healing environment where all students have the opportunity to learn and grow. To meet this goal, we must pursue policies that value and respect the dignity of students, caregivers and their communities.

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This requires providing school equitability resources, adopting a cultural responsive curriculum. Preventing trauma, repairing and promoting resources practice. To do this, we are the brotherhood and sisterhood alongside a number of other youth and organization and organize as demand, structure shift.

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Police free school, an end to all structure that systematically pulls students out of class as part of

1
2 the police and culture. Fully funding our school as
3 to center students success and social, emotional
4 support. Expanding and transforming youth civil
5 power, cultural safe. Educators center trauma
6 informed approach. City leaders reimagine bond staff
7 meaningful students and community led safe
8 structures. School does center healing expanding
9 evidence based training for school as the element
10 that criminalize marginalized students.

11 Schools institutionalize inform comprehensive sex
12 education in school, cultural responsive education
13 and civil education. The distribution of technology
14 resource to all schools, language assistance for
15 family and students, equitable success for students,
16 family with disabilities or narrow divergent.

17 All youth deserve a safe, high quality, holistic
18 and positively transformative educational experience.
19 It will be the equity we want to create and we want
20 to create a future for all New Yorker they deserve.
21 We must build within our school system of
22 accountability, resource, justice, behavior does not
23 include the NYPD. We must close the \$1 billion
24 funding gap for our school, so that we can begin to
25 address the systematized oppression our students face

1
2 as a result of legacy of ignoring the needs of Black,
3 Brown and low income community.

4 We must deconstruct the school to prison pipeline
5 and broken window policy and truly decriminalize low
6 level offense that lead our schools to have negative
7 contacts with the state and the system. We must do
8 it now. Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
10 hear from Shadavia Lanee Burnett. If we could please
11 unmute her.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Bear with us just moment. We
14 are just having one technical difficulty. Shadavia,
15 just give us a moment please, bear with us. Okay,
16 there we go.

17 SHADAVIA LANE E BURNETT: My name is Shadavia
18 Lanee Burnett, I am a Senior at Humanities and Arts
19 High School and a Training Manager and Leader at New
20 York Civil Liberties Union Teens Activists Project or
21 TAP. I hear the call for more trainings but what
22 great faith do we have in school safety when time and
23 time again, they prove that they cannot live up to
24 their name. They make us feel the exact opposite of
25 safety. Their actions continue to get excused and we

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pay the penalty when it should be the other way around. Why are we putting more money into the very thing that sets us as youth back? Years down in the line when my 7-year-old brother is in Junior High or High School, we will be dealing with the same thing. Fighting to fix the same situation but it will never get fixed because students like me feel like we are talking to a wall.

I hear you wanting to want change that will benefit us for years while we have been telling you that it seems like it is going in one ear throughout the other. This is literally a life or death situation for a lot of students, especially Black and Brown – students of Black and Brown color. My people are getting thrown into the school to prison pipeline, while that same energy can be put into counselors, therapists and social workers in our schools.

Are you actually listening to anything that we are saying? I go to a school of 400 students with 2 guidance counselors and 2 therapists. How are students supposed to feel heard and taken care when they can't get a hold of the very people that are supposed to help us?

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We are here today talking about transferring cops from one division to another wasting more money towards police rather than investing it in actual help that we need, especially in this pandemic. We have to get the answers. No, we have the answer actually. Get police out of our schools and shift funding towards these supports. Every day schools feel more and more like a prison. What will you actually do to change that?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will hear from Meril Mousoom.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

MERIL MOUSOOM: Hi, my name is Meril Mousoom. I am a High School Student with Teens Take Charge and Dignity in Schools. This school safety bill Intro. 2211 will threaten the progress that we activists have made and the students that we promised that their lives would be better. This bill will threaten the work of students like me who trusted the City Council after we worked hard to achieve police free schools.

This bill is policing by another name. Policing by another name is still policing and we know who is more likely to get policed. We know that these

1
2 solutions never actual seem to fix the problem of
3 student conflict. Although student school safety
4 agents are mostly women of color, especially Black
5 and Latinx women, we want women of color to have jobs
6 that aren't punitive.

7 I would like to make another point. Mr. Treyger
8 talked about the trauma that students go through
9 every day. In 2017, there was a terrorist attack
10 right outside my school. Seeing a man being shot by
11 a gun, that feeling of running for your life to go
12 get away from the terrorist attack, this is what my
13 classmates had to deal with. Like many students in
14 today's age.

15 Years later, although that memory has not yet
16 been erased, our overworked guidance counselors still
17 do not have time for us. For many students including
18 myself, guidance counselors are our only mental
19 health that we – a resource that we have access to.
20 Because of the stigma mental health carries in
21 communities of color and the barrier of cost to low-
22 income families. Might I mention that low-income
23 people of color are the majority of New York City
24 students.

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2 I want a school system that prioritizes my social
3 and emotional needs, not criminalizes students like
4 me and we can achieve that, starting with scraping
5 Intro. 2211.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the last person
7 is not on right now Council Member Treyger. So, that
8 concludes testimony for this panel.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I just want to thank the
10 students again. This is about you. We must hear you
11 and we have more work to do but I really appreciate
12 you being here and I have seen some of the students
13 here at previous hearings before. Thank you for
14 continuing to speak up. Not just on behalf of
15 yourself, on behalf of your peers as well. It takes
16 courage for students, young people to really speak
17 up. This is your government. This is your - this is
18 the people's I guess virtual chamber peoples house
19 and we appreciate you so much. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. The next
21 panel that we are going to call will be Dawn Yuster
22 Advocates for Children, Quadira Coles Girls for
23 Gender Equity and Smitha Varghese Alliance for
24 Quality Education.

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2 Following this panel, we will call a Teachers
3 Unite panel [INAUDIBLE 4:08:01], Caitlin Delphin,
4 Madeline Borrelli, Natalia Foreman and Jay Julio. We
5 will first start with Dawn Yuster from Advocates for
6 Children.

7 DAWN YUSTER: Thank you, good afternoon.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 DAWN YUSTER: My name is Dawn Yuster and I am the
10 Director of Advocates for Children of New York School
11 Justice Project. Advocates for Children has worked
12 to ensure high quality education for New York
13 students who face barriers to academic success for
14 nearly 50 years. AFC is a proud member of Dignity in
15 Schools New York.

16 We are here today to testify in support of Intro.
17 Number 2188 regulating the NYPD's response to
18 students in emotional crisis within public schools
19 and are grateful to Council Member Ayala for leading
20 the effort on this critical bill.

21 We also testify to express concern about Intro.
22 2211 regulating the transfer of the school safety
23 division from the NYPD to the Department of
24 Education.

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2 Earlier this year, many of us watched in horror
3 and outrage video footage of a 9-year-old girl in
4 Rochester who was brutally handcuffed and pepper
5 sprayed by the police. The video made it patently
6 clear that the officers actions were extreme and
7 unacceptable. Traumatizing a young child, her family
8 and the entire community. While we would like to
9 believe incidents like this are rare, would not
10 happen to our children and would not happen at
11 school, NYPD data and AFC's experiences working on
12 the ground with families indicate that each year,
13 hundreds of students in emotional crisis are
14 handcuffed by police in New York City public schools.

15 Over the past four school years, NYPD officers
16 including school safety agents and precinct officers,
17 intervened in 12,050 incidents of students in
18 emotional crisis who were removed from class and
19 transported to the hospital when medically
20 unnecessary.

21 Nearly half of those incidents involve children
22 before 4 and 12. Intro. 2188 is a really critical
23 step in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic has created
24 and exacerbated the social, emotional challenges for
25

1
2 all members of the school community with trauma most

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4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 DAWN YUSTER: I just want to add very briefly,
6 while we strongly support Intro. 2188, we have been
7 calling on the city to shift funding from the NYPD to
8 support students and therefore want to be really not
9 advocating for additional funding to be allocated to
10 train law enforcement officers to respond to students
11 in emotional crisis, including the training specified
12 in the bill. And also, regarding our concerns for
13 Intro. 2211, uhm, while we support the bills removal
14 of all NYPD officers from schools. You know, but we
15 are very concerned about the mere transfer of the
16 agents from the NYPD to the DOE and we are very
17 concerned that the bill doesn't uhm, reflect the
18 articulated mission of our community partners. You
19 know, to actually uhm, you know, remove police from
20 schools.

21 And so, we stand with Dignity in Schools Campaign
22 and other allies for calling for school safety to be
23 transformed and not merely transferred to the city,
24 to the DOE. The city must uhm, really redesign the
25 role of school safety officers and reallocate NYPD

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2 funding to resources and positions to support
3 students directly.

4 Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak
5 with you. We look forward to working with you to
6 move forward 2188, reimagine the school safety role,
7 reallocate NYPD funding to invest in the critical
8 mental health needs of our students. I would be
9 happy to answer questions. Thank you so much for
10 letting me go over slightly.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
12 hear from Quadira Coles from Girls for Gender Equity.

13 QUADIRA COLES: Good afternoon members and staff
14 of the Committee on Education.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 QUADIRA COLES: My name is Quadira Coles and I am
17 the Policy Manager at Girls for Gender Equity. We
18 are offering testimony today to talk about restoring
19 safety and dignity in our schools. We remain
20 consistent in our demands that the City Council and
21 the Mayor must prioritize police free schools and
22 invest in our students education with services and
23 programs to support the address to inequities that
24 were laid bare by the pandemic in transition to
25 remote learning.

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2 The emotional and mental wellbeing of our
3 returning students school climate and healing driven
4 transition should be the city's primary priorities.
5 The proposed legislation by the Council further
6 intrenches policing in schools instead of meeting the
7 needs of school communities.

8 You all have the opportunity through the budget
9 negotiation process to eradicate violence at the
10 hands of law enforcement and reinvest the money once
11 spent on policing to transform our schools in a
12 direction of healing and support. We strongly oppose
13 Intro. 2211 which codifies the schools division
14 within the DOE with the retention of 5,254 policing
15 staff. This piece of legislation also maintains
16 discretion to any NYPD employee who reasonably
17 believes action to be necessary to address an
18 imminent risk to the public safety or property.

