



# SAFETY WITH DIGNITY

COMPLETE REPORT BY THE MAYOR'S LEADERSHIP TEAM  
ON SCHOOL CLIMATE AND DISCIPLINE

PHASE I RECOMMENDATIONS

**NYC** Criminal  
Justice



**NYC**  
Department of  
Education  
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City of New York  
Mayor Bill de Blasio

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## Background

*Safety with Dignity* details policy recommendations made by the Mayor’s Leadership Team on School Climate and Discipline (“Leadership Team”).<sup>1</sup> The Leadership Team is a one-year task force that was launched by Mayor Bill de Blasio in February 2015 with the mission of developing recommendations to enhance the well-being and safety of students and staff in the City’s public schools, while minimizing the use of suspensions, arrests and summonses. Co-chaired by Ursulina Ramirez, Chief of Staff, NYC Department of Education and Vincent Schiraldi, Senior Advisor, Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, the Leadership Team was charged with the task of examining data and studying best practices in order to:

- Improve the use of data to assess the effectiveness of current policy and practice, and spread promising positive discipline innovations system-wide;
- Reduce the frequency and duration of suspensions and minimize arrests and referrals to the justice system for school-based disciplinary offenses;
- Reduce disparities by race, gender, disability and Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender (LGBT) status in student discipline, arrests and summonses;
- Increase access to mental health and other community-based supports for high-need students; and
- Update the Discipline Code and the Memorandum of Understanding between the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and the Department of Education (DOE) to align the use of school discipline and security personnel and security measures with supportive school climate goals.

To meet its objectives, the Leadership Team developed five Working Groups that involved more than 150 stakeholders,<sup>2</sup> including representatives from city agencies, community organizations, and unions, as well as researchers, practitioners, educators, students and parents.

Over the past five months, these Working Groups convened to define a vision and system-wide approach to positive climate, discipline and safety in schools, as well as to develop targeted initiatives to assist schools with high rates of suspensions, arrests and summonses – and high disparities in those areas – to improve their practices.

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<sup>1</sup> For a full list of Leadership Team Members and their affiliations, see Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> For a full list of Working Group members, and their affiliations, see Appendix B.

Recommendations were developed from this Phase I of deliberations, and are proposed for consideration by the Mayor, DOE Chancellor, Police Commissioner and other relevant entities. A second report will be prepared in the fall (Phase II) that examines how to align existing policy to this new vision and approach, including revising the City's school discipline code as well as the memorandum of understanding between NYPD and DOE.

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

In February of 2015, Mayor Bill de Blasio launched the Leadership Team on School Climate and Discipline—a one-year task force charged with developing policy recommendations to enhance the well-being and safety of students and staff in the City’s public schools, while minimizing the use of suspensions, arrests and summonses.

Research shows that, all things being equal, when students are suspended or arrested in school their chances of being held back in school, dropping out and/or entering the juvenile justice system increase. Furthermore, overly punitive responses have been shown to be an ineffective way to improve student behavior and school climate. For these reasons, national consensus has begun to shift towards deploying more effective methods of addressing student discipline and promoting positive behavior.

After a 63 percent increase in suspensions between School Year 2000 and 2010, New York City has taken steps in recent years to significantly reduce suspensions and arrests while maintaining a safe school environment. From SY2012 to SY2014 suspensions declined by 23 percent with concomitant declines in arrests (55 percent) and summonses (67 percent) issued by NYPD’s School Safety Division (SSD). This progress has not come at the expense of student or staff safety. During the same time period, major crime declined by 20 percent and all crime by 24 percent in New York City public schools.<sup>3</sup>

Several factors have contributed to declines in the use of punitive discipline. Former New York Chief Judge Judith Kaye chaired the New York City School-Justice Partnership Taskforce that released a highly influential report condemning the overuse of

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<sup>3</sup> These favorable trends have continued this school year with suspensions declining by another 11 percent; arrests declining by 19 percent; and summonses declining by 12 percent comparing the beginning of this school year through March to the same time period last year.

**“No parent should have to choose between a school that’s safe for their child and a school where every student is treated fairly. All our schools can and must be both.”**

- Mayor Bill de Blasio



exclusionary discipline in City schools and making numerous recommendations, including the creation of a multi-stakeholder Leadership Team to improve school climate. Advocates successfully urged the passage of the School Safety Act by the New York City Council, bringing greater transparency to rates of arrests, summonses and suspensions in the City's public schools. The Department of Education (DOE) revised its Discipline Code several times in response to feedback from students, parents, educators and advocates. These changes clarified the need for schools to utilize guidance interventions and urged parsimony in the use of suspensions. DOE also began training an increasing number of schools in Restorative Justice. Additionally, SSD introduced its entire force to Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) in order to improve safety agents' skills in de-escalating conflict and has systematically begun to train its officers on more in-depth CPS practices.

These steps demonstrate progress towards a more effective approach to climate and discipline in the New York City public schools. However, continued inconsistencies in disciplinary approaches and high levels of suspensions, arrests and summons in several districts indicate that further system-wide policy and practice change is needed.

Moreover, the prevalence of very high-numbers of suspensions, arrests and summonses in a small number of schools suggests that additional supports and guidance also are necessary. For example, although the average suspension rate is 4.8 per 100 students, the top ten highest suspending schools (by rate) issue 63 suspensions per 100 students and the top 10 schools with the highest suspension rates of students with special needs issue 98 suspensions per 100 students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Students in these schools are significantly more likely to be excluded from classroom learning and become court-involved than their peers. SSD data show a similar pattern: just ten school campuses account for 49 percent of all summonses and 19 percent of all arrests made by the SSD.<sup>4</sup>

Lastly, troubling disparities in race and disability status have remained consistent, or increased, on a system-wide level. For example, during SY2014, Black students comprised 28 percent of student enrollment but made up 61 percent of arrests. Meanwhile, White students comprised 15 percent of student enrollment and made up 5 percent of arrests. Many Leadership Team members expressed concern about perceived disparities in the treatment of LGBTQ youth, an area in which there is a need for reliable data.

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<sup>4</sup> Data calculated from the start of SY2015 to mid-March (7/1/14 – 3/15/15).

## OVERVIEW OF PHASE I RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations reflect a balanced approach of structural changes, policy reforms, training, and additional programming required to comprehensively and durably improve the climate of New York City's schools to truly achieve safety with dignity.

### **1. Articulate a clear mission statement on student discipline that embraces positive supports and presents a strategy for implementing this mission**

The Mayor, Chancellor and Police Commissioner should articulate a clear vision for addressing student discipline that minimizes removal from the classroom and promotes de-escalation, reflection and community building. Such a vision should seek to reduce unfairness and inconsistencies in use of disciplinary removal, arrests and summonses across the system.

The Mayor, Chancellor and Police Commissioner should communicate clear, measureable goals and expectations for positive climate, discipline and safety and also commit to:

- Train superintendents, school administrators, teachers, school safety agents (SSAs), and others on strategies to ensure safety and create positive school climates and progressive discipline;
- Provide social-emotional skills development for students as part of regular classroom instruction and school-wide programs at all grade levels;
- Create meaningful opportunities for input from students and parents to improve the environment for learning in schools; and
- Create positive, non-punitive, incentives for principals and teachers to implement progressive school climate supports.

### **2. Provide additional school climate supports, including staff and training, for schools with the highest numbers of suspensions, arrests and/or summonses**

While there are nearly 1800 public schools citywide, 10 percent or 180 schools<sup>5</sup> account for 41 percent of all suspensions and the vast majority of arrests and summonses issued by the School Safety Division of the NYPD.

In order to improve school climate and safely reduce suspensions and arrests further in these high-priority schools, DOE and NYPD should:

- Provide intensive support for school-level planning, training and on-site coaching in school climate and positive discipline practices (including restorative approaches). Funding should begin with an initial investment in a significant subset of the highest-priority schools in conjunction with an outcome evaluation;
- Increase the number of counselors, social workers and other supports to improve school culture and climate; and
- Prioritize additional training in de-escalation practices for SSAs and resources and technical assistance to schools with the highest numbers of arrests and summonses.

### **3. Increase school climate supports system-wide**

Evidence from other localities implementing school climate strategies indicate that system-wide coordination and dedicated staffing are required for effective assessment, planning and implementation at the school level. Without consistent attention to building positive school climate and discipline, many schools will be unlikely to successfully make the shift in approach.

To ensure appropriate staffing and guidance to assist schools in shifting their practice, the DOE should:

- Appoint a Senior Advisor to the Chancellor on School Climate and Discipline;
- Assign staff at the borough and school level to assist and monitor schools in implementing positive climate, discipline and safety strategies;
- Establish protocols for self-assessment and planning by schools to improve climate and discipline, and provide flexible funding for schools to allocate to implement these plans;

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<sup>5</sup> The Leadership Team designated 180 schools as “high-priority schools” for climate supports/interventions. These schools have high rates of suspensions, arrests, summonses, students living in temporary housing and/or chronic absenteeism and as such should be prioritized for additional supports. The overlap between the Leadership Team’s 180 high-priority schools and Renewal and Community Schools is small (only 28 schools) because Renewal and Community Schools did not factor suspension or arrest rates into their criteria.



- Increase the number of counselors and social work services across the school system, and reframe the role of school-based social workers so they can serve as a resource to school-based crisis management teams; and
- Increase awareness and provide professional development for school personnel and SSAs on the impact arrests and suspensions have on students.

#### **4. Improve citywide and school-level data collection and use**

At present, no city agency captures the full number of students who are arrested, issued summonses or handcuffed in New York City schools. Nor is any information available regarding the arrest of students with special needs. This impairs policy makers' ability to allocate resources effectively.

To ensure better tracking and utilization of data to improve climate and discipline, the DOE should:

- Develop a system interface between schools and NYPD to accurately track the full number of students arrested, summonsed and handcuffed;
- Use the NYC School Survey and focus groups with students to collect better data on student perceptions of climate and discipline;
- Provide training for school personnel on DOE's on-line data collection systems in order to promote consistency in use; and
- Create a systematic way to collect data on progressive disciplinary strategies, such as restorative circles and conferencing, to inform and improve implementation.

