

OUR SCHOOLS, OUR FUTURES: A BUDGET FOR SAFE AND JUST NYC SCHOOLS



DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN-NY (DSC-NY) IS A COALITION OF NYC PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS, FAMILIES, EDUCATORS, AND ADVOCATES ORGANIZING TO ENSURE THAT EVERY YOUNG PERSON—REGARDLESS OF WHICH NEIGHBORHOOD THEY LIVE IN OR SCHOOL THEY ATTEND—HAS ACCESS TO SAFE AND THRIVING SCHOOL COMMUNITIES. WE CALL ON NYC'S ELECTED OFFICIALS TO TAKE AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARD OUR VISION BY ADOPTING A FY 2023 BUDGET THAT SHIFTS FUNDING TOWARDS THE RESOURCES AND RESTORATIVE PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT EVERY YOUNG PERSON TO LEARN AND GROW, AND AWAY FROM THE POLICE PRESENCE AND CULTURE THAT DIRECTLY DISRUPTS LEARNING AND VIOLATES THE DIGNITY AND SAFETY OF BLACK, BROWN, DISABLED, AND LGBTQ+ YOUNG PEOPLE.

1. HIRE 2,000 NEW YORKERS TO STRENGTHEN SCHOOLS

WHEN STUDENTS ARRIVE AT SCHOOL, THEY SHOULD BE GREETED BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND TEACHERS, NOT POLICE. BUT FOR YEARS, THE NYPD AND SCHOOL POLICE UNION HAVE SUCCESSFULLY PRESSURED LAWMAKERS TO INSTEAD DIRECT SCHOOL FUNDS INTO HIRING AND TRAINING SCHOOL POLICE WHO HARM BLACK, BROWN, DISABLED, LGBTQ+, AND OTHER MARGINALIZED YOUNG PEOPLE. WE WANT SCHOOL-BASED JOBS THAT SUPPORT STUDENTS, CONTRIBUTE TO THE SAFETY OF OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES, AND WHICH HIRE BLACK AND BROWN COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND PAY THEM WELL.

- **\$75 MILLION DIRECTLY TO 500 HIGH SCHOOLS TO HIRE SCHOOL-BASED RESTORATIVE JUSTICE COORDINATORS.**
 - THIS FUNDING SHOULD INCREASE BY AN ADDITIONAL \$55 MILLION EACH YEAR FOR THE NEXT 3 YEARS TO HAVE AN RJ COORDINATOR IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS, ULTIMATELY A SUSTAINED ANNUAL EXPENSE OF \$240 MILLION.
- **\$75 MILLION TO HIRE 500 NEW SOCIAL WORKERS.**
 - THIS FUNDING SHOULD INCREASE OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS TO ACHIEVE A RATIO OF 1:150 ACROSS SCHOOLS, WITH 1:50 FOR HIGH NEEDS SCHOOLS.
- **\$75 MILLION TO HIRE 500 NEW SCHOOL COUNSELORS.**
 - THIS FUNDING SHOULD INCREASE OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS TO ACHIEVE A RATIO OF 1:150 ACROSS SCHOOLS, WITH 1:50 FOR HIGH NEEDS SCHOOLS.
- **\$75 MILLION DIRECTLY TO SCHOOLS TO HIRE 500 COMMUNITY MEMBERS INTO SUPPORTIVE POSITIONS BASED ON NEED.**
 - POSITIONS SHOULD INCLUDE PARAPROFESSIONALS, YOUTH ADVOCATES, PARENT COORDINATORS, AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH COORDINATORS; AND STAFF TO GREET STUDENTS AT THE DOOR AND CHECK-IN VISITORS.

ALL NEW POSITIONS MUST BUILD SAFETY FOR STUDENTS AND GOOD LIVES FOR WORKERS. PRIORITY FOR THESE POSITIONS MUST BE GIVEN TO BLACK AND BROWN COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND RECENT NYC PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES. THESE MUST BE WELL PAID UNION JOBS IN THE DOE WHICH ARE EXEMPT FROM THE TYPICAL BARRIERS TO ENTRY SUCH AS AN ADVANCED DEGREE. HOWEVER, THE ADVANCE DEGREE REQUIREMENT WILL REMAIN IN EFFECT FOR SOCIAL WORKERS AND COUNSELORS. ALL POSITIONS MUST REQUIRE TRAINING IN AND COMMITMENT TO DE-ESCALATION AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE; AND HIRING AND TRAINING MUST BE OVERSEEN BY SCHOOL COMMUNITIES (STUDENTS, TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, AND PARENTS). THESE MUST NOT BE NYPD OR POLICING POSITIONS.

2. FUND SCHOOL-BASED RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SHOULD BE SAFE, WELCOMING PLACES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO GROW AND LEARN IMPORTANT CONCEPTS, INCLUDING HOW TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS AND NAVIGATE CHALLENGES. OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS, THE CITY HAS INVESTED IN A TOP-DOWN IMPLEMENTATION OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE, WHICH HAS BEEN INEFFECTIVE AT REACHING STUDENTS AND TEACHERS TO MAKE ANY MEANINGFUL IMPACT. FULL COMMITMENT TO AND FUNDING FOR A SCHOOL-LED RESTORATIVE JUSTICE MODEL WILL MAKE SCHOOLS SAFER FOR ALL STUDENTS AND PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO DEVELOP LIFELONG SKILLS TO RESOLVE DISAGREEMENTS, PRACTICE EMPATHY, AND TAKE OWNERSHIP FOR THEIR ACTIONS.