19 Our police free schools demand includes the total
20 end of police access to school buildings. Intro.
21 2211 does nothing to acknowledge schools need for
22 resources or otherwise to resolve to invest to
23 support schools in ways that sets police free schools
24 up for success. We are grappling with the long
25 legacy of school police violence. Proposing that

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2 agents in the division under the DOE do not have to
3 wear uniforms and materials of the NYPD. It is
4 nothing more than a symbolic gesture, rather than an
5 attempt to address the legacy of school policing.
6 Refusing to dismantle the division means the school
7 police complicity and police and culture will
8 continue to be an interruption to young peoples
9 education.

10 By blanket transferring periodic training, we are
11 leaving a huge gap for young people to suffer in the
12 meantime while we all wait for the culture of
13 policing to shift.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 QUADIRA COLES: Outsource the pipeline to school
16 safety personnel is not a remedy to conflict. It is
17 not the transformative investment that we are
18 demanding in order to meet the needs of school
19 communities. Intro. 2211 potentially commits an
20 unknowable or unspecified mass of funding to training
21 former police in abstract matters like equity or how
22 to honor the dignity and humanity of students instead
23 of investing in a whole school approach to
24 accountability and restorative justice.

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2 You cannot train people into honoring and
3 humanity and dignity of students. Our demand is to
4 disband the school safety division not transfer it.
5 This transition required an opaque and potentially
6 boundless financial commitment that could otherwise
7 go to building something that more closely mirrors
8 what we need rather than what is convened or the
9 lowest possible lift.

10 These bills are skewed towards priorities of the
11 law enforcement instead of new, big, sustained
12 investments in the whole school community. Thank you
13 for the opportunity to testify.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
15 hear from Smitha Varghese.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Bear with us just one moment.

18 SMITHA VARGHESE: Good afternoon. So, my name is
19 Smitha Varghese, I am the New York City Campaign
20 Coordinator for the Alliance for Quality Education
21 and AQE is also a member of DSE. I just want to
22 quickly say I am so disappointed in the tone deaf
23 remarks made particularly by Council Member Holden
24 and Council Member Grodenchik who I am a constituent
25 of. It's just so alarming how there are still

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2 members of the City Council who are extremely
3 ignorant of their privilege and don't see how Black
4 and Brown students have a very different interaction
5 with school safety agents in schools.

6 Now, to get straight to the point, New Yorkers
7 like myself and members of the organizations that
8 make up DSE, who have attended the New York City
9 public school system from kindergarten to CUNY, are
10 calling for the full removal of cops from our
11 schools.

12 Intro. 2211 would solidify the Council's poor
13 NYPD to DOE transfer decision from last year. The
14 bill does nothing to address what the city truly
15 needs. A secure plan to transition police out of
16 schools. AQE rejects this bill. However, we do
17 support the spirit of Intro. 2188 and we agree with
18 most of the language but the bill calls for
19 additional training for police and safety agents
20 which we don't support.

21 The bill mandates that clinical and support staff
22 should be the primary support for young people in
23 crisis. However, there is no significant funding to
24 support this mandate. We believe that money should
25 be invested in DOE positions that care for and

1
2 support young people in their most vulnerable
3 moments, rather than throwing more money at more
4 trainings for cops.

5 So, AQE supports Intro. 2188 with our suggested
6 provisions. None of these bill though address the
7 main and underlined problem, which is police in our
8 schools. The New York City Council must be bold and
9 introduce progressive bills that will head on, tackle
10 the school to prison pipeline and anything less will
11 mean that the Council will continue it's complacency
12 in criminalizing our Black and Brown youth and
13 maintaining the systemic structures that were born
14 from White Supremacy. Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Council Member,
16 that concludes testimony for this panel and I don't
17 see any questions.

18 So, we will move onto the next panel. The next
19 panel will be Caitlin Delphin, Madeline Borrelli,
20 Natalia Foreman and Jay Julio. The panel after that
21 will be Johanna Miller from NYCLU, Nelson Mar Bronx
22 Legal Services, Anna Arkin-Gallagher Brooklyn
23 Defender Services and Crystal Baker-Burr the Bronx
24 Defenders. So, we will start with Caitlin Delphin.

25 CAITLIN DELPHIN: Good afternoon. My name is -

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

CAITLIN DELPHIN: Caitlin Delphin and I am a Special Education Teacher at a high school in Bensonhurst Brooklyn and a Member of Teachers Unite. I am here today to speak in opposition to Intro. Number 2211. We need action to reduce policing in schools and to fund more teachers, counselors, social workers and restorative justice professionals. Rather than spending more money retraining current SSA's. Though we have seen so many times that retraining police does not work.

I am going to focus today on alternatives to policing in schools. I work in a small school; it is unusual within the DOE in a few ways. Our students graduation requirements are based on papers of presentations rather than testing. We are a restorative justice school. We have also spent years developing culture responsive classrooms and curriculum.

Although school is far from perfect, through these efforts, we see a significant drop in suspensions and increase in safety. For example it has been years since we have had a fight at the school. We have been able to do this because

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2 students are empowered to leave restorative justice
3 initiatives including relationship building,
4 mediations and circles facilitation and we have made
5 an effort to train all of our staff in RJ practices.
6 We have done all of this without funding for an RJ
7 Coordinator or other devoted RJ positions as well as
8 in direct contradiction to the culture of policing
9 present in the DOE.

10 The students, teachers and staff at my school are
11 not exceptional. We are a diverse, unscreened, Title
12 1 public school. This can work anywhere but it won't
13 work without funding and support. Despite all of
14 this, when we eventually do return to the building in
15 person, the vast majority of my students who will
16 have been out of the building for over a year, will
17 not be welcomed back by additional counselors or
18 social workers to help them with the traumas of
19 having to care for sick family members or feeling the
20 weight of the family's finances on their shoulders as
21 a teenager or social isolation.

22 They will not be welcomed by more teachers to
23 help refocus students who have had to be more
24 involved in younger sibling school work than their
25 own or some don't have access to adequate technology.

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2 Nope, instead they will be greeted by metal
3 detectors in uniform SSA's reminding them exactly how
4 society values their education. Until we are talking
5 about eliminating policing and fully funding
6 education within our schools, we are not having the
7 right conversation.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 CAITLIN DELPHIN: Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
11 hear from Madeline Borrelli.

12 MADELINE BORRELLI: Good afternoon Council.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 MADELINE BORRELLI: My name is Madeline Borrelli,
15 I am a District 15 parent and a District 21 Special
16 Education Teacher. I am also a member of Teachers
17 Unite. I urge Council Members to reject Intro. 2211.
18 This bill will create new infrastructure to police
19 and criminalize students. This reshuffling and
20 repackaging was 31 percent of de Blasio's phony \$1
21 billion refinement of the NYPD.

22 So, from the beginning, this move was never
23 intended to result in change. The hundreds of
24 millions of dollars spent on school policing will
25 come directly out the DOE's already decimated budget.

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2 And we know racism and violence are ingrained into
3 NYPD culture and practices.

4 We have seen time and time again from all over
5 the country that reforms don't work. Retrain doesn't
6 work. And to go back to the money instead of
7 spending millions to try and retrain school police,
8 we can instead hire Black and Brown New Yorkers in
9 the positions that actually support young peoples
10 wellbeing and are not through a policing
11 infrastructure.

12 Hire Black and Brown community members who have
13 spent their careers learning about trauma informed
14 practices, not former NYPD agents who take a half ass
15 class on restorative justice. Speaking of which, we
16 can't even get the DOE to properly train us teachers
17 who are already in the schools and trauma informed
18 restorative practices but we are to believe that
19 5,000 school cops will be appropriately retrained.
20 It just doesn't add up.

21 In my 7 years of teaching in the DOE, I have on
22 many occasions seen cops escalate conflicts. I have
23 seen students in mental health crisis put in
24 handcuffs. I have seen cops patrolling our hallways
25 in the very same way that the NYPD patrols our

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neighborhoods. They view on folks as criminals. They target Black and Brown students, LGBTQ students and students with disabilities. Policing in all form including personnel has no place in our schools and they certainly should not have a say in how our schools are run.

Now, we are hearing that the city plans to hire 475 new school cops. My school has to share social workers and speech pathologists with other schools but we have money for 475 new school cops in a pandemic. When I have kids still trying to do school work on their parents cellphones but we have money for 475 new school cops. This is unethical.

Council Members, I hope you listen to the young folks on this call today because they are the ones who are living out the policies that you enact.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

MADELINE BORRELLI: If you pass Intro. 2211, you are choosing violence for our young people. We don't want reform. We don't want retraining; we want dismantle and abolish all forms of policing and policing culture from our schools. Please vote no on Intro. 2211. Thank you.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
3 hear from Jay Julio.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 JAY JULIO: Hello, my name is Jay Julio and I am
6 a 23-year-old educator living in District 7 with
7 teaching experiences within the halls of PS69 SPE1
8 River East and with hundreds of students at the
9 Julliard's Schools Music Advancement Program.

10 I also grew up in the public school system in New
11 York as one of the free and reduced lunch students
12 that Council Member Treyger mentioned. Not within
13 New York City DOE but in Uniondale until I was 16,
14 when I moved into the city. I grew up until the age
15 of 14 in Nassau County in some of the only
16 elementary, middle and high schools with SSA's and
17 metal detectors on the island.

18 Those of you who know, know why this is so. I
19 won't speak to that experience besides briefly
20 mentioning that school safety officers and school
21 safety agents are among the lowest paid positions in
22 schools and that we who believe in racial justice,
23 should be asking for the creation of well paying jobs
24 within school structures that are not policed.

1
2 I cannot tell you a single person from the
3 thousands of people I went to school with that looked
4 at these positions and said anything but that is
5 exactly who I don't want to be. We all know these
6 are not aspirational jobs and that of course the
7 creation of policing structures within schools is the
8 very school to prison pipeline that caught so many of
9 my sisters, my brothers who in White schools might
10 have been simply disciplined through head on
11 restorative justice systems by advisors, guidance
12 counselors and school structures that did not
13 involved policing and that metal detectors and pat
14 downs literally lost us hours of our lives that could
15 have been spent in the classrooms. And that so often
16 as soon as my fellow students saw that we were being
17 treated like prisoners in training, that we had been
18 prepped for this through every experience we had
19 growing up, they completely disengaged from the
20 system.

