

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 15, 2023

Media Contact: Olivia Lapeyrolierie, olivialapeyrolierie@gmail.com

**STUDENTS TO CITY COUNCIL: FUND OUR FUTURES, STOP HIRING SCHOOL
COPS**

*****Students available for interviews*****

NEW YORK—Today, New York City public school students with the [Urban Youth Collaborative](#), a NYC student coalition, testified at the Preliminary Budget Hearing on Education, calling on the City Council to cut funding for more school cops and use it instead to fund their futures. They urged the Council to include the following demands in their April 1st budget response: 1) secure a hiring freeze on school cops that does not allow to fill for attrition 2) cut funding for vacant school cop positions and 3) use the funding from both these divestments to fund restorative justice, mental health, and other staff and practices that help students learn and thrive.

The students underscored the harmful impact of the Adams's Administration efforts to further militarize schools, which include: the Administration's [commitment to hiring 850 new school cops](#) throughout this school year, its [commitment to increasing armed police](#) in schools, its [\\$78 million plan](#) to fund video surveillance and locks in schools, and its plan for school principals [to meet weekly with the NYPD](#). Additionally, the Mayor's preliminary budget includes \$40 million for 500 vacant school cop positions. Despite recent reports from the IBO, the bottom line is that Mayor Adams wants to hire 600+ school cops, a 16% increase that amounts to 1 new cop for every high school.

Students shared that the recent murder of Tyre Nichols and the NYPD's assault on a 14-year [old Black student](#) earlier this year are further proof that police are a danger to young people of color like them, and that having cops in schools makes them feel less safe. New York City currently has the largest school police force in the country, with more cops in schools than counselors, social workers, or restorative justice coordinators. [Data on school policing for the 2021-22 school year](#) once again found that nearly 90% of all school policing incidents in NYC target Black and Latinx students, despite them only making up 66% of the school population.

“Everyday I go to a school with about a dozen school cops and three metal detector checkpoints where I often get stopped and searched, resulting in me being late to class. Every day I fear doing something that will jeopardize my freedom and end up in prison. I fear that my little sister will go to a school system that is under-invested and unsafe, because the police don’t keep us safe,” said **Aylin Frias, a freshman in Brooklyn and youth leader with the Urban Youth Collaborative and Future of Tomorrow.** “Yet, Mayor Adams wants to hire more school cops, even though NYC already has the largest school police force in the country. What our schools, my peers, and I need is investments, meaning more counselors, social workers and restorative justice practices to keep us safer, because a safe environment is not one with police and surveillance, but one with resources.”

“It’s frustrating that school police constantly watch us Black and Brown students and are ready to punish us for any minor mistake we make. In mostly white schools, where there are fewer school police, students are not constantly surveilled and any mistakes are treated as opportunities to learn from, not reasons to be punished for,” said **Anari Coleman, a sophomore in Staten Island and a youth leader with the Urban Youth Collaborative and Make the Road NY.** “Seeing police in our schools makes us feel less—not more—safe. As a Black teenager, I want to be welcomed at a school building that prioritizes students' needs and well-being, not that criminalizes just because of their skin color.”

“As a junior, who is almost a senior, I want to make sure my school has more resources for students like me getting ready for college. We want to have more counselors, more college access support programs, and more job opportunities for students like myself,” said **Niyo Gumbs, a junior in the Bronx and a youth leader with the Urban Youth Collaborative and Sistas & Brothas United.** “We all know many of us lost a lot of academic time because of the pandemic, which means now more than ever we need additional support systems to reach academic standards and receive emotional support. We need our schools to feel welcoming and supportive, yet it seems like our call for more resources continues to be met with more money for police. Police that continue to criminalize Black and Brown youth like me.”

"When I walk into my school building each day, there are school cops and metal detectors. When it’s my turn to walk through the metal detectors, all the items I have in my bag that must be removed determine if I make it to class on time. This frustrating experience is something I never truly understood. Schools in low-income communities of color always suffer the inconveniences of metal detectors, whereas schools in wealthier, whiter neighborhoods do not,” said **Nile Borja, a senior in Brooklyn and a youth leader with the Urban Youth Collaborative.**

###