Further, in order to improve transparency, NYPD and DOE should:

- Report instances of arrests and summonses and use of mechanical restraints to the federal Department of Education Office of Civil Rights;
- Report information by school to the public by key indicators like race, gender and disability status; and
- Report the full number of students arrested and issued summonses in schools.

#### **5. Implement protocols and training to improve the scanning process and remove scanners where appropriate**

Currently, there are 80 permanent scanning campuses throughout the City. Despite a 48 percent reduction in total crime in New York City public schools over the last decade,

not one school has removed a permanent scanner during that period. Moreover, there are no written guidelines for removing or adding school scanners.

In order to evaluate the need for scanning in schools and campuses and ensure scanning is conducted in as minimally intrusive a manner as possible, NYPD and DOE should:

- Jointly develop an assessment to determine criteria by which scanners can be removed or added to/from schools/campuses;
- Jointly develop a transparent process for evaluation of the use of scanners in schools to be conducted on a regular basis;
- Develop specialized training for school administration staff and SSAs on roles and responsibilities regarding use of scanning, and prioritize scanning schools to receive joint training of school staff and SSAs in Collaborative Problem Solving; and
- Ensure the scanning process and expectations for behavior of students and staff are clearly communicated through signage and clarification of protocols.

#### **6. Memorialize in writing, policies and protocols within NYPD and DOE that promote de-escalation and integration between educators and agents**

In SY2012, the School Safety Division changed leadership, began emphasizing de-escalation and trained all staff in Collaborative Problem Solving. Since then, there has been a sharp decline in arrests/summonses. Unfortunately, to date, many of these informal but successful approaches have not been written into official policy nor have precinct officers been exposed to them.

In order to ensure schools are safe and supportive, all adults in the school building must work collaboratively and their policies need to be memorialized in writing. As such, NYPD and DOE should:

- Release a joint memo outlining new protocols for integrating School Safety Division personnel into the overall school community;
- Memorialize efforts to train all School Safety Division personnel in CPS, conflict resolution, use of Warning Cards and other de-escalation practices; and
- Include training for all NYPD officers in best practices for policing schools.

#### **7. Create Resource Coordination Teams within the new Borough Field Support Centers**

Currently, there is no centralized system for schools to effectively access the community-based supports and services available for their highest needs students and families. Schools with limited staff resources and capacity must piece together independent relationships with mental health, housing, preventative services and other organizations.

The DOE should pilot the creation of Resource Coordination Teams to serve the two neighborhoods with the highest concentration of high-priority schools (the South Bronx and Central Brooklyn) to:

- Act as liaisons between schools, government agencies and community service providers to assist educators in accessing resources;
- Centralize resource mapping to promote greater efficiency for schools in accessing supports; and
- Provide support and clinical supervision for social workers and other staff in high-priority schools.

#### **8. Implement strategies and supports to specifically reduce disparities in discipline and school-based arrests/summonses**

Despite overall declines in suspensions, arrests and summonses, disparities have increased. Between SY2012 and SY2014, suspension disparities between Black and Hispanic compared to White students increased as did the suspensions disparities between students with special needs and general education students.

To build awareness and support action to reduce disparities, the DOE and NYPD should:

- Create a high-level standing cross-organization committee to develop an action plan to reduce racial and IEP disparities in suspensions, arrests and summonses, and to investigate the extent to which disparities may be occurring for LGBT students and other populations;
- Provide schools with regular reports on discipline, climate and safety data, including identifying patterns of disparity by sub-population; and
- Collaborate with community stakeholders to review implementation and effectiveness of Respect for All in promoting a safe and respectful environment for students.

#### **9. Improve training of staff in high-priority schools about how to identify and meet the needs of students with special needs**

Students with special needs were suspended 2.6 times as frequently as students without disabilities in SY2014. Moreover, many high-priority schools have large numbers of students with special needs and high suspension rates for these students.

In order to more effectively support the needs of these students and reduce disciplinary disparities for this population, the DOE should:

- Improve communication between the Office of Safety and Youth Development and the Division of Specialized Instruction and Student Support;
- Provide training to build the capacity of schools to develop student assessments and plans for students with special or high-needs; and
- Clarify the protocols for conducting, and provide meaningful oversight of, suspension hearings for these students.

**10. Promote transparency, consistency and information sharing between schools receiving students via Safety Transfers and DOE Central**

Safety Transfer protocols differ from borough to borough and are not widely understood by principals. Schools are provided with little information regarding the kinds of supports needed for students who are transferred for safety purposes. Allowing students a fresh start at new schools is a core principle that educators share, yet students would have a better chance to succeed if their receiving school was better prepared to meet their needs.

To improve the quality of care schools provide to students receiving Safety Transfers, the DOE should:

- Systematize Safety Transfer protocols across borough enrollment offices and ensure fairness in the distribution of Safety Transfers;
- Develop a consultative process for seeking input from principals on the protocol for student placement and data-sharing; and
- Allow for Safety Transfers for students who have acted as aggressors and may become future victims.

## History and Context for Reform

National research shows that when students are suspended or arrested in school their chances of being held back in school, dropping out and/or entering the juvenile justice system increase, even when controlling for individual student characteristics and school make up. Studies indicate that even one suspension in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade doubles the risk of high school dropout,<sup>6</sup> and that exclusionary discipline triples the likelihood of juvenile justice contact.<sup>7</sup> Research also has shown that overly punitive responses to discipline-challenged students are not the most effective way to improve student behavior or school climate.<sup>8</sup> For those reasons, national consensus in recent years has begun to shift towards deploying more effective methods of addressing student discipline.<sup>9</sup>

In line with national trends, New York City has made considerable strides towards reducing exclusion from the classroom for disciplinary incidents (see Figure 1). After a decade during which school suspensions in New York City increased by 63 percent,<sup>10</sup> suspensions declined by 23 percent between SY2012 and SY2014, with concomitant declines in arrests (55 percent) and summonses (67 percent) issued by NYPD's School Safety Division (SSD). These declines have not come at the expense of the safety of students or staff. During the same time period, there has been a 20 percent decline in major crime and a 24 percent decline in all crime in NYC public schools.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Balfanz, (2013), *Sent Home and Put Off-Track: The Antecedents, Disproportionalities, and Consequences of Being Suspended in the Ninth Grade*. Prepared for the Civil Rights Remedies Institute Closing the School Discipline Gap Conference.

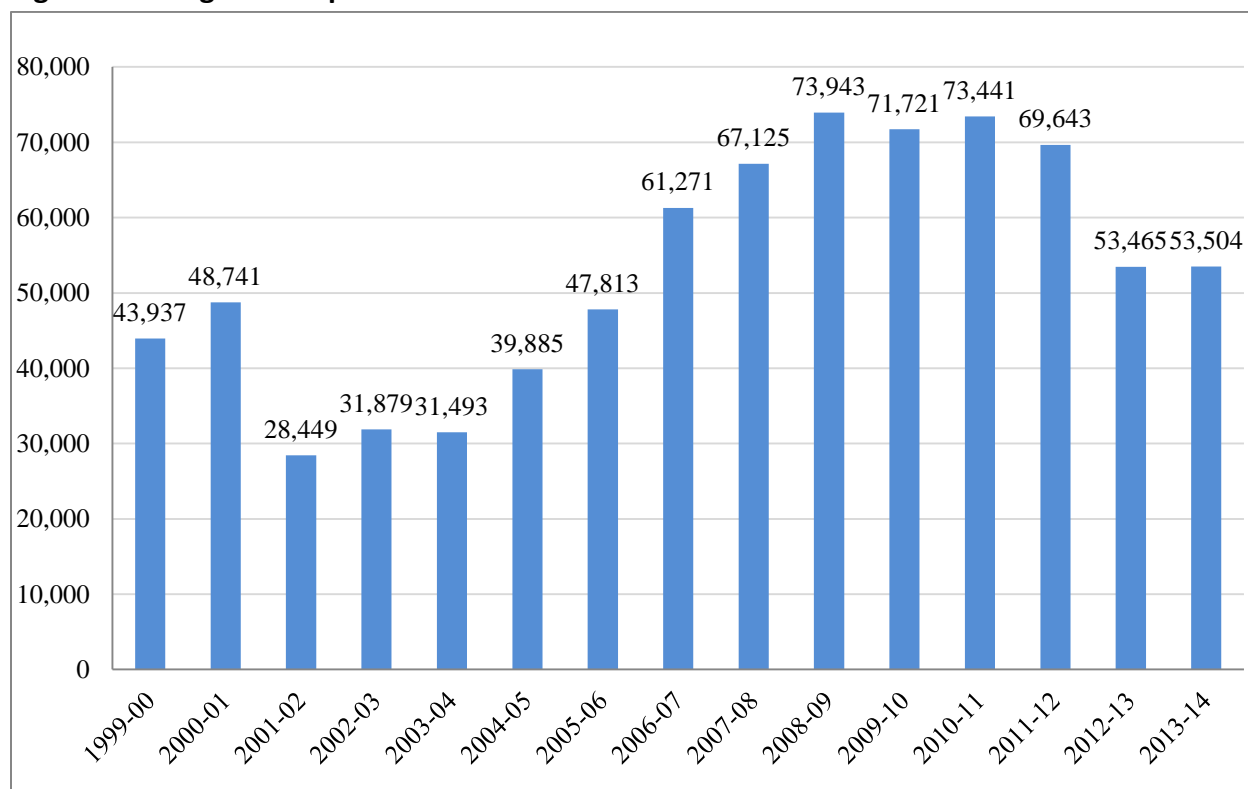
<sup>7</sup> Fabelo, A., Thompson, M. D., Plotkin, M., Carmichael, D., Marchbanks, M. P., & Booth, E. A. (2011). *Breaking schools' rules: A statewide study of how school discipline relates to student achievement and juvenile justice involvement*. New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center & Public Policy Research Institute.