21 These were the students that brought knives or
22 guns and drugs because if we were headed for the jail
23 house, why not act like it? I am sorry, I spoke a
24 lot on that because I have dive 9 years back to think
25 how that 14-year-old back then thought and that it

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was a truly traumatic place despite my later success. Despite all the light and life that was in the school and that's what saved me. Everything else in the school that's constantly in danger of being defunded. Every music class, every science lab, every single Black and Brown peer that I had, every guidance counselor that helped me work through my personal journey. And let's not forget that that student -

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

JAY JULIO: Who is violently threatened constantly because he was gay. Who killed his bullies out of fear of death. A fear that followed him even when he left the school. Don't forget his high school had school security officers. What is our police against homophobia?

Our schools cannot be a buy in until they actually offer us not securitization but true safety. So, no on 2211 and yes on refunding our public schools, the same schools that to this day shares floors and buildings and that have no HVAC systems. Thank you so much.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes the testimony for this panel. Seeing no Council Member questions, the next panel that we will call

1
2 will be Johanna Miller, Nelson Mar, Anna Arkin-
3 Gallagher and Crystal Baker-Burr.

4 The panel after that will be Anthony Singfield,
5 Jasmilet Ortiz, Niaia Timmons[SP?] and Salma Hassan.
6 We will start with Johanna Miller.

7 JOHANNA MILLER: Hi, thank you.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: starting time.

9 JOHANNA MILLER: My name is Johanna Miller. I am
10 the Director of the Education Policy Center at the
11 New York Civil Liberties Union. I am here today in
12 strong opposition to Intro. 2211 and in qualified
13 support of the other three bills that are being
14 considered, which is detailed in our written
15 testimony.

16 I do want to use my two minutes to talk about
17 2211. A legal requirement to train police officers
18 to perform the duties of educators is something that
19 no one here asked for. Not students, not advocates
20 and we know not school safety officers themselves.
21 They don't want this. I don't think that that goes
22 well for them doing it well.

23 The precious funding available for schools has to
24 be spent on teaching and learning, supporting
25 students and improving a learning environment. We

1
2 can't be retrofitting police officers into make shift
3 counselors when we don't have enough counselors
4 already.

5 I think it is worth remembering that we are not
6 having this conversation because the NYPD has done
7 such a great job taking care of our kids,
8 particularly our students of color. We are here
9 because no one's happy with how this is going. In
10 fact, just an hour ago, the leader of the school
11 safety officers union just said the words, parents,
12 your children are not safe. That's from the leader
13 of the school safety union whose job it is to keep
14 kids safe. It's the largest school police force in
15 the country. It's larger than the entire municipal
16 police forces of almost every single American city.
17 It has an ever expanding budget.

18 If his belief is that school safety officers are
19 still failing to keep schools safe with all the
20 resources they have, then I hope that today we can
21 finally dispatch the argument that our current school
22 safety arrangement isn't working at all. And you
23 know, if Greg Floyd and the NYCLU are in agreement
24 about something, I think it's worth paying attention
25 to.

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2 For more than a decade, we have been urging the
3 city to spend less on school policing and to shrink
4 the mind boggling size of the schools safety division
5 through attrition and reassignment but the division
6 has continued to grow -

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 JOHANNA MILLER: Even the hiring freeze that was
9 promised to you. It's the city's prerogative to
10 protect municipal workers but a job protection
11 program at the expense of the wellbeing of children
12 is unconscionable.

13 I just want to thank Chair Treyger for raising
14 the question about the need for collaboration and I
15 want to say, we decline to work with the
16 Administration on this transition because we don't
17 trust them and I hope that if you came into to today
18 thinking that you could trust them, what we learned
19 from this mornings testimony has helped you recover
20 from that. I think there is just way better places
21 for us to spend our money and as an advocacy
22 community, there is far better places for us to spend
23 our time. I am happy to answer any questions.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
25 hear from Nelson Mar.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

NELSON MAR: Good afternoon Chair Treyger and members of the City Council. Thank you Chair Treyger for holding this important hearing today and for your ongoing efforts to support students, families and staff in our public schools.

My name is Nelson Mar and I am an attorney at Legal Services NYC and I have been practicing education law for the last 20 years. I want to share my thoughts with the City Council today about Intro. 2188, sponsored by Council Member Ayala.

As this bill covers an issue very near and dear to my work over the last 20 years. Legal services NYC has been one of the few organizations that have provided free representation to students who face long term suspensions in New York City. From that work, we became quite intimately aware of the practice of schools using 911, calling 911 to respond to students who are experiencing emotional crisis. From this, Legal Services NYC took some of the first steps to publicly address this issue. In 2013, our office sued the DOE and the City of New York to stop the inappropriate use of emergency medical services by school officials.

1
2 Through that settlement of that case, we are able
3 to secure significant changes like school crisis
4 intervention plans. The promulgation of Chancellors
5 regulation A411 and targeted professional development
6 in crisis de-escalation. But unfortunately, we
7 didn't see the significant decrease in the number of
8 911 calls for students as evidence by the data and in
9 individual incidence referenced by Council Member
10 Ayala and others in today's hearing.

11 So, there is still much work to be done and
12 Intro. 2188 takes a good step in the right direction.
13 And it moves the school system further away from
14 using law enforcement response to a student who is
15 experiencing an emotional or behavioral crisis.

16 Whether these situations get de-escalated,
17 largely depends on how the adults respond to the
18 child who is experiencing an emotional crisis.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

20 NELSON MAR: Every adult in the New York City
21 public schools need to have these tools to respond
22 appropriately because a child in any school can
23 experience an emotional crisis at any time.

24 What is clear is that individuals trained through
25 the NYPD are trained to be law enforcement officers,

1
2 not mental health counselors and are not prepared to
3 respond in emotional crisis.

4 So, as Council Member Rosenthal noted, until all
5 NYPD officers are required to be social workers
6 first, their role in responding to children
7 experiencing emotional crisis should be highly
8 restricted as Intro. 2188 requires.

9 And as Ms. Varghese and many of the students
10 mentioned earlier, there needs to be greater
11 investment in social emotional learning and not
12 simply in a disjointed and siloed way that often
13 happens in the New York City Department of Education.
14 Rather, we need a whole school approach and one that
15 is centered on healing. Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
17 hear from Anna Arkin-Gallagher.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 ANNA ARKIN-GALLAGHER: Good afternoon. My name
20 is Anna Arkin-Gallagher and I am a Supervising
21 Attorney and Policy Council in the education practice
22 at Brooklyn Defender Services. Thank you for the
23 opportunity to testify today.

24 Our education unit provides legal representation
25 and informal advocacy to school aged clients and

1
2 parents of children in New York City schools. Many
3 of our clients are involved in the criminal legal or
4 family regulation systems. We believe that all of
5 our city schools, especially those that have
6 historically presented with the highest rates of
7 suspension, calls to EMS and arrests. Must implement
8 reforms related to their handling of student
9 misbehavior and treatment of students in emotional
10 distress. These reforms can and should draw
11 restorative justice practices and collaborative
12 problem solving that facilitate holistic engagement
13 with instances of conflict and misbehavior while
14 minimizing schools reliance on the police.

15 And they should be grounded in the recognition
16 that children should never be placed in handcuffs or
17 otherwise traumatized by their schools as a
18 consequence of disciplinary issues. The city needs
19 to see a financial shift away from law enforcement in
20 schools and a correspondingly substantial investment
21 in resources that help to develop students abilities
22 to engage in conflict resolution, emotional
23 regulation and critical thinking.

24 We support Intro. 2188. We support in particular
25 its mandated limits on the use of handcuffs and other

1
2 restraints for students in emotional crisis. It's
3 requirements that clinically trained mental health
4 staff play a role in responding to students
5 experiencing emotional distress. The boundaries it
6 places on when police officers can respond to
7 students in crisis and its emphasis on the use of de-
8 escalation strategies prior to any attempt to summon
9 law enforcement.

10 As a general matter, we believe that handcuffs
11 and other mechanical restraints have no place in
12 schools. These are children and we see time and time
13 again that handcuffs and other restraints are used
14 disproportionately on students of color and on Black
15 students in particular.

16 And so, we would prefer the bill contain an
17 absolute prohibition on handcuffing students. At the
18 same time however -

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 ANNA ARKIN-GALLAGHER: We appreciate that this
21 bill attempts to limit the use of these interventions
22 only to prevent imminent serious physical injury.
23 Although we support the general intent of this bill,
24 we are nevertheless concerned that it lacks any real
25 measures for accountability.

1
2 It is important that there be measures in place
3 to make sure the mandates of the bill are actually
4 followed and we will highlight some specific
5 recommendations in our written testimony.

6 Ultimately, it is critical that we make serious
7 strides towards recognizing that traumatizing
8 children through the use of restraints and law
9 enforcement presence in schools does not further
10 public safety or the health and wellbeing of New York
11 City's children and communities.

12 Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
14 hear from Crystal Baker-Burr.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 CRYSTAL BAKER-BURR: Thank you Chair Treyger for
17 the opportunity to speak today. My name is Crystal
18 Baker-Burr and I am an Education Attorney with the
19 Bronx Defenders.

20 Our school safety system is broken. At the Bronx
21 Defenders, I work with young people who have been
22 funneled into the school to prison pipeline. Young
23 people who have been failed by the school safety
24 system time and again. Many of our clients have been
25 pushed out of schools or have low attendance because

1
2 of the practices used by the NYPD school safety
3 agents and local precinct officers.

4 Kids do not want to go to jail. So, when their
5 schools look, feel and act like jail, many of them
6 simply stop going all together. Unfortunately,
7 that's how many students end up with the Bronx
8 Defender by their side. Kids in the Bronx deserve
9 better.

10 During the 2019-2020 school year, five of the top
11 nine schools with the highest rate of handcuff and
12 restraint usage were in the Bronx. The J.M. Rapport
13 school in the Bronx was the school with the most
14 frequent use of metal and Velcro restraints. J. M.
15 Rapport is a District 75 high school. Where a large
16 portion of students have a disability classification
17 of emotional disturbance and all students have IEP's.
18 J. M. Rapport should be the model that other schools
19 look to in order to learn about effective de-
20 escalation and restorative justice practices. How to
21 teach students coping skills and how to give students
22 tools and techniques to self-regulate and de-escalate
23 when they are becoming dysregulated or triggered.

