

BEYOND THE MOMENT

BUILDING THE FUTURE OF

NYC PUBLIC EDUCATION



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Executive Summary

New Yorkers for Racially Just Public Schools (RJPS) is a citywide coalition aimed at centering racial justice in policy and budget decisions for public education, and collectively informing the education agendas of the candidates for Mayor and City Council in the 2025 elections and beyond. As home to the largest school district in the nation, New York City's public schools should prepare students not just to succeed, but to lead in an ever-changing world as global citizens. But that promise can only be fulfilled if we, as a city, commit to creating the conditions every young person needs to thrive. This means investing in school communities that are expectant, dynamic, joyful, and welcoming—spaces that reflect and celebrate the beautiful diversity of our city. It means surrounding students with the support, care, and love they deserve, and empowering them to turn their ambitions into reality. A strong public education system in New York City requires investments in the continuum of services that begin in Early Childhood Education, seamlessly continue in K-12, and culminate in CUNY. We honor and uplift the work of groups like ECE On the Move, New Yorkers United for Childcare, the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) of CUNY, and NYC Union of Students, as policies that complement our vision for Racially Just Public Schools. It is proven that when we make significant investments in education, communities reap the benefits with improved local economies and reduced costs in social safety nets and emergency services.

Early Childhood Education: We stand in solidarity and fully support universal child care, as defined by the Empire State Child Care coalition, as a public good that covers children up to the age of twelve while adequately compensating the workforce, most of whom are women of color.

Higher Education: We stand in solidarity with the NYC Union of Students and urge the creation of a Department of Higher Education to build a pipeline from Kindergarten to CUNY and coordinate across public and private universities to make higher education more affordable and accessible for all NYC students.



Executive Summary

Our policy roadmap: **Beyond the Moment**, outlines the conditions necessary to make the vision of inclusive, thriving schools a reality for all students. It reflects the collective brilliance and expertise of our coalition, and of the students, parents, educators, and community members across New York who contributed through our survey and campaign. No single policy can deliver racial justice on its own—and we cannot achieve lasting change without the voices and leadership of our communities. This roadmap is intentionally centered on those most impacted by systemic inequities: immigrant and asylum-seeking students, students of varying immigration statuses, disabled students, trans and gender non-conforming youth, and all those historically harmed by structural racism—especially Black students.



Executive Summary

We understand the complexity of making meaningful change in a system as large as New York City. Our policy roadmap lays out a bold and comprehensive vision for New York City schools as a North Star for the next administration as they set their policy agenda. In the coming months, we will be releasing targeted implementation plans and timelines for each of our 6 policy buckets to compliment this roadmap. Additionally, we have identified “3 Big Ideas” the next mayor can take immediately following the November election and within their first 100 days.



- 1. Choosing the next Chancellor:** Create an inclusive Search Committee composed of students, parents, classroom educators, and educational experts to support the identification and screening of potential candidates. This committee should also include the City Council education chair, the education representative from the City Comptroller’s office, and the Public Advocate’s office. The committee should establish and share a criteria and qualification rubric that will help guide their decision-making.
- 2. Convene** an independent commission of advocates, experts, and researchers to engage and educate the public on models for building a truly democratic school governance system, and to make recommendations for short and long term City and State policy changes.
- 3. Appoint** a Deputy Chancellor of School Integration to facilitate coordination of integration efforts and the implementation of the 2019 School Diversity Advisory Group (SDAG) recommendations.

Who We Are

New Yorkers for Racially Just Public Schools (RJPS) is a citywide coalition aimed at centering racial justice in policy and budget decisions for public education, and collectively influencing the education agendas of the candidates for Mayor and City Council in the 2025 elections and beyond.

The coalition brings together three stakeholder groups:

1. Parent, youth, and educator organizing and advocacy groups
2. Education policy and service delivery agencies
3. Elected and appointed parent leaders through the Community Education Councils, Education Council Consortium, Panel for Educational Policy, School Leadership Teams, and other bodies

The goals of the coalition are:

1. To build, amplify, and align the collective voice and power of education justice advocates in New York City
2. To shape the dominant public narrative about racial equity in NYC public schools.
3. To influence candidates and elected officials to embrace and enact our policy platform for racial equity in education.