<sup>8</sup> American Psychological Association [APA] Zero Tolerance Task Force. (2008). Are zero tolerance policies effective in the schools? An evidentiary review and recommendations. *American Psychologist*, 63(9), 852–862

<sup>9</sup> See Shah, N. (1/10/2013) "Discipline Policies Begin to Shift With What Work" *Education Week*. Also: US Department of Education-Department of Justice, School Climate and Discipline Guidance Package.

<sup>10</sup> From SY2000 to SY2010 the number of suspensions increased from 43,937 to 71,721.

<sup>11</sup> These favorable trends have continued this school year with suspensions declining by another 11 percent; arrests declining by 19 percent; and summonses declining by 12 percent comparing the beginning of this school year through early April to the same time period last year.

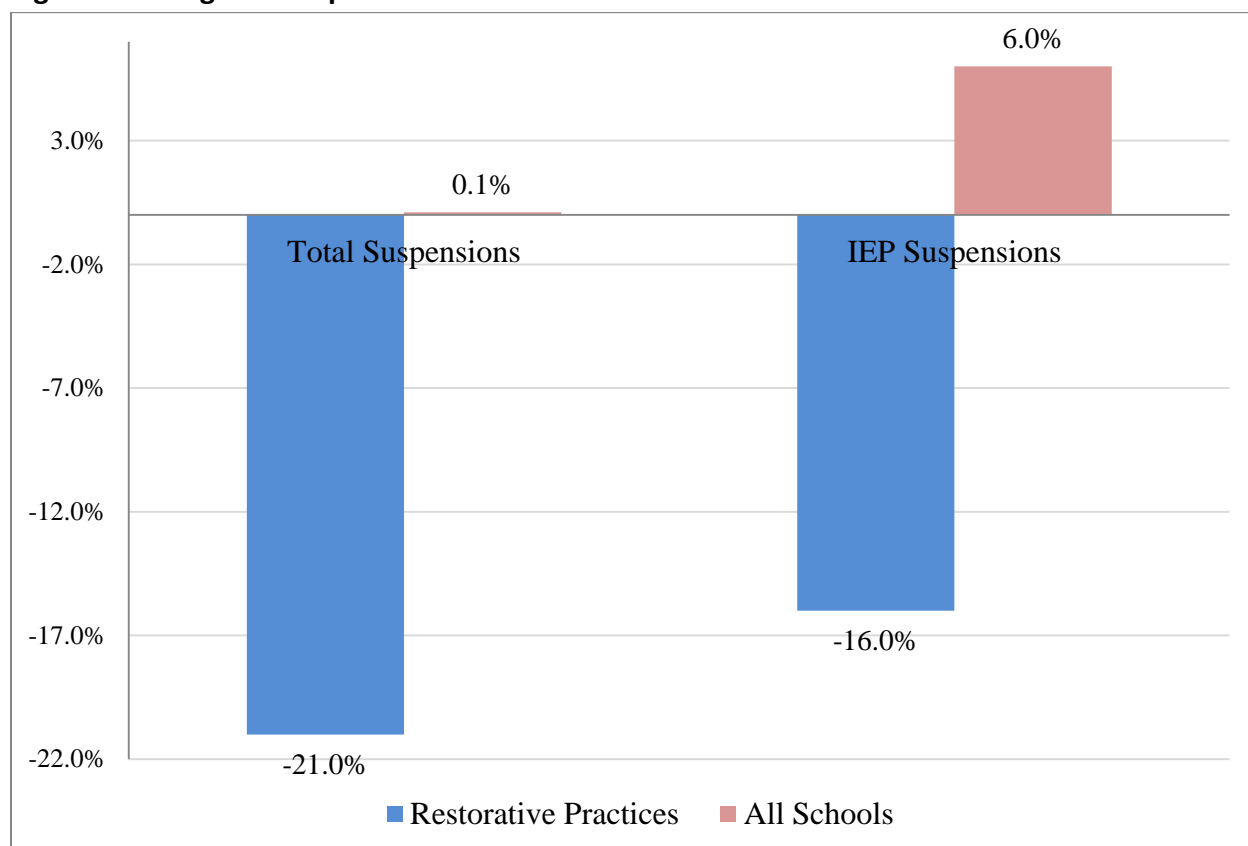
**Figure 1. Changes in Suspensions SY2000 to SY2014**

Several factors during this time period contributed to declines in punitive discipline. Former New York Chief Judge Judith Kaye chaired the New York City School-Justice Partnership Taskforce that released a highly influential report condemning the overuse of exclusionary discipline in New York City schools and making numerous recommendations, including the creation of a multi-stakeholder Leadership Team, to improve school climate in New York. New York City advocates successfully urged the passage of the School Safety Act by the New York City Council, bringing greater transparency to rates of arrests, summonses and suspensions in New York City's public schools. And, the Department of Education (DOE) revised its Discipline Code several times in response to feedback from students, parents, educators and advocates. These changes clarified the need for schools to utilize guidance interventions and urged restraint in the use of suspensions.

In addition, both the DOE and the NYPD School Safety Division invested in training to build understanding of positive strategies for working with students. Cohorts of teachers and administrators across the system have now been exposed to Restorative Justice Practices, leading to sharp declines in suspensions and problematic student behavior. In SY2014, schools trained in restorative practices experienced a 21 percent decline in total

suspensions compared to the prior school year (SY2013), whereas all schools experienced a .1 percent increase over the same time period. In addition, these schools experienced a 16 percent decline in the total number of IEP suspensions, in contrast with an increase of 6 percent in the total number of IEP suspensions system-wide.

**Figure 2. Changes in Suspensions for Schools Trained in Restorative Practices vs All Schools**



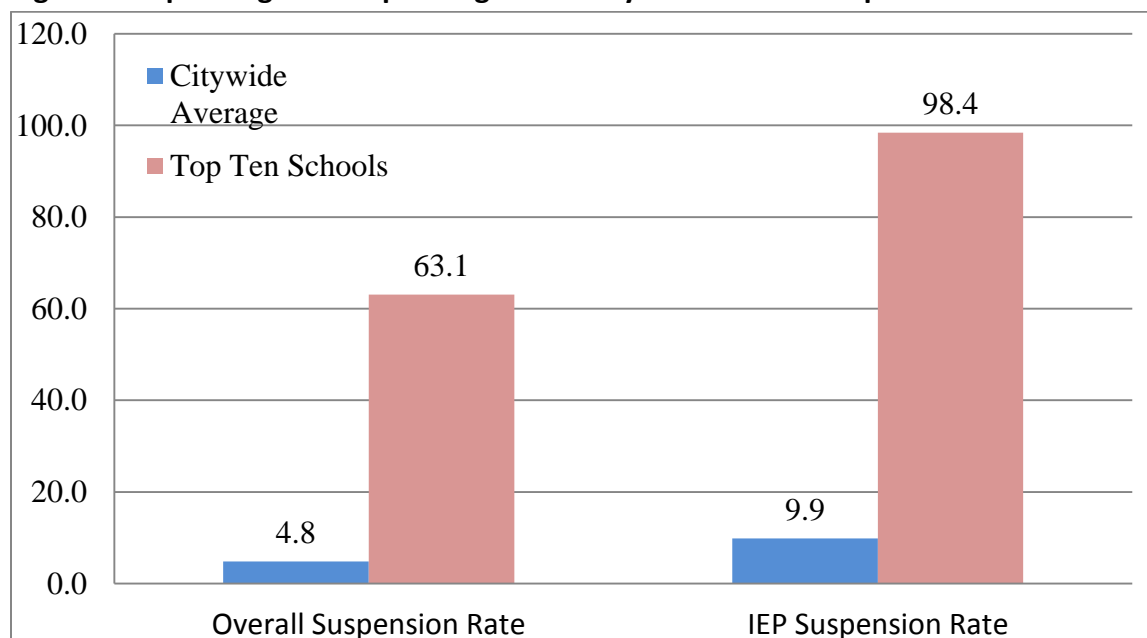
Additionally, since SY2012, all police personnel in the NYPD School Safety Division (SSD) have been trained in an introduction to Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) in order to improve their skills in working effectively with children and adolescents. This system-wide CPS training has coincided with significant declines in arrests and summonses. Although more research on the effects of CPS is needed, extant data<sup>12</sup> suggests that CPS training has improved the ability of SSD personnel to deescalate potentially volatile

<sup>12</sup> The year after SSAs received introductory-level CPS training, arrests and summonses declined by 33 percent and 53 percent respectively. Additionally, assaults on School Safety Division personnel and summonses issued for refusal to comply with lawful orders decreased. Comparing SY2014 to SY2013, felony assaults on School Safety Division personnel decreased by 10.5 percent and summonses issued for refusal to comply with a lawful order decreased 47.3 percent.

situations, not only avoiding the use of arrests and summonses, but also helping to reduce assaults against SSD personnel. Building on this progress, the SSD is now training its officers on in-depth CPS practices.

Nonetheless, despite these promising steps forward in reducing disciplinary exclusion, a small number of the City's public schools continue to show very high-numbers of suspensions, arrests and summonses. For example, although the average suspension rate is 4.8 per 100 students, the top ten highest suspending schools (by rate) issue 63 suspensions per 100 students and the top 10 schools with the highest special needs suspension rates issue 98 suspensions per 100 students with IEPs. According to School Safety Division data, just ten school campuses account for 49 percent of all summonses and 19 percent of all arrests issued by safety agents.<sup>13</sup> Students in these schools are more likely to be excluded from classroom learning and become court-involved than their peers.