24 But instead, J. M. Rapport has made harmful
25 practices such as metal and Velcro restraints the

1
2 norm. In the 2019-2020 school year, J. M. Rapport
3 made up close to 11 percent of the total number of
4 incidents in which metal and Velcro restraints were
5 used for child in crisis incidents across the entire
6 city. J. M. Rapport is also a very segregated school
7 in more ways than one. Serving a student population
8 that is 94 percent Black and Latinx and its
9 reflective use of punishment in carceral
10 interventions pushes far too many students into the
11 juvenile and criminal legal systems after not
12 receiving -

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 CRYSTAL BAKER-BURR: The appropriate special
15 education services or supports they are entitled to
16 deal with triggering events or impulsivity.
17 Handcuffing should not be a tool in the toolbox for
18 addressing emotional crisis in classrooms. Too often
19 in this system children aren't seen as children but
20 instead they are seen as problems. They are sent
21 from school directly to Lincoln Hospital for
22 emergency psychiatric evaluations for behaviors that
23 do not rise to the level of a child in crisis. Like
24 hiding under a desk and refusing to come out.

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2 We support Intro. 2188 because it addresses these
3 grave harms to children and because it will take
4 these practices out of the NYPD toolbox. Students in
5 emotional crisis should be met with de-escalation
6 techniques and restorative justice practices rather
7 than the dangerous and harmful practices used by many
8 school safety agents and school administrators.

9 Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That concludes the testimony
11 for this panel. Thank you. Seeing no Council Member
12 questions, I will call the next panel. Anthony
13 Singfield, Jasmilet Ortiz, Niaia Timmons and Salma
14 Hassan. After that panel, I will call Billy Council,
15 Chi Ossie[SP?], Melissa Clark, Alyssa Figueroa and
16 Sandra Mitchel. We will first hear from Anthony
17 Singfield.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 ANTHONY SINGFIELD: Good afternoon. Am I
20 audible?

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

22 ANTHONY SINGFIELD: Okay, great. I walk in
23 school - I walk in the school for my 5th period and
24 the officer tells me to wait. What are you here for?
25 What else could I be there for? But we have been

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2 there before at a different start time than other
3 students and because of that I had to announce my
4 business at my school as if I were attending or a
5 stranger to its mission. This was the language of my
6 school safety agents on a good day.

7 I will allow you to imagine our interactions when
8 students get in trouble. Imagine when students
9 return that aggression on bad days. Imagine when we
10 are told to strip ourselves of calculators and
11 scissors to quite metal detectors. These officers
12 jobs are to keep the school safe but that shouldn't
13 have confused their mission to protect the students
14 over the school. For the building is nothing without
15 its children. In 2021 researchers found that up to
16 one-third of New York City public high school
17 students experience depression.

18 The first thing I am introduced to at 8 a.m. in
19 the morning is an officer treating me like a
20 criminal, then every morning I would associate that
21 encounter with grief and I did. It will take
22 everything for someone to try and arrive with energy
23 to last the 8 hour day and it was. I am sure those
24 feelings aren't strangers to anyone in this room.

1
2 Why should we feed that energy with unprofessionalism
3 which does not give the safety our students need.

4 While we provide more chaos at a situation that
5 already has New York City students at risk. We
6 suggest a transition of power from NYPD to DOE.
7 However, we do not need a mere change of supervisors.
8 We need a change of protection. Reject Intro. 2211.
9 Give us mental health professionals. Fund more extra
10 curriculars for low income neighborhoods. Stop
11 criminalizing us. My name is Tony Singfield. I
12 represent Ya-Ya Networks mission and justice and
13 creativity. Help us by ensuring we have protectors
14 in our schools, not enforcers. Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
16 hear from Jasmilet Ortiz.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 JASMILET ORTIZ: Hi, my name is Jasmilet Ortiz.
19 I am a part of the Ya-Ya Network Action Committee. I
20 am a 12th grader at Gotham Professional Arts Academy.
21 One of the more fortunate schools that doesn't have
22 to go through the terrors of metal detectors.

23 A school that's predominantly Black and Latino
24 students with no metal detectors, wow, that's a
25 shocker. I say that because 100,000 New York City

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2 high schools go through metal detectors every
3 morning. Half of Black high school students in the
4 city go through it, 38 percent Latinx students do as
5 well. I wonder if you guys actually stop and think
6 how those students might feel. Saying metal
7 detectors are for our safety. Is it really or are
8 you guys just threatened by the color of our skin?

9 We come to school to learn, not to be
10 investigated or feel criminalized. While reading
11 legislation 2211, I didn't see anything that changes
12 the metal detectors or how scanning is done. Just
13 because school safety agents won't be run by the
14 NYPD, it doesn't really change a thing. It's a title
15 change. It doesn't change policing in schools. If
16 you really think about it, metal detectors are still
17 part of policing.

18 Maybe that didn't run through your mind. We
19 don't feel safe having to go through metal detectors.
20 Metal detectors cause students to be late and miss
21 out on important information. Is there education
22 even important? If it was important than metal
23 detectors would be out of our schools.

24 I didn't know that metal detectors were a part of
25 our education. It just teaches us about systematic

1
2 racism. Only 14 percent of White students go through
3 metal detectors. This isn't a safety issue, it's a
4 race issue. When coming into school buildings,
5 students want to feel welcome not feeling as if they
6 are walking into a prison. Another thing is the cost
7 of policing in schools. They take away most of the
8 schools funds. With that being said, the money spent
9 on metal detectors and school safety agents could be
10 used to hire social works and guidance counselors.
11 Something New York City schools actually need.

12 Us students want to be able to succeed. To be
13 able to grow and to be able to be happy in our
14 schools. We don't need or want policing in our
15 schools. The title isn't enough. That's why we are
16 saying no onto 2211. Thank you.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
19 hear from Salma Hassan.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 SALMA HASSAN: Hello, my name is Salma Hassan. I
22 am here with the Ya-Ya Network to address the
23 proposed legislation regarding school safety agents.
24 While the proposed legislation appears to take minor
25 strides in the effort to provide safe for schools,

1
2 the fight for the one and two Black and one and three
3 Latinx students who must go through metal detectors
4 and endure heavy policing every day is not over.

5 I attended two different predominantly White high
6 schools and in my four years at both institutions, I
7 have had to go through random metal detectors for
8 about 8 days of my time in the DOE. That is 712 days
9 less than the 100,000 mostly Black and Brown students
10 that are required to go through metal detectors
11 daily. 712 days where I did not have to line up
12 outside of school, have my bags searched, take off my
13 shoes and belt and make sure to throw away my glass
14 bottle before I enter the building I was expected to
15 learn at.

16 I wonder why across New York City some of my
17 Black and Brown peers are expected to do this every
18 day for 720 days. Throughout this meeting I have
19 heard a lot about policies to change methods of
20 policing but no change to one of the most
21 traumatizing policing practices in schools, metal
22 detectors.

23 There has been no accountability from the NYPD or
24 DOE that the scanning policies in place are
25 ineffective and that they criminalize students.

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2 Metal detectors disproportionately effect and
3 traumatize students of color.

4 Transferring the jurisdiction of the school
5 safety to the DOE is not enough to eliminate the
6 space for policing and bias in schools. Intro. 2211
7 fails to address the demand to defund school
8 policing. You are once again still putting money
9 into the pocket of an officer, rather than a
10 counselor or social worker. I see a guarantee to
11 change jurisdiction but I do not see a guarantee in
12 safety and mental health resources.

13 Students are still being policed and surveilled
14 and nothing is being done to change it. How can a
15 student feel welcome in a place where they must be
16 scanned to enter? We cannot erase the bias of
17 employees unless you eliminate the space you create
18 for it to happen. That begins with police free
19 schools and the removal of metal detectors and the
20 investment into mental health resources. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
22 the testimony for this panel. The next panel is
23 going to be Melissa Clark, Alyssa Figueroa and Sandra
24 Mitchel. After that panel, we will call Katherine
25

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2 Rojas, Judy Chen, Brendon Gillet and Nuala O'Doherty
3 Naranjo. We will first start with Melissa Clark.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

5 MELISSA CLARK: Good afternoon Committee Chair
6 Treyger and members of the Committee on Education. I
7 want to first thank you all for holding this very
8 important hearing on the ways in which police
9 interact with our students and the safety and
10 security of our public schools.

11 My name is Melissa Clark and I am the Youth
12 Justice and Child Welfare Policy Associate at
13 Children's Defense Fund. At Children's Defense Fund
14 New York, our mission is to ensure every child
15 receives a healthy start, fair start and moral start
16 in life so that they are able to achieve a successful
17 passage into adulthood with the help of caring
18 families and communities.

19 We provide a strong, effective and independent
20 voice for all children who cannot vote, lobby or
21 speak for themselves. As a member of Dignity in
22 Schools New York, Solutions not Suspension Coalition
23 and NYC Coalition, we work with students and other
24 advocates to create an equitable system for all New
25 York City youth.

1
2 We envision a system where our young people can
3 thrive free of criminalization, harmful discipline
4 practices and police. Now more than ever and the
5 recent history of our city is a critical time for our
6 students and families.

7 It is imperative to the social and emotional
8 development of our young people that we remove police
9 from situations where students are experiencing
10 emotional crisis. To bridge this gap, it will
11 require a significant investment to hire and deploy
12 therapeutic support staff in schools focusing first
13 on schools with the fewest supportive staff and
14 resources in communities who need it the most.

15 Until these things are possible, we believe that
16 a reform said in Intro. 2188 are a step in the right
17 direction. Decentering police from crisis response
18 and protecting students from police practices that
19 traumatize children.

20 We support Intro. 2188 because it recognizes that
21 school safety personnel should not be responding to
22 students in emotional crisis. Thank you for your
23 leadership and for your consideration of this
24 testimony.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
3 hear from Alyssa Figueroa.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

5 ALYSSA FIGUEROA: My name is Alyssa Figueroa and
6 I am the Coalition Coordinator of the Urban Youth
7 Collaborative. The Urban Youth Collaborative is a
8 coalition made up of youth leaders from Sisters and
9 Brothers United in the Bronx, Future of Tomorrow in
10 Cypress Hills Brooklyn and Make the Road New York.

11 We have worked together since 2004 to fight for
12 racial and social justice in schools. I am
13 testifying today on behalf of this coalition in
14 opposition to Intro. 2211. I am going to start my
15 testimony with a statistic.