Who We Are

Amber Colon	The Circle Keepers
Andrea Ortiz	Dignity In Schools NY
Chauncy Young	Parent Action Committee (PAC)
Cherrell Brown	The YA-YA Network
Chrisheena Turner	Commission On Racial Equity (CORE)
Diandra Verwayne	People's Early Childhood
Divine Ndombo	The YA-YA Network
Felicia Singh	Coalition for Asian Children and Families (CACF)
Gabriella Corrales	El Puente
Gavin Healy	CEC 2
Hadia Ali	The YA-YA Network
Ilona Nanay	Movement of Rank and File Educators (MORE-UFT)
Jan Atwell	Former NYC City Council Policy Analyst
Jania Witherspoon	The Circle Keepers
Jia Lee	Movement of Rank and File Educators (MORE-UFT)
Jonathan Greenberg	Education Council Consortium (ECC)
Jose Vilson	EduColor
Julia Watson	Alliance for Quality Education (AQE)
Kaiser	Alliance for Quality Education (AQE)
Kaliris Salas-Ramirez	RJPS, NYCOO
Kulsoom Tapal	Coalition for Asian Children and Families (CACF)
Leonie Haimson	Class Size Matters
Maria Bautista	NYU Metro Center – EJROC
Marina Marcou-O'Malley	Alliance for Quality Education (AQE)
Martin Urbach	The Circle Keepers
Matt Gonzales	RJPS/Liberation Spaces
Meg Jones	Movement of Rank and File Educators (MORE-UFT)
Megan Madison	Transformative Schools
Naila Rosario	NYCKidsPAC
Natasha Capers	Partnership for the Future of Learning
NeQuan C McLean	Education Council Consortium (ECC)
Nyah Berg	New York Appleseed
Orlaa F.	The Circle Keepers
Paullette Ha-Healy	D75 Legislative Chair
Rasheedah Brown-Harris	Parent Action Committee (PAC)
Raúl Soto	The YA-YA Network
Rochelle Du	New York Appleseed
Sherée Gibson	Gibson+Co Consulting, Inc./AQE, ECC
Shino Tanikawa	Education Council Consortium (ECC)
Smitha Milich	Alliance for Quality Education (AQE)
Tanesha Grant	Parents Supporting Parents NY (PSPNY)
Tazin Azad	RJPS/ECC
Terrance Winston	NYC Coalition for Community Schools Excellence
Tom Sheppard	Parent Action Committee (PAC)
Vanessa Leung	Coalition for Asian Children and Families (CACF)
Zakiyah Shaakir-Ansari	Alliance for Quality Education (AQE)

Report prepared and designed by Liberation Spaces



The Education Landscape

New York City is one of the most diverse, vibrant, and dynamic places on the planet. As New Yorkers, we welcome people from every corner of the globe and every walk of life to pursue their dreams in this Gotham. One of the most powerful vehicles for helping families realize those dreams is our public school system.

As home to the largest school district in the nation, New York City's public schools prepare students not just to succeed, but to lead in an ever-changing world. But that promise can only be fulfilled if we, as a city, commit to creating the conditions every young person needs to thrive. This means investing in school communities that are dynamic, joyful, and welcoming—spaces that reflect and celebrate the beautiful diversity of our city. It means surrounding students with the support, care, and love they deserve, and empowering them to turn their dreams into reality.

Public education is the fulcrum of a healthy democracy and a powerful tool for social mobility in our communities. Democracy and public education in the United States are at a critical crossroads. The Trump administration, through Project 2025, has waged a war on public schools, targeting the most vulnerable students and families in our communities.

The assault on diversity, equity, and inclusion; the targeting of immigrants, asylum-seeking students, those with different statuses, disabled students, and trans and gender non-conforming students; threats to end Title I funding; plans to discontinue Head Start; and deeper investments in school privatization policies like vouchers and charters are all part of Trump's agenda. With a unified Republican Congress, the most alarming priorities of Project 2025 are trickling down to states and localities. New York City must remain a bulwark against Trump's education agenda.