**Figure 3. Top 10 Highest Suspending Schools by Rate and IEP Suspension Rate**



*\*Notes: Suspension rates are shown per 100 students*

In addition, troubling disparities in the application of suspensions, arrests and summons are evident across the system. While suspension rates declined across races, disparities in suspensions are increasing, particularly for Black students and students with

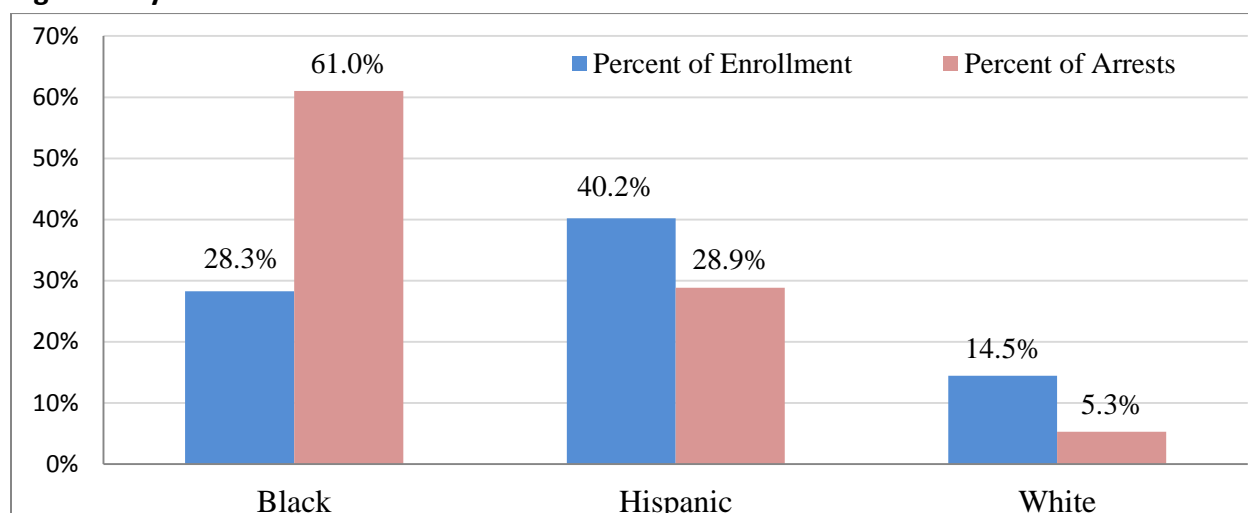
<sup>13</sup> Data calculated from the start of SY2015 to mid-March (7/1/14 – 3/15/15).



disabilities. Even though suspension rates for Black and White students declined between SY2012 and SY2014, Black students were 4.1 times as likely to be suspended as White students in SY2014, compared to a disparity of 3.6 in SY2012. During the same time, the rate at which students with disabilities were suspended compared to students without disabilities increased from 2.35 to 2.62.

Similar disparities exist within arrest data. During SY2014, Black students comprised 28.3 percent of student enrollment but made up 61 percent of arrests. In contrast, White students comprised 14.5 percent of student enrollment and made up 5.3 percent of arrests (See Figure 3).

**Figure 4. System-wide Racial Distribution of Enrollment and Arrest**



More troubling, City data currently do not capture the full number of incidents by which students may be removed from their schools. These include arrests made in schools by precinct-level police, handcuffing (or use of other mechanical restraints on students), and 911 emergency calls regarding students.<sup>14</sup> The lack of data collection impedes policy makers' ability to allocate resources efficiently and the public's ability to hold lawmakers accountable.

In sum, the progress in recent years provides compelling evidence of the benefits of positive discipline supports to improving the climate for learning while maintaining safety in schools. At the same time, there was a strong consensus among Leadership

<sup>14</sup> In his February announcement creating the Leadership Team, the Mayor announced that the City would begin tracking incidents of handcuffing students in schools and improve data collection on Emergency Management Systems calls and transports.

Team members that further steps are needed to reduce suspensions, arrest and summons, and the growing disparities therein, particularly in the City's most challenged schools.

# A Call to Action

## Phase I Recommendations to Improve Climate and Discipline in New York City Public Schools

The following ten recommendations advance the Mayor’s commitment to promoting equity across all systems. They present a balanced approach of structural changes, policy reforms, and additional training, culture shifting, and programming to comprehensively and durably improve the climate of New York City’s Schools to truly achieve safety with dignity. This strategy aligns with key Mayoral initiatives, such as the Community and Renewal Schools initiatives<sup>15</sup> that aim to reduce disparities in educational achievement and target critical supports to schools with concentrated needs. It also furthers the objectives of the Children’s Cabinet, which is designed to improve inter-agency collaboration to better meet the needs of the City’s most vulnerable students and families.

### **Recommendation 1: Articulate a clear mission statement on student discipline that embraces positive supports and presents a strategy for implementing this mission**

New York City has made considerable strides towards positive climate and discipline. The goal of the following recommendations is to accelerate progress to promote a school system oriented on the principles of respect for diversity and positive youth development, in which all schools utilize the multi-tiered system of student supports to ensure that all students receive the social, emotional, and behavioral supports needed to advance learning and maintain safety, while minimizing disciplinary exclusion and eliminating disparities based on race, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression.

To promote system-wide implementation of a positive approach to climate and discipline, the Mayor, Chancellor and Police Commissioner should issue clear and consistent messaging on the new strategy for positive climate, discipline and safety as articulated in these recommendations. This messaging, to be issued in 2015, should communicate a vision for implementation of culturally inclusive,<sup>16</sup> youth development principles in schools across the system.

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<sup>15</sup> Community Schools or Renewal Schools that have high-suspension rates, or are designated as high-priority schools for school climate interventions will explore setting school climate related goals.

<sup>16</sup> Culturally inclusive youth development is defined as a student-centered framework that recognizes and affirms diversity in racial and ethnic backgrounds, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression,

In addition, the Mayor, Chancellor and Police Commissioner also should commit to:

1. Provide training to help schools build their own vision for and understanding of this work.
  - a. Create an in-depth orientation, preferably beginning in summer 2015, for all superintendents, borough staff, principals, and assistant principals on the vision for positive school climate and the core principles of progressive discipline based in a culturally-inclusive, youth development approach, and how this framework can improve academic achievement and the environment for teaching and learning in schools.<sup>17</sup>
  - b. Institute ongoing training for school administrators, teachers and non-instructional staff, parents, and the borough- and district-based staff who are charged with supporting schools, as well as the Community Education Councils and Chancellor's Parent Advisory Committee. This training also should be provided to NYPD school safety agents and other officers in regular contact with schools in order to increase understanding of the school's philosophy and approach to climate and discipline, and further their integration into the school community.
    - o Beginning in SY2016, training should provide an overview of the DOE's new vision and strategy for positive climate and discipline. It also should support awareness-building and skills development in approaches to creating

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family composition, immigration status and student abilities, in the content and organization of schools and classrooms, as well as in the interpersonal relationships among members of the school community. Students are provided with multiple opportunities to participate in a wide range of pro-social activities and, at the same time, bond with caring, supportive adults. Administrators, teachers and non-instructional staff, and safety agents are trained to be aware of how personal bias can influence relationships and expectations for student success; skilled in navigating issues of culture, identity, and power in the school environment; and able to effectively incorporate diverse experiences, strengths, histories and voices of students and their communities into curriculum and instruction. Discipline is addressed as a community, with participation and leadership from students, parents, staff and administration. Disciplinary interventions are informed by an understanding of the impact of trauma on student behavior and knowledge of restorative strategies to promote trust and engagement in learning, caring for others, and accountability for and self-regulation of behavior in the classroom and school.

<sup>17</sup> Members of the Mayor's Leadership Team on School Climate and Discipline should be tapped to inform the development of the training, including identifying potential experts to participate. The Principals' Working Group members are particularly important to include, given their expertise and unique perspective on what schools need.

respectful learning environments and managing student behavior, such as: multi-tiered system of student supports; social emotional learning; adolescent brain development; the effects of implicit bias on classroom practice; techniques for building positive relationships with students; crisis de-escalation; the impact of trauma on students; and the use of data to guide this work.

- c. Train teacher evaluators and coaches on feedback techniques to help teachers improve their skills in SEL and culturally responsive and positive classroom management techniques, using Danielson Framework components 2(a) and 2(d).
2. Provide social-emotional skills development for students as part of regular classroom instruction and school-wide programs at all grade levels;

Effective social emotional learning helps students develop fundamental skills for life success, including: recognizing and managing emotions; developing caring and concern for others; establishing positive relationships; making responsible decisions; and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically. Such skills help prevent negative behaviors and avoid the disciplinary consequences that result when students do not live up to behavioral standards.<sup>18</sup>

- a. Provide students with regular instruction in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) as an essential component of instruction at all grade levels. The Division of Teaching and Learning should drive this work so that it is aligned to and infused into the curriculum. This should be done in collaboration with the Office of Safety and Youth Development (OSYD).
  - o Encourage schools to develop strategies for student participation in the implementation of SEL-oriented interventions, such as through the creation of credit-bearing classes on restorative interventions, to ensure ongoing opportunities for positive youth development and voice in the school.
  - o Expand access to mentors, both adults and peers, as a critical source of social-emotional support to students, and provide service credit for young people who play these roles.

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<sup>18</sup> For an example of a comprehensive approach to SEL, see Syracuse City School District Code of Conduct.

- Work to inform teacher and administrator pre-service programs about the importance of including SEL and the City’s framework for progressive discipline into coursework for prospective educators, beginning with the NYC Teaching Fellows, NYC Leadership Academy and expanding to include institutions of higher education (such as CUNY).
3. Create meaningful opportunities for input from students, parents and other stakeholders to improve the environment for learning in schools.
    - a. Establish a multi-stakeholder advisory committee to inform implementation of the City’s strategy/mission statement for positive discipline and climate, including practitioners, educators, advocates, and other experts as well as parents, students and community-based organizations.
    - b. Utilize student, parent and community councils at the borough and city levels to gather input on perceptions of climate and discipline, and increase opportunities for substantive participation by students in developing strategies for school climate improvement.
  4. Create positive, non-punitive, incentives for principals and teachers to implement progressive disciplinary supports and align school accountability frameworks with the new vision and strategy.
    - a. Create positive, non-punitive incentives for principals and teachers to implement progressive school climate supports. Incentives could include providing extra points on formal evaluations for positive discipline and climate.
    - b. Expand the emphasis on positive climate, social-emotional skills and culturally-inclusive curriculum and instructional approaches in school quality reviews, beginning in SY2016.
    - c. Revise the index used for comparing school performance to account for additional indicators of student need/trauma, including students returning from detention settings, designated temporary housing, or with two or more suspensions in a previous setting.