16 Black and Latinx students in New York City make
17 up 90 percent of all youth arrests, issued summons
18 and juvenile reports. 90 percent, it is shameful
19 that New York City has allowed a racist school
20 policing system to play out for decades. Intro. 2211
21 will not transform the system. In fact, the bill
22 actually takes us backward in our fight to end the
23 criminalization of Black and Brown students.

24 Intro. 2211 legislates the Mayor's plan to
25 transfer to school safety divisions more than 5,000

1
2 agents from the NYPD to the Department of Education.
3 Putting SSA's in different uniforms will not undue
4 the engrained mentality in training that results in
5 racist, bias and policing.

6 Leaked disciplinary records have shown that this
7 bias has resulted in school safety agents sexually,
8 verbally and physically abusing students of color.
9 It shouldn't take records to prove what young people
10 have been saying for decades. Police in schools do
11 not make them feel safer, yet Intro. 211 will invest
12 DOE funding and resources to supposedly retrain
13 SSA's.

14 Extensive research has found that retraining
15 police does not undue implicit racial bias and we
16 have seen with our own eyes that retraining police
17 has not led to less trauma and harm in our
18 communities. Young people should not be subject to
19 being guinea pigs and what will be a failed
20 experiment. This is not to mention that this
21 retraining would likely cost hundreds of millions of
22 dollars in addition to the \$445 million already
23 allotted to the school safety division in the Mayor's
24 Preliminary Budget. Enough with the investment in
25 SSA's.

1
2 There are more school safety agents than guidance
3 counselors and school social workers combined,
4 sending a clear message to Black and Brown students
5 at New York City, rather police them than invest in
6 their futures. Numerous cities have already taken to
7 completely removing police from schools, including
8 Oakland, Seattle, Portland, Rochester and Denver.

9 Intro. 2211 will make New York City the first
10 district to simply fold the division of the police
11 department into schools. Making it fall even more
12 behind in the national movement to end racist
13 institutions. Intro. 2211 was crafted quickly,
14 behind closed doors with absolutely no input from
15 students. Young people are clear that they want
16 police free schools. The city should engage them so
17 we can collectively chart a path forward for our
18 schools beyond policing.

19 It is for these reasons that we ask you to vote
20 no on Intro. 2211 and instead work with us on real
21 solutions that will make New York City a more
22 equitable place to live, learn and grow. Thank you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Thank you Alyssa.
24 Next, we will be hearing from Sandra Mitchel.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

1
2 SANDRA MITCHEL: Blessings and good afternoon.
3 Thank you Committee Chair Treyger and just making
4 time for us to be able to speak our hearts and thank
5 you all members of the Council as well as all the
6 community advocates.

7 My name is Sandra Mitchel and I am providing
8 testimony today on behalf of the New Settlement
9 Parent Action Committee, which is a parent led Bronx
10 organization where I am a leader and we are also a
11 member organization with the dignity in schools
12 coalition and parts of the Healing Center Schools
13 Working Group.

14 As a Bronx parent and a Mental Health Advocate,
15 it is clear that the City of New York needs to invest
16 in counselors, not cops. It is time for New York
17 City to reinvest in the highest quality education
18 that respects the dignity of all students and pursues
19 restorative approaches to conflict and harm. It is
20 time for reinvestment in supportive staff positions
21 and continuous professional development. We are
22 calling for funding to have Black and Brown New
23 Yorkers for jobs that support young peoples social,
24 emotional and mental health.
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2 It is time we need to hire necessary personnel
3 such as restorative justice coordinators,
4 paraprofessionals, community outreach staff, nurses,
5 social workers and guidance counselors. It is time
6 we need to invest in a new culturally responsive
7 Healing Center School curriculum.

8 It is time we need to invest in the policies and
9 procedures that would encompass the Healing Center
10 School model, coupled with sustained and I say
11 sustained, etched in stone, sustained culturally
12 responsive supportive education at its core. It is
13 time all school staff need to receive professional
14 development and receive ongoing workshops and trauma
15 responsive education practices. It's [INAUDIBLE
16 1:52:38]. It is time New York City schools to know
17 and to understand that New York City schools have
18 failed our students from PreK to high school and
19 college decade after decade after multiple decades.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 SANDRA MITCHEL: I will close in saying it is
22 time to reinvest in our public schools and it's the
23 right thing to do. We must protect, empower, inspire
24 and nurture the genius in our New York City students.
25 We should be investing in counselors not cops. I

1
2 thank you for your listening ear and I hope that it
3 pierced your heart and pierced your soul, so that you
4 will be able to do what is right before God almighty.
5 Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Chair do you have
7 any remarks for this panel?

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I just want to thank them
9 for their very powerful testimony. Quite powerful
10 stuff. I truly appreciate it. Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and seeing that no
12 Council Members have their hand raised, I am going to
13 go ahead and call our next panel Michael Perez,
14 Robert Malik, Althea Eboh, Kim West and John Felci.
15 We will now begin with Michael. Michael Perez.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Just bear with us one moment
18 please. Well, we will start with John Felci, some of
19 our registered panelists dropped off. So, we will
20 just start with John Felci. Can we please start with
21 John Felci? Thank you.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: John, please accept the
24 unmute. I apologize, we will turn it back to John
25 but we are going to turn to Nuala O'Doherty Naranjo.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You are still muted.

NUALA O'DOHERTY NARANJO: There, is that better?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Yes.

NUALA O'DOHERTY NARANJO: Okay, so thank you Council Member Treyger and the Education Committee. My name is Nuala O'Doherty Naranjo. I would just like to fight a report from the ground. I am a proud mother of five, a grandmother of two. All future, current or a public school graduate here. I believe we have great local public schools here in Queens which is my area of knowledge.

I have been a mother, a PTA President, an SLT member and now a CEC member for District 30. I have been in and out of our great local public schools for almost 15 years and I am constantly in and out of the schools here in Northeast Queens. But most importantly, I want to reiterate Council Member Treyger's point, that the Chief educator in the building, that's the principal. They must be in charge of hiring, firing and managing all the employees in the building, including the school safety officers. Everyone in the building must

1
2 report to the principal because education has to be
3 the focus of everything that goes on in that
4 building.

5 Secondly, we must recognize the positive impact
6 many SSA's have in our schools. For example, one
7 school I worked with, the SSA runs a school. When
8 you walk in the SSA knows whats going on. Who is in,
9 who is out, what special programs are going on.
10 Where are the principals, where the assistant
11 principal is. What school programs are on that day.

12 Well, many school safety agents have informally
13 become adult confidants of students, they are often a
14 helpful adult in the building but they should not be
15 security guards. I am not against the individuals
16 but about the role that's being defined for them by
17 this bureaucracy. For too long, many of our school
18 safety agents have become receptionists. When a
19 school receptions job is important, it is the face of
20 the school for so many people. Both the parents and
21 the public. This is the first face they see. It
22 should be a parent coordinator or a similar person
23 who basically welcomes people to the school.

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2 In an immigrant community like mine in Queens,
3 the blue NYPD uniform causes a lot of concern, rather
4 than comfort. Removing just the logo isn't enough.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 NUALA O'DOHERTY NARANJO: It's something but not
7 enough. As a member of District 30, most of my
8 experiences in PreK to 8 schools and in fact in
9 Queens are biggest safety issues are actually traffic
10 safety. But the SSA's aren't allowed to go outside
11 and deal with those issues. I echo the call for the
12 positive reverse role models in our schools but they
13 should not be in an NYPD uniform. They need to be
14 counselors, social workers and positive role models.
15 We can do much better than these bills. Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Thank you, now we
17 will hear from Althea Eboh.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

19 ALTHEA EBOH: Good afternoon, my name is Althea
20 Eboh and I have been working in New York City schools
21 for the last 17 years. I am currently a Dean Student
22 Advocate at Chelsea CTE High School. Prior to that,
23 I was a Dean and Teacher at the George Washington
24 Educational Campus in Washington Heights.

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2 I am also the mother of two young men who have
3 graduated from public high schools in the city. I am
4 here to speak in opposition to Intro. 2211, which
5 will intrench policing in New York City schools and
6 suck up hundred of millions of dollars that should
7 instead be invested in what will lead to true safety
8 and the wellbeing of our students.

9 The hiring of counselors, social workers, nurses
10 and school aids who prioritize the humanity of our
11 youth and the implementation of restorative justice
12 programming access to DOE schools.

13 While at George Washington, students were met at
14 the beginning of each day by school safety agents who
15 ran the metal detectors. It was always clear that
16 the SSA's sole purpose was enforcement. Getting
17 students into the building with speed. They were
18 definitely not there to make the students feel good
19 about heading into school. There was always
20 shouting, take off your belts, take your shoes off
21 and this is what shaped the beginning of students
22 days.

23 Young people get into fights, it happens. At the
24 schools I have taught at, the trend was young people
25 get upset. SSA's come, SSA's call NYPD and there was

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2 a lack of restorative practices. This is not how you
3 create a safe space for learning. This is how you
4 dehumanize children and make them hate school.
5 Transferring SSA's to NYPD to the DOE will not erase
6 the verbal and physical harm that this can afflict on
7 students. At my current school at Chelsea, things
8 are different because we practice restorative
9 practices - restorative justice programming in our
10 school. If an argument happens, students are given
11 space and time to cool off and we have a circle
12 process where we discuss what has happened and make
13 agreements with each other on how to address the
14 problem.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 ALTHEA EBOH: These restorative practices are
17 very successful in mediating conflicts but our school
18 still lacks resources we need to fully support
19 students. Our student population is largely Black
20 and Latinx. Students deal everyday with trauma of
21 systemic racism in class and equity. Conflict most
22 often arises when this trauma is triggered. Students
23 need staff members who really know them and spaces
24 where they can go to talk things out before things
25 get to a crisis level. But our social worker only

1
2 comes to our school three days a week and has another
3 school they go to.

4 My time is up but that's my statement today.
5 Thank you for listening to me.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will now hear
7 from our next panelist Kim West.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

9 KIM WEST: Good afternoon. My name is Kim West.
10 I am a parent, a teacher always and a Retired School
11 Administrator. I am a child advocate that believes
12 in justice and equity for all in a safe environment.
13 I am one that believes that the emotional state of an
14 individual impacts on his or her overall development.
15 This applies to both child and adult and impacts on
16 decisions that he or she makes in life.