But resistance is not enough. While we fight back against Trump's threats to public education, we must also champion education justice and continue working to build schools that will inspire and motivate our young people to transform the world. As New York City decides who will lead our city beyond this moment, we need all candidates running for elected office to embrace and commit to implementing an education agenda shaped by the people.



The Education Landscape

For decades, education justice advocates in New York City have been at the forefront of the freedom fight for public schools. The nation's largest public school system has also been one of its most segregated, due to various fiscal, social, and political factors.

As such, this city has, at once, been a testing ground for deleterious education reforms pushed by billionaires, celebrities, and hedge fund managers, while also serving as a site of resistance and an exemplar in challenging the anti-public machinery.

We have secured significant policy wins such as the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) and made progress in areas including Community Schools, culturally responsive education, school integration, restorative justice, and class size reduction—all necessary conditions to support vibrant, high-quality learning environments. In addition, New York City has been a national leader on initiatives such as universal pre-K, an emphasis on literacy, community schools, universal meals, real-world learning, and more.

Over the past four years, we have persistently beaten back efforts by city leadership to cut public school budgets and have worked to protect critical pandemic-era programming. Partnering with the City Council and coalition members, we were able to restore funding for restorative justice. Despite these efforts, city leadership has continued to pursue an education agenda centered on expanding police presence in schools, increasing segregation, and eliminating culturally responsive curriculum.

Upon entering office, the current administration cut the \$202 million investment in the Mosaic Curriculum—a hard-won policy victory led by New York City parents from the Coalition for Educational Justice (CEJ). We cannot resist Project 2025 if we have a Mayor who is already implementing its vision and advancing the continued divestment from the majority of NYC public school students.

Over the next four years, it will be up to places like New York City to serve as sites of resistance to the most dangerous priorities of the Trump administration, while offering a vision for public education rooted in equity, democracy, inclusion, and racial justice.



Spilling the Tea Campaign



In February 2025, RJPS launched a citywide campaign to engage New Yorkers in a conversation about creating racially just public schools, called “Spilling the Tea” on NYC Education. While the concept of “tea” has multiple representations across cultures, we specifically used the tagline as a call to action and an invitation for honesty about New Yorkers’ opinions regarding public schools.

Our mobile tea shop visited communities across New York City with the goal of engaging 1,000 parents, students, educators, and community members on the education issues most important to them. In addition to gathering community voices, we also held meetings with former and current NYCPS officials to share survey data and discuss their perspectives and recommendations on key issues. This included school leaders, superintendents, central office staff, and other high-level administrators.

These discussions were incredibly fruitful and helped shape our thinking in several sections of this document.



Spilling the Tea Campaign



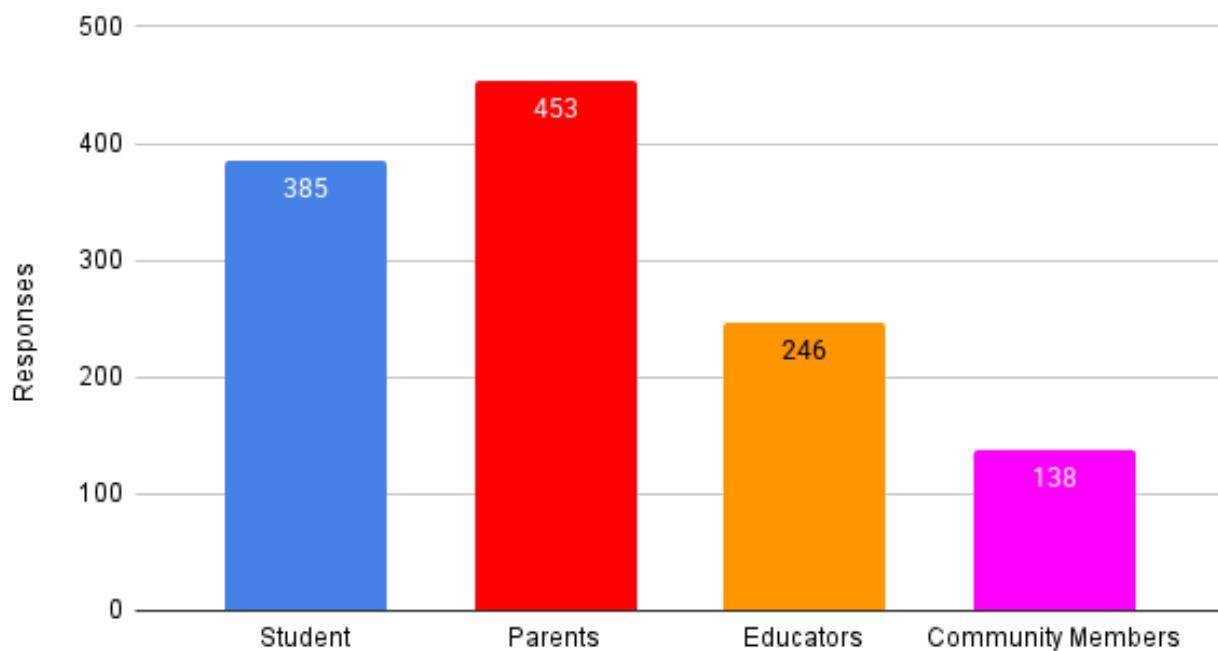
Using a combination of online and paper surveys in five languages (English, Spanish, French, Bangla, and Chinese), we gathered the “tea” from 1,222 New Yorkers. This included 385 students, 453 parents, 246 educators, and 138 community members.