- **\$45 MILLION (ON TOP OF FUNDING FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE COORDINATORS) DIRECTLY TO SCHOOLS TO:**
 - ACCESS ONGOING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE TRAINING FOR ALL SCHOOL STAFF, AND MAKE IT AVAILABLE TO THE BROADER SCHOOL COMMUNITY (E.G., STUDENTS AND FAMILIES). REQUIRE THAT RESTORATIVE JUSTICE TRAININGS INTEGRATE AN ANTI-RACIST APPROACH. NO MONEY SHALL BE USED FOR TRAINING SCHOOL COPS.
 - FUND SAMs FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO LEAD RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES AND BUILD SKILLS THAT WILL SET THEM UP FOR THE FUTURE.
 - DEVELOP RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CURRICULUM WITH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS.
 - OFFER RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CLASSES OR ADVISORIES, AND OTHER PRACTICES.

IMPLEMENTATION MUST BE OVERSEEN AND INCLUSIVE OF LONG-TIME RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTITIONERS, STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, PARENTS, AND COMMUNITY GROUPS. FUNDING MUST BE ALLOCATED DIRECTLY TO SCHOOL COMMUNITIES LEADING THE WAY TO ENSURE MONEY IS SPENT ACCORDING TO INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS' NEEDS. IT SHOULD NOT GO TO PRIVATE CONTRACTS WITH NONPROFITS THAT HAVE NO RELATIONSHIP TO THOSE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES.

3. SUPPORT STUDENTS' SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

ANY YOUNG PERSON EXPERIENCING CRISIS OR CHALLENGES IN THEIR LIFE SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO SUPPORT SERVICES TO HELP THEM TO MANAGE THROUGH DIFFICULTIES, STAY IN SCHOOL, AND THRIVE. FOR TOO LONG, NYC'S ELECTED OFFICIALS HAVE CHOSEN TO SEND POLICE INTO SCHOOLS TO RESPOND TO MENTAL HEALTH CRISES INSTEAD OF INVESTING IN SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES—DENYING SUPPORT TO YOUNG PEOPLE AND OFTEN COMPOUNDING HARM THROUGH PUNITIVE RESPONSES. IN FY 2022, THE CITY ALLOCATED \$5 MILLION FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM—A PROMISING MODEL TO HELP STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES ACCESS DIRECT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN SCHOOL AND CONNECT STUDENTS TO OTHER SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE CITY. THE MODEL IS SET TO LAUNCH IN SPRING 2022. HOWEVER, FUNDING MUST BE EXTENDED IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THIS INITIATIVE DOES NOT EXPIRE IN JUNE 2022, AND THAT STUDENTS AT EACH OF THE 50 PILOT SCHOOLS IN SOUTH BRONX AND CENTRAL BROOKLYN DO NOT LOSE ACCESS TO THESE CRITICAL SUPPORTS.

- **\$5 MILLION BASELINE FUNDING FOR MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM.**
 - THIS FUNDING SHOULD BE EXPANDED TO \$15 MILLION BY 2024.

4. MOVE MONEY AWAY FROM POLICING

SCHOOL IS A PLACE WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD BE FREE TO FEEL SAFE, TRY NEW THINGS, AND LEARN. BUT PUNITIVE DISCIPLINE AND POLICING CREATES BARRIERS TO LEARNING AND VIOLATES THE SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF STUDENTS—PARTICULARLY BLACK, BROWN, DISABLED, AND LGBTQ+ YOUNG PEOPLE, WHO ARE TARGETED MOST HARSHLY BY SCHOOL POLICE. THE HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS THE CITY CURRENTLY CHOOSES TO SPEND ON THE NYPD'S SCHOOL POLICING DIVISION SHOULD BE REDIRECTED TO FUND THE RESOURCES, STAFF, AND RESTORATIVE PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT EVERY YOUNG PERSON TO LEARN AND GROW.

- **REDIRECT \$450 MILLION FROM SCHOOL POLICING TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE:**
 - DISBAND THE NYPD'S SCHOOL POLICING DIVISION (\$425 MILLION)
 - ELIMINATE THE YOUTH COORDINATION OFFICER POSITION (\$25 MILLION), THE REBRANDED NAME FOR THE 300 UNIFORMED OFFICERS THAT SURVEIL YOUNG PEOPLE AND PATROL SCHOOL BUILDINGS
- **DO NOT HIRE 1,363 NEW SCHOOL COPS TO REPLACE CURRENT VACANCIES.**
 - THIS FUNDING MUST BE REDIRECTED TO FILL SUPPORTIVE STAFF POSITIONS DETAILED IN DEMAND #1.
- **NO FUNDING FOR NEW OR EXISTING STUDENT SURVEILLANCE AND SCANNING EQUIPMENT.**
 - THIS SHOULD BE A FIRST STEP TOWARD THE FULL ELIMINATION OF METAL DETECTORS AND STUDENT SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGIES BY 2025.

THE CITY MUST REJECT MAYOR ADAMS' DANGEROUS EXPLORATION OF STRATEGIES THAT INCREASINGLY SEEK TO HIDE POLICING INFRASTRUCTURE FROM SIGHT—SUCH AS HIS PROPOSAL TO REPLACE METAL DETECTORS WITH "HIGH-TECH" SCANNING TECHNOLOGY, AND POLICE UNIFORMS WITH PLAIN-CLOTHES. GIVING A MAKEOVER TO SCANNING AND SCHOOL COPS WON'T MAKE THEM ANY LESS HARMFUL TO THE BLACK AND BROWN STUDENTS THEY TARGET, BUT WILL ONLY MAKE THAT HARM MORE INSIDIOUS.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US AT:

KATEM@DIGNITYANDRIGHTS.ORG