17 On February 3rd, the MBSK unit District 29,
18 hosted a session entitled, "Let's Talk at my Table."
19 The session brought youth and police officers
20 together. There were very deep open discussions,
21 concerns and questions expressed by both elementary
22 and adolescent students. They spoke from their
23 hearts. The fear of police was well in their
24 thoughts. They asked why certain things happen.

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2 We know that these concerns are not equitably
3 shared by youth in all communities. Some kids will
4 never be engulfed in these fears. If issues
5 surrounding ones thoughts and feelings as a child are
6 not resolved, they become crucial factors in the
7 evolution of that child into adulthood impacting
8 future decisions he or she makes.

9 As we know social media is here to stay and
10 looking at listening to some of the many voices that
11 I have heard, I too say bringing 5,000 police officer
12 from Department A -

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 KIM WEST: And planting them in B is not the
15 answer. If there is a cancer in A, that cancer comes
16 to B. We need to reimagine schools. We need
17 effective support. We need civic understandings for
18 youth, restorative practices, cultural
19 responsiveness, emersed as nourishment and armor for
20 every child. Especially Black and Brown children who
21 the research shows and we know experience much more
22 than others.

23 For years, schools have begged for guidance
24 counselors. Basic things that they should have. Me
25 as a parent, I have a son. I want him to live and

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2 thrive as a normal child. I don't want him to fear.
3 I want him to just to blossom, which is something
4 that I know most parents want.

5 The types of fears kids are experiencing, they
6 should not. Let's reimagine our school system. We
7 need safe environments. We need partnerships. We
8 need collaborations. Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I will now turn
10 it back to John.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we will come back to
13 John after the next panel to see if he has unmuted
14 himself. So, the next panel will be Katherine Rojas,
15 Diana Paloma from Big Brothers Big Sisters of New
16 York City, Sandra Sanchez from the Ya-Ya Network and
17 Kaiser. We will first begin with Katherine.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

19 KATHERINE ROJAS: Hi everyone, my name is Kathy
20 Rojas. I am a product of public schooling. I grew
21 up in Queens. I am now a teacher in Queens. I have
22 been working in the public school system for about
23 uhm, probably like 7 years. Anyways, all of this to
24 say that on both ends of the spectrum, both as a
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2 student and now a teacher, I really think this is to
3 be honest, a smack in the face.

4 I mean, our students right now through COVID are
5 facing food insecurity. They are facing housing
6 insecurity. Our schools are having their budgets
7 cut. I work in a school in Elmhurst Queens that just
8 saw \$665,000 cut this year, this school year. We
9 don't have enough money for teachers. We don't have
10 enough money to literally feed our kids. Our youth
11 are struggling with employments. SYEP got cut. I
12 mean the list goes on and instead of funding all of
13 those things, you are going to tell me that you
14 prefer to spend millions of dollars on a budget to a
15 force that has already proven to be oppressive and
16 racist.

17 If we look at who is targeted by these school
18 police officers, 89 percent of the people stopped by
19 police officers in schools that are reprimanding
20 them, are a Black and Latino students. Have you not
21 been listening to the protest movement? To the
22 youth? All of this summer saying time and time and
23 time again that they do not trust police. Police are
24 not trained to deal to counsel with students. Having
25 more people in the school yelling at them to go into

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2 classes does not feel comfortable for them. It is
3 not a safe place for them. What we need to be doing
4 is divesting from police and really investing in what
5 our students need. More trained counselors, more
6 teachers, more job opportunities, SYEP, after school
7 programs.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 KATHERINE ROJAS: Okay. So, this is really - I
10 can't even believe that this bill is on the table.
11 It's really, really a smack in the face to both our
12 youth, to our teachers, to everyone that has been
13 working so hard to provide the necessary resources to
14 our kids coming out of pocket and now you are going
15 to give this funding to an oppressive institution. I
16 just, it's really ridiculous. Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we will be
18 hearing from Diana.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 DIANA PALOMO: Thank you to the Education
21 Committee Chair Treyger and members of the Committee
22 for holding a hearing on school safety and security.
23 My name is Diana Palomo and I am Bigs Program Manager
24 for Big Brothers Big Sisters in New York City. I am
25 here to express support for Intro. 2211, sponsored by

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2 Council Member Constantinides. Which will ensure
3 that the NYPD be fully removed from school safety and
4 that school safety personnel will be retrained with a
5 focus on restorative justice, child youth development
6 and de-escalation.

7 Our organizations mission is to ignite the
8 biggest potential in our youth. In 2017 we created
9 the Bigs and Blue Initiative with the goal of
10 building trust between officers and the community.
11 Our group mentoring model allows for officers to
12 mentor youth during the sessions with a curriculum
13 focused on trust building, leadership skill
14 development and community engagement.

15 As a Program Manager, I witnessed the impact
16 officers can have in the youth life if they are being
17 presented as mentors and not merely authoritative.
18 The perspectives change as littles create bonds with
19 officers rooted in trust and mutual respect.

20 Our organization is committed to advance and
21 diversity, equity and inclusion. As such, we created
22 the bias awareness training, provide youth
23 development training in peer mentoring spaces for
24 officers to share best practices applicable in their
25 communities. In addition, we developed a set of new

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2 program focused on accountability including youth
3 first. Our mentors are expected to uphold the values
4 of Big Brother Big Sisters for New York City. Be in
5 good standing with the NYPD, attend enrollment
6 meetings and engage in youth development training.
7 Littles get to learn about the officers, build trust,
8 create positive relationships and officers understand
9 the complexities of youth development.

10 Our hope is that these relationship persist
11 outside of the classrooms. That our littles go back
12 to their community see their local officers as their
13 mentors and a trusted adult. And for our officers to
14 see the community from its own perspective and
15 respect each member –

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 DIANA PALOMA: For them to learn from the youth
18 and to offer real support and guidance rooted in
19 addressing youth needs. Thank you for your efforts
20 and support of this bill. We look forward to
21 continue to provide safe spaces for our youth to
22 ignite their biggest potential.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and thank you
24 Kalima for taking over. Next, we will hear from
25 Sandra Sanchez followed by Kaiser.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

SANDRA SANCHEZ: 91,114 New York City high school students go through metal detectors every morning. 48 percent of those students are Black, 38 percent of those high school students are Hispanic, including myself and 14 percent of those high school students are Asian and White. Not discriminating they say right but we see the huge difference in percentages. And the reason for these metal detectors is believed to be for safety but what if I told you that is not the reality?

What if I told you I felt it was more like a prison? What if I told you I felt like I was being called a criminal? Are these to prevent shootings or is this another way of telling students of color that they are the problem? That they are dangerous? Answer that for me. Another way of saying we don't trust you. Are we the problem? Or is it really the way the school system was built?

Spending \$1,000 through \$30,000 on one metal detector when we could be using that money oh, for I don't know, maybe counselors, maybe looking for more mental health resources. But safety first right? Why not try and help your students stay happy and

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motivated? Why not make them feel like they matter? Why not talk to them to see how they are doing? But instead, we need to make sure they aren't carrying a knife or gun. It's not like we are still children. It's not like we still get scared. Oh wait, that's right, we do.

How would you feel if you got stopped for having a bobby pin on your head? How would you feel if you were stopped to take them all off in front of everyone? Because that is what happened to me and let me tell you something, it's embarrassing. It's shameful, it's dehumanizing.

With that, I have one request. Let's get metal detectors out of schools, not just the police. Let's break the system. Let's rebuild it. Let's start a conversation among each other. Let's make bigger change. A change no one will forget.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

SANDRA SANCHEZ: My name is Sandra. I am a student from Gotham Collaborative High School, as well as a member of the Ya-Ya Network and I stand against the school systems to have metal detectors and police in them.

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2 Also, to add on to that, I still have classmates
3 trained to learn English, who just moved to New York
4 City. I still have classmates trying to keep up with
5 the microlearning and you are worried about spending
6 money on some police and metal detectors. Are you
7 kidding? I have helped my classmates out of the own
8 kindness of my heart and I will continue to help my
9 teachers translate and work for them and help them
10 succeed even if you won't. And I will make sure they
11 graduate and I will be the person they can come speak
12 to when they have no one. I will do the job you
13 should be doing. Thank you for your time.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
15 hear from Kaiser.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 KAISER: Hi, I am Kaiser I am a Teacher at MS50
18 in District 14 in Brooklyn and I am on the Steering
19 Committee of Black Lives Matter at New York City
20 schools. I am here to voice my opposition to Intro.
21 2211 in chorus with young people across the city who
22 took time on their vacation to advocate for
23 themselves at this meeting. I want to thank them.

24 I grew up in West Chester and there weren't any
25 school safety officers in my public school. The

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2 budget was instead spent on multiple full time
3 guidance counselors and social workers, increased
4 teaching staff, so we could have small class sizes
5 and access to varied sports and arts offerings.

6 These are the things that create a supportive,
7 safe, nurturing atmosphere where students feel valued
8 and loved and protected and that is how we can
9 prevent harm from occurring in our schools instead of
10 reacting to it in a way that in fact perpetuates the
11 violent cycle, called the school to prison pipeline.

12 We know that this is how thousands of suburban,
13 White, rich schools around the country function.
14 Resources are allocated for support rather than
15 surveillance and punishment and its racist and
16 classist to presume that this should not be the case
17 in a school system with mostly Black and Brown low
18 income students. If anything, New York City public
19 schools should be spending disproportionately more on
20 counseling staff and on enrichment programs compared
21 to a school with mostly White population. Because we
22 do know that our society failings and oppression of
23 poor people and people of color can cause them to be
24 disengaged in school.

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School safety officers do not help this problem. They do not make students feel safe in their school community. As the students themselves have told you repeatedly today. There are schools in my district where there is a documented history of racist rhetoric and actions by teachers and administrators and when these concerns are raised publicly, the Black parents seeking support are yelled at and silenced by people in power, including the Chancellor.

It's an insult to them to put the control of school safety agents into the hands of these same racist administrators and then claim that this will somehow keep their students safe.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

KAISER: Please vote no on Intro. 2211.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes testimony for this panel. The next panel that we will hear from will be Kim Famous from Healing Centered Schools, Hope Newton Center for Family Representation and Spring Dawson-McClure from Teachers Unite.