**Recommendation 2: Provide additional school climate supports, including staff and training, for schools with the highest number of suspensions, arrests and/or summons.**

High rates of suspensions, arrests and summonses are highly concentrated in New York City schools. While there are nearly 1800 public schools citywide, 10 percent or 180 schools<sup>19</sup> account for 41 percent of all suspensions and the vast majority of arrests and summonses issued by the School Safety Division of the NYPD. Indeed, just ten school campuses account for 49 percent of all summonses and 19 percent of all arrests made by the SSD.<sup>20</sup> Although the average suspension rate is 4.8 per 100 students, the top ten highest suspending schools (by rate) issue 63 suspensions per 100 students and the top 10 schools with the highest suspension rates of students with special needs issue 98 suspensions per 100 students with IEPs. Students in these schools are significantly more likely to be excluded from classroom learning and become court-involved than their peers.

In order to improve school climate and safely reduce suspensions and arrests further in these high-priority schools, DOE and NYPD should:

1. Provide intensive support for school-level planning, training and on-site coaching in school climate and positive discipline practices (including restorative approaches). Funding should begin in SY2016 with an initial investment in a significant subset of the highest-priority schools in conjunction with an outcome evaluation (See Appendix D for a description of the proposed Safe and Supportive Opportunity Program Expanded, SSOPE);
  - a. Support should include funding for a full-time coordinator or the equivalent via release-time for teachers or other staff in the building, and very large schools may need more than one.
  - b. Selection of participating schools also should consider the readiness and capacity of administrators and school faculty to implement restorative interventions. In addition, preference should be given to Renewal Schools that meet these

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<sup>19</sup> The Leadership Team designated 180 schools as “high-priority schools” for climate supports/interventions. These schools have high rates of suspensions, arrests, summonses, students living in temporary housing and/or chronic absenteeism and as such should be prioritized for additional supports. The overlap between the Leadership Team’s 180 high-priority schools and Renewal and Community Schools is small (only 28 schools) because Renewal and Community Schools did not factor suspension or arrest rates into their criteria.

<sup>20</sup> Data calculated from the start of SY2015 to mid-march (7/1/14 – 3/15/15).

criteria, as well as those that have already taken steps to address climate and discipline, and where additional supports would accelerate progress and provide models of success for others to follow.<sup>21</sup>

2. Increase the number of counselors, social workers (including licensed clinical social workers) and other supports to improve school culture and climate. When services are being provided to students with intensive needs, a ratio of 1:50 is suggested.
3. Prioritize additional training in de-escalation practices for SSAs and resources and technical assistance to schools with the highest numbers of arrests and summonses (starting with an investment in a subset of the highest-need schools with a strong objective outcome evaluation).
4. Provide technical assistance and training to schools with high numbers of arrests and summonses to develop effective School Safety Committee meetings. Technical assistance and training should cover:
  - a. Best practices in SSA-educator collaborations to reduce crime and incidents of arrests and summonses.
  - b. Input and analysis of data collected in the Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) (including time of day and location of incidents); analyzing School Safety Division and NYPD Compstat data, and (if applicable) data related to incidents at scanning stations.
  - c. Best practices in engaging student and parent participation in meetings.

**Recommendation 3: Increase school climate supports system-wide.**

Evidence from other localities implementing school climate strategies indicate that system-wide coordination and dedicated staffing are required for effective assessment, planning and implementation at the school level. Without consistent attention to building positive school climate and discipline, many schools will be unlikely to successfully make the shift in approach.

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<sup>21</sup> Note that the selection process also consider the appropriateness of including schools that are being phased out, and as well as ways in which SSOPE would need to be adapted to help the particular needs of schools sharing a campus.



To ensure appropriate staffing and guidance to assist schools in shifting their practice, the DOE should:

1. Appoint a Senior Advisor to the Chancellor on School Climate and Discipline to guide further development of this strategy, as well as implementation and monitoring over time. This position should be responsible for improving coordination among the offices for teaching/learning, OSYD, special education, legal, mental health, community schools, and renewal schools to promote better integration of efforts to support students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs.
2. Assign Borough-level School Climate Coaches to assist and monitor schools in developing and implementing positive climate, discipline and safety plans. Responsibilities should include: (i) convening regular meetings of school-based School Climate Coordinators to support peer-to-peer exchange, learning and development; (ii) monitoring implementation of school climate and discipline plans; and (iii) helping schools to create opportunities for student and parent voice and feedback on implementation of positive climate and discipline.
3. Establish protocols for effective self-assessment and planning by schools, recognizing that some schools may need more time than others to reach their ultimate goals. Protocols should require:
  - a. Creation of a multi-stakeholder School Climate/Discipline Action team, which could be the School Leadership Team, fairness committee or other group that already exists in the school, to develop School Climate/Discipline Plans. The team should include the principal, teachers, social workers, parents, students, and other partners in the school community.
  - b. Articulation of a Goal for positive school climate/discipline by schools as part of its Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP), beginning in SY2017. Each school's strategy to reach this goal should be detailed in a School Climate and Discipline Plan and submitted as part of its Youth Development Consolidated Plan. The Goal should articulate the school's core values and include an analysis of student needs and behavioral supports to be provided by the school, consistent with a multi-tiered system (or pyramid) of student supports. The role of the CEP as a guiding tool for improving school climate should be communicated to superintendents and QR reviewers.

- c. Protocols also should clarify expectations regarding: (i) use of the multi-tiered system of student supports; (ii) designation of at least one 80 minute professional development session for staff to engage in on-site planning, training and peer exchange with other schools; and (iii) opportunities for diverse groups of students to inform the development of School Climate and Discipline Plans.
1. Provide schools with Climate Coordinators who are trained to facilitate positive climate and discipline strategies. Coordinators should assist school-based Climate/Discipline Action Teams in: (i) assessing school needs and strengths; (ii) articulating school-wide philosophy and values; and (iii) creating and implementing a positive climate/discipline plan, including selection of whole-school culture-building strategies as well as interventions to resolve conflicts and provide intensive supports to students with additional needs. For schools with high rates of suspensions, arrests, and summonses, funding should be provided for the School Climate Coordinator to be full-time or the equivalent.
2. Allocate flexible funding for schools to use to promote positive climate strategies. Funds may be used to provide, for example, additional training, staffing or per session time for staff to visit other schools and to receive in-school coaching from teachers and paraprofessionals who model positive climate strategies.
3. Increase the number of counselors and social work services available to all schools, and reframe the role of school-based social workers so they can serve as a resource to school-based crisis management teams.<sup>22</sup>
  - a. Additional guidance counselors should be phased into the system, beginning in high-priority schools and with the goal of reaching a minimum student-to-counselor ratio of 1:250 system-wide.
  - b. Additional social work services also should be phased into the system, beginning in high-priority schools and with the goal of reaching a minimum student-to-social worker ratio of 1:250. Schools with greatest need would benefit from having a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) while schools with less need would benefit from having a licensed master social worker (LMSW).

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<sup>22</sup> The Borough Field Support Centers should also explore strategies for maintaining case notes electronically to improve consistency and quality of care to students.

4. Increase awareness and provide professional development for school personnel and school safety agents (SSAs) on the impact arrests and suspensions have on students.
5. Assist Community and Renewal Schools to integrate positive school climate and discipline into their transformation strategy in SY2016.

**Recommendation 4: Improve system-wide data collection and use.**

The federal Department of Education Office of Civil Rights requires schools to report all referrals to law enforcement including school related arrests, summonses, and the use of mechanical restraints with students. However, at present, no city agency captures the full number of students who are arrested or issued summonses in New York City schools. In addition to not meeting the requirements of federal law, the lack of data collected impairs policy makers' ability to allocate resources effectively. While the School Safety Division (SSD) tracks incidents of arrests and summonses involving their personnel, they do not track incidents of handcuffing, nor do they track arrests or summonses made by precinct officers. Further, NYPD data is tracked by school campus only and many campuses contain several different schools.

Moreover, regular use of data at the system-level, borough, district and school-level can reduce the incidence of disciplinary exclusion by enhancing educators' understanding of and ability to respond effectively to students' academic, social or behavioral needs. While disciplinary data (classroom removals, suspensions, arrests and summonses) should be a bedrock of these analyses, data also should include other indicators of student engagement and success, including attendance, grades and course passing, as well as student perceptions of climate and discipline in schools.

To ensure better tracking and utilization of data to improve climate and discipline, the DOE should:

1. Develop a system interface between schools, NYPD and the School Safety Division to accurately track the full number of students arrested, summonsed, or handcuffed in NYC public schools, by individual school.<sup>23</sup> Data should be tracked by race, special education status, English Language Learning status, grade and school.

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<sup>23</sup> The full number of arrests, summonses and handcuffing should include those made by NYPD precinct and School Safety Division officers.

2. Use the NYC School Survey and focus groups with students to collect better data on student perceptions of climate, discipline, and safety.
  - a. Provide additional guidance to schools on survey administration to protect confidentiality, and seek feedback from students on survey content/validity and implementation on a routine basis.
  - b. Add items to the survey scales measuring Trust and Supportive Environments to: (i) assess student interactions with non-instructional adults in schools, including School Safety Division personnel; and (ii) probe perceptions of fairness and effectiveness in the application of discipline and safety policies and practices.<sup>24</sup>
  - c. Beginning in a set of pilot schools, expand the survey—in concert with focus groups—to obtain a more complete picture of student experiences that may affect their engagement and behavior in school.<sup>25</sup> Pilot questions should be developed in consultation with research experts, students and advocates, and include an “About You” panel with questions exploring: (i) student experiences of belonging on the basis of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender

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<sup>24</sup> Sample Questions for the NYC School Survey

1. Adults working at this school treat all students respectfully.
2. Adults working at this school have disrespected students because of their race, ethnicity or cultural background.
3. Boys and girls are treated equally well.
4. People of different cultural backgrounds, races or ethnicities get along well at this school.
5. Students at this school are teased or picked on about their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.
6. Discipline is applied fairly in my school.

*Source:* Questions 1 – 5, See US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *School Climate Surveys* for students, staff and non-instructional staff. Sample questions drawn from 2014 Student Survey.

