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Groups Repping +1,500 NYC Students Call on Mayor de Blasio to Nix \$20 Million Plan to Hire 475 New School Police

Students send [letter](#) amidst national spotlight on back-to-back police killings of Black & Latinx youth

Letter: “Imagine how we feel when our elected leaders offer their thoughts and prayers—all while funding the largest school police department in the country”

NEW YORK — 15 youth-facing groups representing over 1,500 students across the five boroughs joined the Urban Youth Collaborative in sending the Mayor a [letter](#) calling for a full cancellation of plans to hire 475 new school police at a cost of \$20 million. The groups drafted the letter in the wake of a national spotlight on four police killings of Black and Latinx youth across the country: Adam Toledo (13), Daunte Wright (20), Anthony J. Thompson Jr. (17), and Ma’Khia Bryant (16).

“Dear Mayor Bill de Blasio,

In the past week, we witnessed the murders of four young people at the hands of police—including one in a school building. While we also got a taste of accountability in the guilty verdict of Derek Chauvin, we know that real justice would have been George Floyd being alive today, and that justice moving forward means no one is ever harmed at the hands of police again. This begins with working to remove police from our communities, including in our schools. **We are writing to ask for more than your condolences. We ask that you cancel your plan to spend \$20 million on hiring 475 new school police.**

Adam Toledo (13), Daunte Wright (20), Anthony J. Thompson Jr. (17), and Ma’Khia Bryant (16) were youth like us, with so much life ahead of them. But like thousands of Black and Latinx youth across this country, they were not afforded the right to grow up. Instead, they were murdered by police.

Imagine how we feel when we go back to enter into school buildings—after these traumatic killings, in the midst of this traumatic pandemic year—and the first thing we see are police officers, some of whom are armed.

We know that Black and Latinx students make up 66 percent of NYC’s student population, but 91 percent of all student arrests. A [new report](#) surveyed students from communities of color with police in their schools and found that 60 percent said they or someone they knew experienced a negative interaction with school police. That number was 78 percent for Black respondents. These negative interactions include verbal, physical, and sexual abuse as well as arrests, tickets

to go to court, and juvenile reports. Additionally, 35 percent said they attend schools with armed police. And 20 percent of students felt targeted by their race. Putting 475 new police in our schools means so much more harm.

Imagine how we feel knowing we're not afforded any of the grace that our peers in wealthier, whiter schools are, because just one mistake could get us arrested—or worse. And imagine how we feel when our elected leaders offer their thoughts and prayers—all while funding the largest school police department in the country.

Bottom line: we're terrified, for ourselves and for our communities. After this harrowing year, we need increased access to mental health and social support. The last thing we need is more school police, on top of the already-bloated +5,000 school police force the city plans to spend \$450 million on this year.

We demand a total reversal of your plan to spend \$20 million to hire 475 new school cops. The news this past week makes it crystal clear: policing is designed to criminalize and harm Black and Latinx communities, and there is no amount of reform—not a transfer, not a retraining, not the occasional guilty verdict—that is going to end this vicious cycle. The only solution is police free schools. Mayor de Blasio: we urge you not to take us backward by enlarging the racist school police infrastructure. Commit to not hiring any more school cops.

Signed,

Urban Youth Collaborative
Arab American Association of New York
Churches United for Fair Housing
FIERCE
Future of Tomorrow
Girls for Gender Equity
Integrate NYC
Make the Road NY
NYCLU Teen Activist Project
Poli Fem
Sistas & Brothas United
SOUL SISTERS
Teens Take Charge
The Brotherhood Sister Sol
YA-YA Network
Youth Alliance for Housing”

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