Following that panel will be our last panel, which will be Naomi Sharlin, Dominic Repole, Timothy

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2 Metzger, Rama Elmhass and Bonnie Massey. We will
3 first hear from Kim Famous.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 KIM FAMOUS: Hello, I am Kim Famous. I am a
6 Parent Advocate and the current Bronx Borough
7 President Appointee for CEC 11 in the Northeast
8 Bronx. I am also a member of the Outreach Committee
9 of Healing Centered Schools.

10 We have been talking all day about school safety
11 agents and I believe that there should be a shift in
12 this watchdog mindset and instead, provide protection
13 and true safety and security for all our students. I
14 live in a predominantly White middle class
15 neighborhood where my daughter went to elementary
16 school and they also have middle school there. Every
17 day I was greeted in a friendly matter by the school
18 safety agent who knew everyone by name and also whose
19 parent belonged to which child.

20 I have attended you know, meetings at Truman High
21 School, which is less than a mile away where they
22 have metal detectors and have personally experienced
23 indignant treatment by the school safety officers
24 there and cannot imagine what it would feel like for
25 a child to have to go through that experience daily.

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2 Healing Centered Schools has a model that aims to
3 create an environment in which school safety agents
4 are not needed. With the increase in mental health
5 workers, situations can be de-escalated before they
6 become physically violent or restrictive techniques
7 are used. Every situation is not life or death.

8 Healing Centered Schools has a roadmap in which they
9 promote the transformation teams that can be formed
10 within schools to include a holistic comprehensive
11 approach with dealing with the communities, the
12 administration of the school, community-based
13 organizations, teachers and input from parent
14 advocates and families.

15 This is a collaborative effort in which we should
16 all be aiming to have within the school system.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

18 KIM FAMOUS: School safety agents need to be
19 aware the implications of their actions. They are
20 not just managing individual incidences. Children as
21 young as 8-years-old are being suspended. A child
22 who is suspended is twice as likely to become a drop
23 out and once a drop out is 8 times more likely to be
24 incarcerated. These are all facts that should be

1
2 made aware and public knowledge so the people can be
3 aware of the school to prison pipeline.

4 We have heard examples of several major cities,
5 although not as big as New York City. Oakland,
6 Seattle and LA mentioned by Kenyatte Reid are all
7 examples of having school safety agents removed from
8 the school system having positive results and having
9 the retraining of the school staff and social
10 emotional awareness.

11 Again, this should be the goal for all of us to
12 have collaborative efforts for mental health and
13 safety for everyone involved.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
15 hear from Hope Newton, the Center for Family
16 Representation.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 HOPE NEWTON: Good afternoon. Thank you Chair
19 Treyger, members of the Education Committee for the
20 opportunity to speak on what is on every parents
21 mind. My name is Hope Newton, I am an impacted
22 parent, advocate with the Center for Family
23 Representations Policy and Education Advocacies team.

24 We represent 2,400 parents in abuse and neglect
25 proceedings in Queens and Manhattan. The parents we

1
2 represent face a variety of allegations including
3 educational neglect, which have intersections with
4 the issues that we are talking about today.

5 I also serve on both the Steering and Outreach
6 Committee for the Healing Centered Schools Working
7 Group. Today, we are here to talk about a safe
8 environment where our children feel psychologically,
9 physically, emotionally safe to learn and grow.

10 School safety agents train for 17 weeks at the
11 NYPD Police Academy. They learn about law, police
12 behavior, police and behavioral science. They learn
13 how to write summonses, detain and arrest with deadly
14 force if necessary. School, teachers, principals,
15 social workers, guidance counselors and
16 administrators go to college for at least five years.
17 They study everything from child psychology, child
18 development, early education, leadership counseling
19 to special education and more. A graduate degree is
20 required with field placements to apply what they
21 have learned. When you give – I don't understand why
22 you would give those with the least amount of
23 education and skills the responsibility to resolve
24 problems for children, instead of those who have the
25 ability and the training to do it. To deal with

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2 solving issues related to child development conflict
3 resolution and de-escalation practices.

4 It does not create a healthy environment. It
5 does not create an environment of safety. It creates
6 an environment that normalizes criminalization of
7 school based conflicts, behavioral issues. It does
8 not create an environment of physical, psychological
9 and emotional safety.

10 As the NYP Division of Safety Budget continues to
11 increase, the New York City Department of Education
12 school budget for guidance counselors, social workers
13 continues to decrease. So, when we say defund the
14 police, we mean stop increasing the budget for police
15 trained school safety agents to handcuff, detain and
16 write summonses and increase the number of school
17 guidance counselors and social workers.

18 We have a model. There is an evidence based
19 proven practice of a holistic healing centered
20 approach that centers the wellness of student and
21 staff needs. That needs to be implemented to address
22 the challenges the New York City Department of
23 Education, children, families and our communities
24 will face on the other side of COVID. When children
25 return to school after more than a year with limited

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2 social, emotional connection of families and peers.
3 A healing centered approach that's inclusive of input
4 from families, parents, administrators and the
5 community is what we need to move forward to serve
6 our children, preparing them for success as opposed
7 to preparing them for prison. Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
9 hear from Spring Dawson-McClure.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

11 SPRING DAWSON-MCCLURE: Good afternoon, thank
12 you. I am a White parent raising White children. I
13 am psychologist that's part of a team who has been
14 working in collaboration with New York City school
15 leaders, teachers, staff and parents for the past 15
16 years. And I am an Assistant Professor of Population
17 Health at NYU Langone. These views are my own.

18 I am here today to urge you to reject Intro.
19 2211. I stand with students, parents, community
20 leaders and Teachers Unite in calling for divestment
21 from policing and investment in restorative
22 approaches to conflict and harm.

23 In calling for funding to hire Black and Brown
24 New Yorkers into jobs that support young peoples
25 social, emotional and mental health. In sharing

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2 responsibility for transforming systems of
3 oppression.

4 To support your decision, I offer some takeaways
5 about the research evidence on school police officers
6 but here is the bottom line, what you have heard
7 today from young people is absolutely born out in
8 study after study after study. Staffing schools with
9 police has substantial, harmful consequences and
10 there is no evidence that this costly strategy
11 prevents school shootings as it is often framed.
12 Research involving interviews with officers across
13 the country finds that those in schools with more
14 White students were primarily concerned about
15 intruders or other external threats.

16 Whereas officers in schools with more students of
17 color viewed the primary threat as students
18 themselves. Stationing officers in schools is a
19 setup for Black and Brown children. Creating
20 conditions for typical child behavior to be
21 criminalized via arrest in juvenile court, rather
22 than addressed with developmentally appropriate
23 consequences and supports. Rigorous research
24 documents that increasing the presence of officers in
25 middle and high schools increases the use of

1
2 exclusionary discipline. Which disproportionately
3 removes Black and Brown children from classroom
4 learning, diminishes their connection to teachers and
5 hinders academic skills and wellbeing.

6 There is robust evidence substantiating
7 alternative practices and policies -

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 SPRING DAWSON-MCCLURE: That ensure safety and
10 support childrens learning and development. I urge
11 you to take courageous and bold action to reimagine
12 school safety. You may be tempted to downplay the
13 evidence and call for more time to study this issue
14 but what if this policy has gained far more momentum
15 than its evidence? Where does the burden of proof
16 lay? At what point did taskforce become sell
17 tactics. Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and I see some
19 other people have come on. So, the next panel and
20 our last panel before we do a wrap up that I will be
21 calling is Naomi Sharlin, Timothy Metzger and John
22 Felci. We will start with Timothy Metzger.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 TIMOTHY METZGER: Good afternoon. Thank you for
25 the opportunity to testify here today. My name is

1
2 Tim Metzger. I am a Social Education Teacher at
3 Brooklyn Hunters High School and a Member of Teachers
4 Unite. Which is an organization of New York City
5 public school and looking to dismantle the school to
6 prison pipeline.

7 I am here today to urge Council Members to reject
8 Intro. 2211, a bill that would codify the transfer of
9 the NYPD school division to DOE. We need to build
10 schools and communities that address the needs of
11 young people and frame safety and reducing harm
12 rather than punishing behavior.

13 My school was a transfer school and we work hard
14 to build a community where our students feel safe and
15 can plan success. We are able to do this in part
16 because of our partnership with Good Shepherd
17 Services which provides counselors for all students.
18 I believe all schools should have these kinds of
19 supports for all students. It is unacceptable that
20 they wouldn't hire more SSA's at this time when
21 schools need counselors and support staff to create
22 safe and successful schools.

23 I fully support schools looking like their
24 communities and hiring Black and Brown staff across
25 all parts of the school community. However, SSA's

1
2 are among the worse paid positions in schools. I was
3 shocked when I realized that those SSA's at my school
4 who were most connected to our students and went
5 above and beyond often left and become cops because
6 they were paid poorly and there was no pathway to
7 career advancement as an SSA.

8 The City Council should not be fighting to
9 maintain policing roles but should be investing in
10 the creation of a supportive school positions that
11 pay Black and Brown workers well, which don't require
12 a bachelor's degree and which do require experience
13 in restorative justice and de-escalation. Positions
14 like Restorative Justice Coordinators, they are
15 professionals used as the kids community outreach
16 coordinators and parent coordinators.

17 Reformative restorative justice isn't just a
18 program that enables cultural shift that needs
19 funding and time. The funding simply to retrain one
20 of the largest police departments in the country, the
21 NYPD school division is an expensive, ineffective and
22 misguided move that won't change the deeply embedded
23 culture of policing.

24 It is time for us to be serious about change that
25 can make our schools safer. Just shifting

1
2 responsibility from NYPD to DOE with no change in
3 philosophy or commitment to dismantle racist systems
4 will only perpetuate the trauma –

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 TIMOTHY METZGER: Thank you for your time and
7 consideration.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
9 hear from Naomi Sharlin.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 NAOMI SHARLIN: Hi, thank you for the
12 opportunity. My name is Naomi, I am a Teacher in a
13 high school in the Bronx. I have been a teacher in
14 New York City public schools for over ten years in
15 three different boroughs, all in Title 1 schools.
16 And in my experience, schools struggle to meet
17 students social and emotional needs. Schools don't
18 have the resources to meet the needs of our students.

19 Teachers and again, I am sure I am echoing things
20 that other people have said but teachers often take
21 on this role of being a social worker, being a
22 therapist which you know, in a way we are happy to do
23 but in other ways we are absolutely not trained for.
24 And so, it's not fair to us and it's also not fair to

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2 students who are being shortchanged in terms of
3 having their needs met.