<sup>25</sup> Sample Questions for the “About You” Panel

1. What is your gender?: Male; Female; Transgender
2. What is your sexual orientation?: Straight; Lesbian/gay; Bisexual; Queer; Not sure/questioning
3. Have you ever been bullied or harassed at school because of your sexual orientation (being lesbian, gay, etc.)?
4. Have you ever been bullied or harassed at school because people don’t think you are masculine enough or feminine enough?
5. Have you ever felt uncomfortable in school because of your skin color or gender?
6. Do you have a place at home where you can relax and do your work?
7. Have you, or a care-giver (parent, guardian, family member), ever been incarcerated?<sup>25</sup>
8. Have you ever been bullied or teased because your parent was in jail or prison?
9. Have you ever experienced: classroom removal, principal or suspension, summons, arrest?
10. How do safety procedures at your school make you feel?

*Source:* Questions 1 – 5, Angela Irvine (2010) National Center for Crime and Delinquency. These questions are being used in juvenile detention centers.

identity and expression;<sup>26</sup> (ii) student experiences of trauma, particularly with respect to current or prior incarceration of a caregiver;<sup>27</sup> and (iii) student experiences of school-specific discipline and safety strategies, including metal detectors/scanners and restorative interventions.

3. Provide training for school personnel on DOE's on-line data collection systems in order to promote consistency in use.
  - a. Train school personnel on Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) Data Management Tools and how they can support better school-based inquiry and action-planning by staff, deans and school-based mental health. Training also should seek to ensure consistent use of positive guidance interventions when disciplinary problems arise<sup>28</sup> and should emphasize the role and importance of OORS for better school-wide planning (and not as a tool for punishing schools with high rates of discipline).
  - b. Review OORS, in consultation with school-level administrators and staff, to assess implementation challenges and obstacles to usage at the school level, and what can be done to improve accuracy in reporting. This review also should examine ways to help schools track removals from class and by teacher. Reports should be linked to observation reports, and in concert with other student data, to facilitate more effective support to children in need and to facilitate intervention with adults who may need additional guidance on supportive disciplinary strategies. These data should be viewed as a tool for continuous

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<sup>26</sup> Young people who identify as LGBTQ or gender non-conforming are more likely to be disciplined at school and to experience bullying at school than their heterosexual and gender conforming peers, more likely to experience rejection or victimization by their parents/caregivers, more likely to face homelessness, twice as likely to be arrested and detained for status offenses and other nonviolent offenses, and at higher risk for illicit drug use. Cited from US Department of Justice, *LGBTQ Youths in the Juvenile Justice System*; See also Blad, E. (10/21/14). "Efforts Build to Track School Climate for LGBT Students," *Education Week*.

<sup>27</sup> National data show that one in 28 children have an incarcerated parent, making it likely that every school professional will come in contact with children of incarcerated parents. Parental incarceration can affect student readiness (behavior, attention and social skills), often as a result of the anger, frustration, confusion and lack of information and control they experience. Children with incarcerated parents also are more likely to experience lower teacher expectations, isolation and teasing from peers, and are at increased risk for dropping out of school. Increasing awareness of school staff of the trauma and shame experienced by students with incarcerated family members can increase the chances of belonging and success at school. See: *New York Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents: A Fact Sheet for Teachers, Counselors, and School Professionals*. The Osborne Association.

<sup>28</sup> Although all schools are required to utilize the Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) to record disciplinary incidents, anecdotal reports suggest that there may be inconsistencies in the way data are entered into the system and utilized by schools in planning.

support and growth, and not as a formal part of teacher and administrator summative evaluations.

- c. Require principals/administrators to record in OORS contact with parents/guardians after a student has been handcuffed, arrested or issued a summonses/Warning Card.
4. Create a systematic way to collect data on progressive disciplinary strategies that schools are using, such as restorative circles and conferencing, to inform and improve implementation.
    - a. Examine ways to expand usage of OORS and Suspensions and Office of Hearing Online (SOHO) to include more complete information on the use of progressive discipline strategies by schools, such as by creating drop-down menus that facilitate coding by schools about consequences to behavior, such as restorative circles, conferences and peer mediation.
  5. Develop a system to track all incidents of students receiving Warning Cards and the corresponding guidance interventions or disciplinary actions issued to these students. Require that such a record be deleted at the end of each school year.<sup>29</sup>

Further, in order to improve transparency, NYPD and DOE should:

6. Report instances of arrests and summonses and use of mechanical restraints to the federal Department of Education Office of Civil Rights in compliance with federal law.
7. Report information by school to the public by key indicators such as race, gender and disability status.
8. Report the full number of students arrested and issued summonses in schools.

**Recommendation 5: Implement protocols and training to improve the scanning process and remove scanners where appropriate.**

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<sup>29</sup> In order to assist DOE in tracking Warning Cards, NYPD could issue 3 copies of a Warning Card: 1 for the student, 1 for the school administration, and 1 for NYPD.

Currently, there are 80 permanent scanning campuses throughout the City. Despite a 48 percent<sup>30</sup> reduction in total crime in NYC public schools over the last 10 years, not a single school has removed a permanent scanner during that period. There are currently no written guidelines for removing or adding scanners to schools. Because some students see metal detectors at schools as intrusive and denigrating, schools should ensure the scanning process is as minimally intrusive as possible.

In order to evaluate the need for scanning in schools and campuses and ensure scanning is conducted in as minimally intrusive a manner as possible, NYPD and DOE should:

1. Jointly develop an assessment to determine criteria by which scanners can be removed or added to/from schools/campuses. The assessment should review several years of data, including weapons found and confiscated, the number of incidents at scanning resulting in the issuance of summons, arrest or school disciplinary interventions and whether students are consistently late for class due to scanning delays. A baseline assessment should be completed by the beginning of school year 2015-16 and should be repeated every three years.
2. Jointly develop a transparent process for evaluating the use of scanners in schools that is conducted on a regular basis. The assessment should consider whether less frequent forms of scanning, such as random or unannounced scanning, would be useful and whether other whole school positive climate improvement interventions can be implemented. The evaluation should be developed with input from key stakeholders in the school community and should be shared with parents, students and teachers.
3. Develop specialized training for school administration staff and SSAs on roles and responsibilities regarding use of scanning, and prioritize scanning schools to receive joint training of school staff and SSAs in Collaborative Problem Solving.
  - a. Utilize student focus groups to develop said training.
  - b. Develop a checklist, PowerPoint or outline for a school assembly to be held at the beginning of the school year for all students. The assembly should cover the most recent assessment of scanning in the school and expectations and procedures for the scanning process. In addition, the assembly should include a

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<sup>30</sup> Data from SY2005-SY2014.

“Know Your Rights” segment regarding the implications of scanning refusal and altercations that occur during the scanning process, as well as the student’s rights to ask for school staff intervention.

4. Ensure the scanning process and expectations for behavior of students and staff are clearly communicated through signage and clarification of protocols.
  - a. Require schools to post clear signage at entry to show items that need to be removed, and how scanning procedure works. Signs should be appealing, welcoming and visually designed to accommodate literacy, special needs and language barriers of parents and students. Sign design should be vetted by student representatives if possible.
  - b. Ensure properly trained school administrators (or other designated school staff with authority to administer responses to incidents) are available to assist in courteously moving students through the scanning process in the least intrusive manner possible. DOE staff should utilize appropriate supportive/de-escalation practices supported by DOE.
5. Update the section about scanning in the SSA training guide as follows:
  - a. “Line Control” #2: affirmatively require that SSAs and school staff designees who are assisting with morning entry/scanning use welcoming language and interactions with students to expedite students getting into school and to their classes in a timely and peaceful manner. The training guide should emphasize that scanning should be accomplished in the least intrusive manner possible.
  - b. When a situation arises during scanning, SSAs should employ de-escalation practices taught in CPS and conflict resolution training to minimize the use of summonses or arrests.
  - c. When a student refuses scanning or disagrees with the confiscation of an item that is not a weapon, the matter will be referred to school administration staff.
6. Further clarify Chancellor’s Regulation on what happens when a student refuses scanning. Currently the regulation stipulates that a student cannot be sent home for refusing scanning and that the student should be directed to the principal. However, there are no further recommendations for how a principal should respond.



**Recommendation 6: Memorialize in writing, policies and protocols within NYPD and DOE that promote de-escalation and integration between educators and agents.**

While arrests and summonses by School Safety Division personnel have declined greatly throughout NYC public schools, these incidents are still concentrated in a few schools. This year to date, ten school campuses account for 49 percent of all summonses and 19 percent of all arrests made in NYC public schools. Schools with high concentrations of arrests, summonses and suspensions need additional resources and guidance in order to reduce the number of students who ultimately dropout or become court-involved. In all schools, overall school climate will benefit through better integration of School Safety Division personnel.

In order to better support schools' ability to integrate School Safety Division personnel with school staff and students, and to decrease the use of arrests and summonses, the DOE and NYPD should:

1. Release a joint memo outlining new protocols for integrating SSD personnel into the overall school community that includes guidelines for cross training and best-practices in relations between educators-safety agents. Protocols should require:
  - a. Inclusion of safety agents by school administrators in school meetings on an ongoing basis, including: daily briefings, Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings, Town Hall meetings and 80 minute weekly professional development. DOE should provide principals with a menu of professional development training options that schools can utilize during their 80 minute weekly professional development that include topics applicable to both teaching staff and SSD personnel.
  - b. Opportunities for SSD personnel to participate in joint orientation before school year begins, if feasible. If not feasible, school climate should be the topic of one of the first 80 minute professional development opportunities of that school year. This orientation should include opportunities for SSAs and staff to: introduce themselves; discuss changes in staffing; discuss safety protocols for the upcoming year; and review special needs students' behaviors and practices for addressing them effectively. DOE and NYPD should produce a document outlining issues to be addressed at orientation.

