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200+ Students, Supporters and Council Members Rally & March to Call on NYC to Divest from School Policing and Invest in Student Care in Upcoming Budget

*[*Click here for photos from the event*](#)*

*[*Click here for the link to the livestream of the action*](#)*

NEW YORK—Today, 200+ students with the Urban Youth Collaborative (UYC), supporters, and City Council Members rallied and marched to call on NYC elected officials to prioritize true public safety solutions—not policing—for schools and communities in the upcoming city budget. They presented a large symbolic budget featuring the [students' demands](#) that asks the city to divest from student criminalization and instead invest in their care. Specifically, their demands include:

- Eliminating funding for the NYPD's School Policing Division
- Eliminating funding for new school police officers to replace current vacancies
- Eliminating funding for new or existing student scanning and surveillance equipment
- \$75 million in restorative justice coordinators
- \$45 million in restorative justice training,
- \$75 million new counselors,
- \$75 million in new social workers,
- \$75 million in community member positions
- \$5 million baseline funding for a mental health continuum.

Mayor Adams preliminary budget allocates \$400 million to school policing, which allows for the hiring of nearly 1,000 more school police. Mayor Adams has also publicly called for hiring new school police officers, including funneling new scanner equipment in schools. This is all while NYC public schools have more school police than counselors, social workers or restorative justice coordinators.

“It is not okay that over the last few years the city has only given us small crumbs towards programs that are vital to our lives and education. It is also not okay that over decades New York City has invested more money in policing Black and Latinx students in schools and our communities which has only traumatized us,” said **Delia Davis, student and youth leader at Urban Youth Collaborative and Sistas and Brothas United.**

School policing disproportionately impacts students of color. In NYC, Black and Latinx youth represent **91%** of all arrests, despite being only **66%** of the student population. Experiencing an arrest during high school doubles the odds of a student dropping out. Young people who dropout of school are 3x more likely to end up in the juvenile justice system within a year.

“I want to remind you all that Policing, including school policing, has a racist history, and we see the effects of that history today, as police harm our Black and Latinx schools and communities daily,” said

Alex Mojica, youth leader at Urban Youth Collaborative and Sistas & Brothas United. “Living in the Bronx I’ve seen cops daily, maybe even hourly, I see cops in my park, outside of my bodega, I see cops on the trains and in my schools. But all this exposure to police does not make me feel safer. I actually feel threatened by their presence and it is overwhelming to constantly feel like I’m a target.”

"In order to attain the educational, safety and health outcomes we all want, and to set the young people of New York City up for successful, fulfilling lives, there are so many things we should be investing in," said **City Council Member Tiffany Caban.** “These include: mental and physical health resources available to every student in every school; abundant socio-emotional, artistic, physical, and sexual education; and a school environment and culture that is welcoming to students of all backgrounds, languages, sexual and gender identities, and more. School policing simply cannot achieve this. The more we invest in systems of violence, control, and enforced order, the more our schools become precursors to prison, with all of the trauma, fear, and racist double standards that entails. It is time to get police out of schools, so that our students have the freedom to grow, heal, and thrive."

Research shows that, over time, just seeing police in schools may negatively affect students’ mental health. **81%** of NYC students [surveyed](#) see police at school at least once a day. But only **7%** have daily interactions with school counselors and social workers.

“The establishment wants us to believe that the way to safety is more funding increases to the NYPD. We know that safety is hiring more counselors and social workers. We know that children don't need to be policed, they need conversations with trusted staff,” said **City Council Member Kristin Richardson Jordan.**

“After two years of a traumatizing pandemic, what our students need is a steep investment in their social and emotional well-being and healing. We need an unprecedented investment in counselors, social workers, restorative justice professionals, and smaller class sizes for more meaningful student-teacher interactions. I am impressed by and honored to stand with the students from the Urban Youth Collaborative and the Dignity in Schools Campaign in fighting for their demands,” said **City Council Member Sandy Nurse**

“Mayor Adams, is this what safety looks like to you? Nowadays schools have become a place where students feel targeted when we’re supposed to feel safe,” said **Isabel Fernandez, student and youth organizer at Liberation Program of the Brotherhood Sister Sol.** “School is supposed to be an environment where we young people learn, explore, socialize and discover our own senses of self while we plan our futures. What futures are really possible in an overpoliced and under-resourced world for marginalized students?”

NYC has the largest school police force in the country by far. For comparison, Los Angeles, which has the second largest school district in the country, has **20x** less police in their schools than we do—despite having more than half of NYC’s student population.

“We need to provide a space where students can speak about their troubles and dreams, a safe space that can be given and provided by a guidance counselor/social worker in their schools,” said **Christine Ramirez, parent leader with the Parent Action Committee and parent association President at P.S.**

35. “We need to do this for the Black and Brown students, who are voiceless against a system that oppresses them. They deserve a voice and to take a stand against school policing that has for decades hurt their chance at a life of success. It is an injustice that NYC has more school police than school counselors, school social workers, or restorative justice coordinators.”

About the Urban Youth Collaborative: [The Urban Youth Collaborative](#) is a student-led coalition of NYC youth organizing groups fighting to end the school-to-prison pipeline and transform the city’s public schools into supportive learning environments. Member groups include Future of Tomorrow, Make the Road NY, and Sistas and Brothas United.

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