4 I have recently started working at a school that
5 does have a robust social work department and its
6 been really striking to me to see the difference in
7 the classroom and that I am able to do so much more
8 in the classroom now on Zoom.

9 But I am able to do so much more instructionally
10 because my students social and emotional needs are so
11 much more likely to be met. We heard from young
12 people earlier today, who try to go see a social
13 worker and they don't get seen all day. My students
14 are able to be seen by a social worker when they need
15 to talk to somebody. And yeah, the difference is
16 just, it's so stark.

17 And so, I would like to kind of add my voice to
18 the chorus that we make real substantive change to
19 actually allocate resources towards supporting
20 students social, emotional needs. Putting school
21 safety officers under the heading of the Department
22 of Education does not do that. That is a stall
23 tactic from where I stand. We need real change.
24 Thank you so much.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
3 hear from John Felci.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 JOHN FELCI: Good afternoon everybody, can you
6 hear me?

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes we can.

8 JOHN FELCI: Okay. Okay, so, thank you for
9 allowing me to speak this afternoon, to the Chairman
10 and the Committee. I just have a few quick
11 statements that I want to make. I just want to say I
12 do have an issue in the New York City public system.
13 Okay, so this is important to me.

14 Uhm, my name is John Felci, I am a Former School
15 Safety Officer. I was a School Safety Officer in
16 1994, before - before with the DOE and then emerged
17 to NYPD in 2008. I lost a job in 2016, I am now
18 presently a social worker.

19 So, I understand this from both sides. However,
20 keeping that in mind, uh, every system in my opinion,
21 has to have professionals for different you know,
22 different needs. Okay, so, uh, although we do need
23 more counseling staff working with students,
24 especially after this pandemic is over, we do have to
25 keep in mind that they are situations where a

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2 trained, if you want to call it a security force or
3 law enforcement force will be necessary and that's
4 and ready you know to act such as events that
5 occurred like on 911 okay.

6 I was on a school safety through 911, it was
7 utter chaos, natural disasters and uhm, so yeah.
8 Therefore removing school safety agents from schools
9 would be policy that I really think that we really do
10 need to look at and visit. And again, as we said, to
11 retrain the entire force at this point would be a
12 detriment. I believe and yeah, so, that's my
13 sentiment and uh, thank you for allowing me to speak.
14 Thank you for allowing me to uh, voice my opinion and
15 concerns.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, appreciate that.
17 There have been many people that have dropped on and
18 dropped off throughout today's proceeding, so when we
19 call someone's name, they may have been logged off of
20 Zoom.

21 So, if anyone is back on Zoom and registered and
22 we did not call your name and you still wish to
23 testify, if you could please use the raise hand
24 function in Zoom and we will call you in the order
25 with which your hand is raised.

1
2 So, we have Bonnie. So, if we could please go
3 ahead and unmute Bonnie.

4 BONNIE MASSEY: Hello.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 BONNIE MASSEY: Thank you. Hi, my name is Bonnie
7 Massey and I am a School Social Worker who has been
8 working in New York City public schools in school
9 programs for about 20 years and I just really want to
10 adding to that, that a lot of the work that I have
11 done over the last like 10 years or so, 10 to 15
12 years has been doing restorative justice work in
13 schools.

14 Uhm and I want to thank you guys for like the
15 moves that you guys are making. I really appreciate
16 it and I have been involved in a lot of the work
17 that's been happening over like the last decade in
18 trying to decrease suspensions, decrease arrests of
19 you know, in trying to make all of this stuff more
20 equitable. Uhm, my concern has always been and
21 continues to be is that there is not enough resources
22 put into that work. And you know, as the speaker
23 before me just spoke said like, right now after,
24 especially after the pandemic as we are going back
25 into school, we are going to need more and more

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2 social workers. We are going to need more and more
3 and not just social workers right. Like, people who
4 are youth developers. People who do that work, who
5 know how to do that work and who are trained in that
6 work and training of all school staff to do that work
7 regardless of what their positions are.

8 It is one thing to put things on paper and say,
9 oh yeah, we are going to do restorative justice now.
10 It's another thing to actually carry that out in a
11 school and it takes a tremendous amount of effort.

12 I am seeing my time go down and so, I just want
13 to say it is unconscionable to me that we are going
14 to spend money putting that on you know, bringing
15 officers - regardless of where the officers are, who
16 they work for, what their bosses are, it's
17 unconscionable to me that we are going to spend uh,
18 resources on that when we need resources so badly to
19 do this other thing well. That we have been saying
20 that we want to do and that you know, people say and
21 I am saying, I have myself like been somebody who has
22 been involved in meeting circles between people who
23 are at each other with machetes. And it is those
24 things that stop people and fix those things.

1
2 And so, I just - it takes a lot though and we
3 need those resources.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 BONNIE MASSEY: Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Chair Treyger,
7 there are no further hands raised, so that concludes
8 the public testimony portion of this legislative
9 hearing.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I just, I want to thank all
11 of the students, the educators, social workers,
12 school psychologists, school staff, parents,
13 advocates, everyone that took the time out today.
14 This has been some of the most powerful testimony
15 certainly of my tenure. Very sobering and you know,
16 I just, I try to center myself back to my teaching
17 days as well. Uhm and understanding that the word
18 safety, it's, we have to look at it holistically.

19 Uhm, and we had again, I just shared with my
20 colleagues, a number of my students shared with me
21 that they were experiencing food insecurity. That is
22 not something we can go to a school safety agent to
23 respond to. A number of our students were dealing
24 with trauma impacts from whether it is domestic
25 violence, other housing insecurity, not knowing

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2 whether they will have safe housing, supportive
3 housing.

4 At the same time, as I mentioned you know,
5 repeatedly, uh, we had school safety agents putting
6 their lives on the line even now during this time of
7 this pandemic. Folks who have tragically passed away
8 because of the pandemic. A workforce that's
9 predominantly made up of women of color. They don't
10 make the salary of officers and you know; this is
11 something that's - this is very critical work because
12 we have to center kids. But I am also mindful that
13 we are dealing also with humans, human beings and
14 peoples lives and you know, there have been some
15 calls for example to - some people mentioned during
16 the budget fight last year to fire these positions
17 and then to use the money to prepare them for
18 different careers. And you know, there is practical
19 questions such as, who is going to pay their rent?
20 Who is going to support them with health insurance
21 and so forth? They are human beings; they have
22 children who also go to the school system.

23 And so, like the Public Advocate and other people
24 have used you know, it's not just about a just
25 transition. We really do need to have a very

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2 holistic broad reimaging conversation about not just
3 school safety but school climate.

4 I know that we, many often times associate school
5 safety with like suspension numbers or other types of
6 – but you know, I want to center the conversation to
7 the words [LOST AUDIO 3:39:04].

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member, you cut out.
9 Chair Treyger?

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Can folks hear me?

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, I was trying to get your
12 attention but I don't know if maybe you couldn't hear
13 me.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Can you hear me now Malcom?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yeah, you cut out for the
16 last minute or two.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: My apologies but I just, I
18 wanted to say just kind of summarize, is that this is
19 a conversation that's deeper than just simply moving
20 things, moving personnel and quite frankly, students,
21 educators, laborer, advocates, they must be at the
22 table. This is not something that can be done in
23 piecemeal or this has to be a true collaborative
24 effort, collaborative discussion.
25

1
2 I was just sharing, if folks lost me during the
3 conversation is that this is a very important but
4 difficult challenging conversation. Because just to
5 repeat that I believe that school safety – I
6 appreciate their work during the pandemic. I
7 appreciate the role that they can play. I do believe
8 fundamentally school leaders are in charge of
9 schools. That is something that we saw earlier
10 today, the NYPD had a difficult time answering.

11 You saw the spirited exchange and debate about
12 who is in charge of a building. What does that mean
13 for students? What does that mean for staff? That
14 has implications but at the same time, I am very
15 mindful that there are people who do value the work
16 of wanting to keep kids safe and supported but we do
17 need to center what the kids are telling us. They
18 need more counselors. They need more social workers.
19 They want restorative practices to be embedded in
20 terms of the entire school community. I would echo
21 that right now, the key word that's needed for now
22 and moving forward to the next school year or into
23 summer, is the word connection. How to reconnect
24 with our children. Who is best suited and licensed
25 to conduct evaluations of where our kids are at,

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2 taking stock of where they are at. Getting baseline
3 data of not just academic. It's social emotional
4 baseline data. Are our kids okay?

5 So, that's a safety conversation that doesn't
6 always get centered in this debate but that's going
7 to certainly be heavy in my mind as we now and moving
8 into this budget season as well.

9 So, I just want to thank all of my colleagues. I
10 want to thank all of the advocates. We may not
11 always agree in every single detail but I know where
12 your heart is. It's about the children and about
13 keeping them safe and supported and also, I have to
14 say this. A number of school educators and support
15 staff, they are human beings and they are
16 experiencing trauma. We don't really hear this
17 enough but I have been on the phone during this
18 pandemic with principals who have broken down in
19 tears trying to fight for their kids to get hot
20 meals. Teachers fighting like hell for their kids
21 who are battling housing insecurity and other issues.
22 That's trauma for them to. They have had loved ones
23 pass away; members of school communities pass away.

24 So, our educators, our school staff, they are
25 also enduring trauma. And that also impacts what

1
2 happens in the school community. So, we need this
3 budget and this year ahead, it is critical to not
4 just simply you know, move to September for a re-
5 this is about reconnecting with our kids and our
6 staff, evaluating, taking stock of their needs, not
7 just academic. You know, the only evaluations I want
8 to hear is about our kids and our staff, are they
9 okay? What more can we do to support them during
10 this very difficult challenging time?

11 Some people want to center it to academic. To
12 me, are our kids socially, emotionally okay? That is
13 critical. That's a safety conversation.

14 So, I just want to say we have more work to do.
15 We have got a lot of powerful testimony. We are
16 going to continue to go through this. I am going to
17 push the Administration for true collaboration
18 because quite frankly, this has not been it. This
19 has not been it and I truly appreciate all of you for
20 doing the work well before the pandemic and certainly
21 your work has been that much deepened during this
22 very challenging time.

23 So, I thank all the panels. I thank my
24 colleagues. Thank you Malcom and thank the

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extraordinary Council Staff for their work and
partnership. This hearing is adjourned.

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 March 23, 2021