- c. Review of data and interventions implemented for students who have received the Warning Cards at School Safety Committee meetings in schools participating in the Warning Cards program.
2. Pilot recommended integration of safety agents in Freshmen Orientation. Freshman orientation should give SSD personnel the opportunity to introduce themselves to incoming students, clarify roles and responsibilities, and allow school staff to explain expectations for student behavior overall and interactions with School Safety staff.
3. Memorialize efforts to train all SSD personnel in CPS, conflict resolution, use of Warning Cards and other de-escalation practices. These efforts should include:
  - a. Mandating all SSD personnel receive ongoing and continued training in Collaborative Problem Solving, conflict resolution and other de-escalation practices, as well as training in implicit bias and trauma and its effects on student behavior.
  - b. Providing in-depth professional development training on students with special needs for all SSD personnel assigned to District 75 schools.
  - c. Providing additional training for SSD personnel issuing Warning Cards to ensure they are issued for instance when a summons would have been issued (and not for minor issues).
4. Include training for all NYPD officers in best practices for policing schools. Training should include information about the role of safety agents, the distinction between student discipline and law enforcement, and the philosophy of non-arrest to be used in schools.
5. Provide high ranking NYPD officers with training in the philosophy of non-arrest to be used in schools; de-escalation practices; CPS and conflict resolution principles; and understanding special needs students' behaviors.

**Recommendation 7: Create Resource Coordination Teams (RCT) within the new Borough Field Support Centers.**

Currently there is no centralized system for schools, particularly high-need schools, to learn about and effectively access the full scope of community-based or city-wide

supports and services available for their highest needs students and families. Schools with limited staff resources and capacity must piece together independent relationships with mental health, housing, preventative services and other organizations. In addition, although school social workers are not all clinical social workers, most, if not all, provide clinical interventions and receive no clinical supervision.

The DOE should pilot the creation of Resource Coordination Teams to serve the two neighborhoods with the highest concentration of high-priority schools, (the South Bronx and Central Brooklyn) to:

1. Act as liaisons between schools, government agencies and community service providers to assist educators in accessing resources. RCT staff<sup>31</sup> should communicate directly with designated point people at other City agencies, engage in troubleshooting obstacles to effective communication and disseminate information to educators regarding accessing agency and community based services. In order to serve as an effective liaison, RCT staff should also:
  - a. Develop (and regularly update) simple guides to help students/parents/school staff navigate systems such as ACS, juvenile and adult court systems; public housing, citizenship, etc.
  - b. Identify mental health resources (and funding streams) for schools and develop streamlined referral processes to expedite services for students and their families (e.g. formal relationships with social work schools/institutes).
  - c. Meet regularly with principals and other school staff (which can include guidance counselors, assistant principals, social workers or school psychologists) to assess school needs.
  - d. Work with schools to create professional development opportunities to learn more about navigating systems and connecting students and families with services.
  - e. Develop a tracking system for services most requested.

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<sup>31</sup> To see a full proposed staff structure please see Appendix E.

- f. Where needed and feasible, escort students to initial appointments at outside agencies/nonprofits.
2. Centralize resource mapping to promote greater efficiency for schools in accessing supports.
  - a. Develop and maintain an interactive web-based resource map for the catchment areas that includes relevant contact information and descriptions of local and citywide community based services.
  - b. The Resource Integration Working Group created a potential prototype map which contains over 900 individually mapped services categorized by relevant subgroups. (Map available at [goo.gl/TsZcX8](http://goo.gl/TsZcX8))
3. Provide clinical support and supervision to school social workers, as recommended by the National Association of Social Workers. Direct supervision by a trained social worker will enhance the level of service provided to students and provide training and professional growth opportunities for school social workers.
4. Serve as a liaison between DOE “content experts” and school staff to ensure content experts are aware of and optimally addressing schools’ highest needs.

**Recommendation 8: Implement strategies and supports to specifically reduce disparities in discipline and school-based arrests/summonses.**

Despite overall declines in suspensions, arrests and summonses, disparities have increased. Between SY2012 and SY2014 suspension disparities between Black and Hispanic compared to White students increased as did the suspensions disparities between students with special needs and general education students.

1. Create a standing cross-organization committee within DOE to develop an action plan to reduce racial and IEP disparities in discipline. This function could be informed by the multi-stakeholder advisory group in Lead Recommendation 2.4c.
2. Provide schools with regular reports on discipline and climate data, including identifying patterns of disparity by sub-population. These may be reports drawn from OORS and SOHO data, as well as analyses of results of the NYC School Survey.

3. Collaborate with community stakeholders to review implementation and effectiveness of Respect for All in promoting a safe and respectful environment for students and adults in schools.
4. Provide professional development aimed specifically at building the skills of school administrators, teachers and non-instructional staff, and school safety agents to work with students experiencing trauma, the effects of implicit bias, culturally inclusive practices in the classroom, and strategies for building positive relationships with students.

**Recommendation 9: Improve training of staff in high-priority schools about how to identify and meet the needs of students with special needs.**

Students with special needs are suspended at much greater rates than their non-disabled peers. Although these students make up only 18 percent of all NYC public schools students, they account for 36 percent of all suspensions. Students with disabilities were suspended 2.6 times as frequently as students without disabilities in SY2014. Moreover, many high-priority schools have large numbers of students with special needs and high suspension rates for these students

To reduce disparities in suspensions, arrests and summonses of students with special needs, and increase school staff's ability to better understand and address the behavior, as well as more effectively support the needs of these students, the DOE should:

1. Improve communication between the Office of Safety and Youth Development (OSYD) and the Division of Specialized Instruction and Student Support to minimize suspensions and create supportive responses to student behavior that is connected to a diagnosed or as yet undiagnosed disability.
2. Provide training to all school staff in high-priority schools on how to effectively address challenging student behaviors and to build the capacity of schools to develop student assessments and plans for struggling general education students or those with previously identified special needs<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Schools should be encouraged to develop a range of behaviors that require educators to develop student assessment plans.

- a. Staff should be encouraged to enhance Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) by including Collaborative Problem Solving frameworks if appropriate.
3. Clarify protocols for conducting, and provide meaningful oversight of, suspension hearings for students with special needs including:
    - a. Providing clearer guidance for school staff and other participating parties in how to conduct Manifestation and Determination Reviews (MDRs).
    - b. Develop a pilot in a subset of high-priority schools that require a qualified, neutral party to be present at MDRs in order to better inform the process and introduce systemic responses available to address the students' needs.
  4. Improve communication with parents/guardians regarding MDRs. Re-design layout of suspension letter so that the MDR date is clearly identified on the first page with the information about the suspension hearing and so that language is direct and clear about why the MDR is important. The letter should also inform parents/guardians of their right to bring an advocate.
  5. Recommendation for future study: Increase the number of available seats in therapeutic school settings for students diagnosed with severe challenges whose needs cannot currently be met in the public school system.
    - a. Identify effective practices of successful non-public schools serving the highest needs students for potential replication within the public school system

**Recommendation 10: Promote transparency, consistency and information sharing between schools receiving students via Safety Transfers and DOE Central.**

Safety Transfer protocols differ from borough to borough and are not widely understood by principals. Schools are provided with little information regarding the kinds of supports needed by students who are transferred for safety purposes. Allowing students a fresh opportunity at new schools is a core principle that all educators share, yet students would have a better chance to succeed if their receiving school was better prepared to meet their needs. At present, many principals feel unprepared to effectively support students who have received Safety Transfers.

To improve the quality of care for students receiving Safety Transfers, the DOE should:

1. Systematize Safety Transfer protocols across borough enrollment offices and ensure fairness in the distribution of safety transfers by creating a list of Safety Transfers across schools that is shared within DOE and re-assessing schools that are excluded from the rotation.
2. Develop a consultative process for seeking input from principals on the protocol for student placement and data-sharing to ensure that the best information is available to meet the child's needs and is shared consistently across the seven Borough Field Support Centers.
3. Provide principals with adequate time and appropriate student information to prepare for Safety Transfers.
4. Allow for Safety Transfers for students who have acted as aggressors and may become future victims.

## Appendix A

### **MEMBERS OF THE MAYOR'S LEADERSHIP TEAM ON SCHOOL CLIMATE AND DISCIPLINE**

Ursulina Ramirez, Chief of Staff, NYC Department of Education (*Co-Chair*)

Vincent Schiraldi, Senior Advisor, Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (*Co-Chair*)

Ana Bermudez, Commissioner, Department of Probation

Mary Bassett, Commissioner, Department of Mental Health & Hygiene

Ian Bassin, Deputy Counsel to the Mayor

Gladys Carrión, Commissioner, Administration for Children's Services

Chief Brian Conroy, Commanding Officer, School Safety Division, NYPD

Kathleen DeCataldo, Executive Director, NYS Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children

Celeste Douglas-Wheeler, Principal, MS 57, Ron Brown Academy

Hon. Monica Drinane, Former Supervising Judge of Bronx Family Court

Edward Fergus, Assistant Professor, New York University

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## Appendix B

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Shawn Mangar, Principal, MS 532 Baychester Middle School  
Magdelyn Neyra, Principal, The Forward School  
Taeko Onishi, Principal, Lyons Community School  
Carolyn Quintana, Principal, Bronxdale High School  
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## APPENDIX C

### ANALYSIS OF HIGH PRIORITY SCHOOLS

At the request of the Leadership Team, the Data Working Group developed a methodology for determining the highest priority schools for targeted school climate intervention. Indicators examined in these analyses included: suspension rate; IEP suspension rate; Black suspension rate; Economic Needs Index score<sup>33</sup> and rate of chronic absenteeism.

#### **Methodology**

Data used in these analyses were initially obtained from the Student Safety Act data file that profiled 1,570 schools during the 2013-14 School Year. This data file redacted suspension figures less than ten, meaning that the 712 schools with fewer than ten suspensions were set to zero. After subtracting the schools with redacted data, 858 schools remained. The list was then broken down by school type and sorted by the average number of suspensions, average suspension rate, and average number of IEP suspensions. Using these averages as benchmarks, a composite index was created based on absolute number of suspensions, suspension rate, and number of IEP suspensions. Nine schools were subsequently added to the list that did not have high-composite index scores, but had high absolute numbers of suspensions or were located in campuses that accounted for the largest proportions of summonses and arrests district-wide.

In order to rank the schools based on need for intervention, the group first analyzed which school-level indicators correlate most highly with suspension rates. Among all school types, Black enrollment, chronic absenteeism, and the Economic Needs Index were the strongest, statistically significant correlates of suspension. At middle and K-8 schools, ELA and Math scores also were significantly correlated with suspension rates; this was not the case for elementary schools. With the exception of Black enrollment, which was substituted for Black suspension rate<sup>34</sup>, these indicators were then used to rank the different school types (elementary, middle and high school). Total suspension rate and IEP suspension rate also were included in the ranking system.

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<sup>33</sup> The Economic Need Index reflects the socioeconomics of the school population. It is calculated using the following formula: Economic Need Index = (Percent Temporary Housing) + (Percent HRA-eligible \* 0.5) + (Percent Free Lunch Eligible \* 0.5)

<sup>34</sup> After deliberation, the data group decided to exclude the Hispanic suspension rate from the ranking as a result of the high number of schools with zero (less than ten due to redaction) suspensions for Hispanic students.

To give greater weight to the more serious suspensions, the group calculated a separate rate for superintendent suspensions and added that to the ranking. As disparities were of particular interest, the group weighted the importance of Black suspension rate and IEP suspension rate by multiplying their ranking number by 2. Lastly, a composite index was created for each school by summing all of the aforementioned indicator ranks and then dividing by the number of index variables available (to account for missing values at certain schools).

**Descriptive Analysis of 180 High Priority Schools for School Climate Interventions**

Initiatives/Interventions	Number	Percent of Schools in Initiative
Community and/or Renewal <sup>35</sup>	36	20%
Community Schools	11	6.1%
Renewal Schools	28	15.6%
Restorative Practices	30	16.7%
Trained in TCI	1	0.6%
Learning Partners	7	3.9%

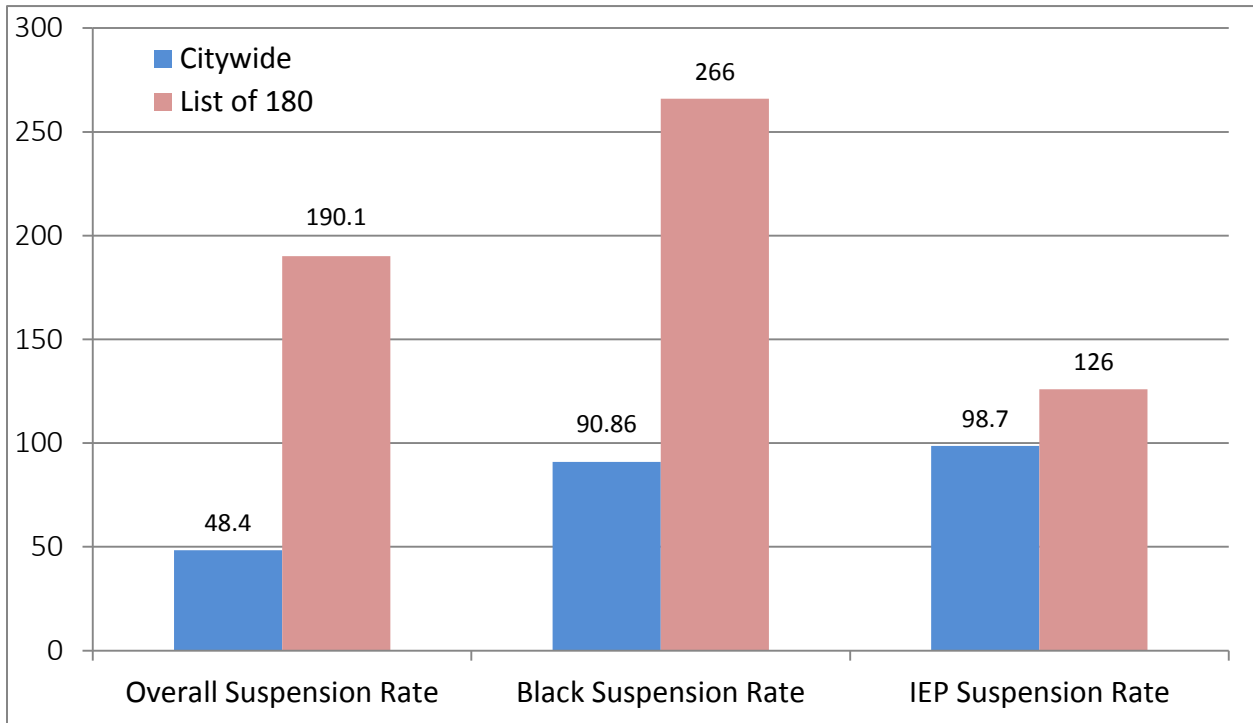
Descriptive Indicators	Citywide	180 High Priority Schools
Overall Suspension Rate	4.84%	19.0%
Black Suspension Rate	9.09%	26.6%
IEP Suspension Rate	9.87%	12.6%
Teacher Attendance	96%	96.0%
Attendance Rate	91%	87.0%
Chronic Absenteeism*	19%	22.0%
Severe Absenteeism**	13%	19.0%
ENI***	0.75	83.0%

Suspensions		
Citywide Total Suspensions (1700+ schools)	180 Total	Percent of All Suspensions from 180
53504	21848	40.8%

<sup>35</sup> Within the 180 high-priority schools, three schools are both a Renewal and a Community School.

\*Students are chronically absent if they miss 20 days or more of school  
 \*\* Students are severely chronically absent if they miss 38 days or more of school  
 \*\*\* Economic Needs Index reflects the socioeconomics of a school population. It is calculated using the following formula: Economic Needs Index = (Percent Temporary Housing) + (Percent HRA eligible \* .5) + (Percent Free or Reduced Lunch Eligible \*.5)

**Comparing Suspension Rates of Priority Schools to Citywide Average**



\*Rates are calculated per 1000 Students



**APPENDIX D****SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM EXPANDED (SSOPE)**

Beginning in SY2016 and expanding thereafter, the proposed SSOPE initiative would provide 20 schools from the list described in Appendix C with the supports listed below. Participating schools would be chosen as per the selection process described in Lead Recommendation 7.1.b.

**1. School Climate Planning/Coordination**

- a. Provide a .6 FTE School Climate Coach/Resource Coordinator responsible for:
  - Establish and facilitating a School Culture Committee/Climate Action Team
  - Liaise between OSYD and the school
  - Identify staff for training in restorative approaches, Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) and Collaborative Problem Solving, under the direction of the school principal
  - Facilitate collaboration between partner organizations, social worker, and the school and community based organizations
  - Convene regular meetings of DOE/school staff and core agencies to ensure coordinated services to students and identify and address gaps in service
- b. A school-based Restorative Justice coordinator will be provided in up to three schools in Brooklyn, selected by OSYD and the Brooklyn Community Foundation (BCF) in consultation with the Leadership Team. These may be free-standing schools or schools sharing a campus, where BCF resources would be deployed to provide additional staff support for a larger student population.

**2. Professional Development**

- a. Restorative interventions training
  - Tier 1 Restorative Circles and social emotional learning for 5 – 8 staff/school
  - Tier II Restorative Conferencing for 4 staff/school
  - Onsite coaching and support
- b. Peer mediation training for two to three staff on creating student mediation teams
- c. Collaborative Negotiation Skills training for counselors and school staff
- d. Gatekeeper training for staff on early warning signs/symptoms of mental health issues

**3. Student Supports**

- a. Full-time DOE social worker (in addition to existing school staff)
- b. Full-time social worker from Partnership With Children to provide counseling (individual and small group) to high-need and at-risk students
- c. Mentoring for high-need students from social work interns and trained school staff

## APPENDIX E

### **Proposed Staffing (all 12 month positions)**

#### **1. Director of Resource Coordination**

##### Primary Responsibilities:

- In collaboration with principals and RCT, sets priorities for resources/supports needed in the schools and develops strategy for accessing and streamlining resources.
- Serves as primary liaison between key/designated point people at other City agencies. As primary liaison, the Director ensures clear pathways of communication between the schools and the agencies, troubleshoots obstacles and updated information/processes for accessing agencies' services.
- Works collaboratively with designees at other city agencies to improve schools' and family access to services (e.g. by meeting regularly with partner agencies, convening forums for schools/community to interact with staff from partner agencies), including emphasis on supporting highly vulnerable students, such as court-involved youth and homeless youth.
- Serves as primary liaison between DOE "content experts" and principals/designated school staff to ensure "content experts" are aware of and optimally addressing schools' highest needs.
- Works with schools to create professional development opportunities to learn more about navigating systems and connecting students and families with services.
- Identifies barriers to obtaining services and work collaboratively with schools and agencies to improve delivery to students and families.
- Supervises other resource coordination staff.

#### **2. Senior Social Worker (2)**

##### Primary Responsibilities

- Provides clinical supervision to school social workers (within in BFSC catchment area).
- Identifies mental health resources/supports for schools and mental health staff and develops streamlined referral processes to expedite services for students and their families (e.g., formal relationships with social work schools/institutes; funding streams to support additional mental health services/staff in schools; professional development training/supports for mental health staff and all school staff).

Position background includes:

- Bilingual preferred
- Seminar in Field Instructor (SIFI) Certified

### **3. Resource Coordinator (RC) (2)**

Primary Responsibilities

- Serves as ground level liaisons between schools and BFSC; meets regularly with principals and other school staff (which can include guidance counselors, Assistant Principals, Social Workers or school psychologists) to assess school needs; where needed, escorts students to initial appointments at outside agencies/nonprofits.
- Develops and maintains interactive web-based resource map for catchment area. Identifies and establishes relationships with nonprofits in catchment area; coordinates with team Director to identify and establish relationships with City agency services; researches other resource guides/websites to maximize access to resources; seeks and incorporates regular feedback from principals and other school staff on functionality and utility of resource guide/map.
- Coordinates opportunities for nonprofits/local agencies to provide workshops/services in schools and/or community.
- Develops (and regularly updates) simple guides to help students/parents/school staff navigate city/state systems such as ACS, juvenile and adult court systems, applying for housing, citizenship, etc.
- Oversees interns/fellows and establishes relationships with local universities to streamline internship process.