Our pop-up visits featured a large visual display representing our platform. We offered sweet tea and other healthy snacks to participants as an invitation to join our table. We provided palm cards with a QR code and one-pagers outlining our campaign and platform, available in five languages.

For those willing to stay and chat, we asked what education issues mattered most to them. Based on what people shared, we helped connect their concerns to our platform. Many parents and educators expressed worry about the Trump administration’s attacks on public education.

We also visited schools to talk with middle and high school students. In some instances, we presented to large auditoriums of students, while in others we partnered with teacher-allies to recruit students, share the platform, and gather feedback.

Identity of Respondents

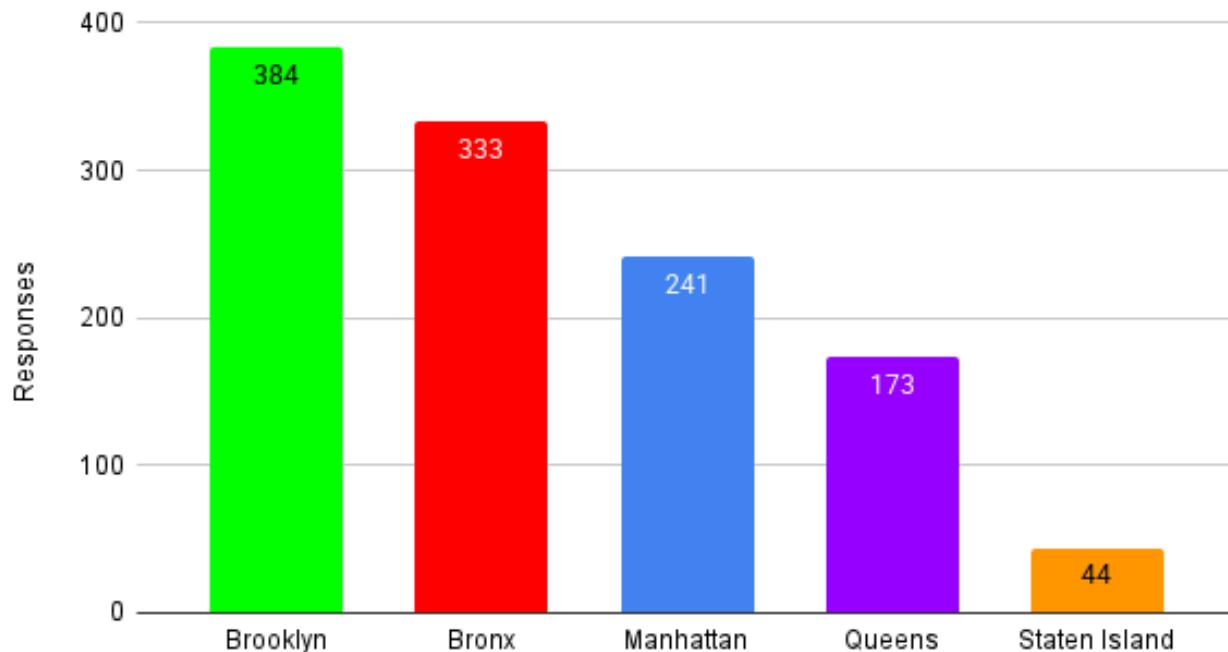




Spilling the Tea Campaign

We heard from New Yorkers in every borough, with 384 responses from Brooklyn, 333 from the Bronx, 241 from Manhattan, 173 from Queens, and 44 from Staten Island. These data indicate a need to expand our outreach efforts into underrepresented boroughs like Queens and Staten Island.

Responses by Borough



Manhattan *Brooklyn* *The Bronx*
Queens *Staten Island*





Spilling the Tea Campaign

We asked New Yorkers to rank the issues on our [platform](#) from their highest priority to lowest. We chose a ranking system similar to NYC's Rank Choice Voting electoral system in order to encourage voters to become familiar with the relatively new voting system.

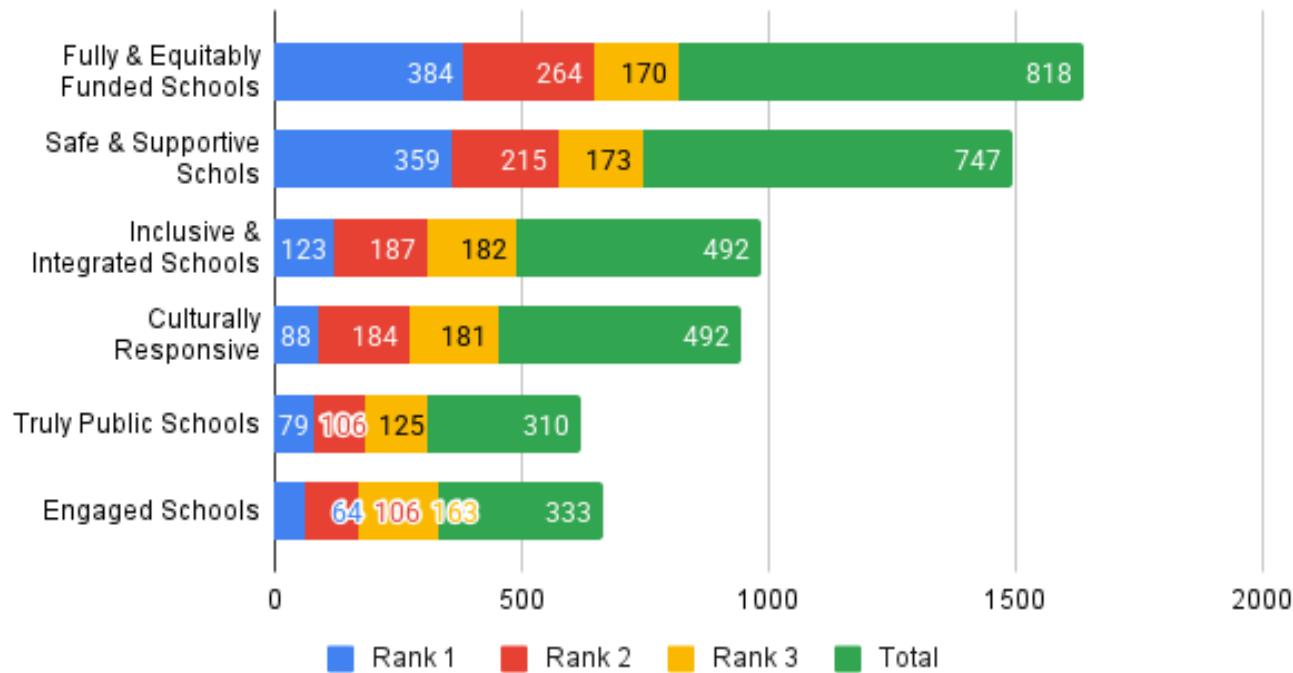


Spilling the Tea Campaign



The majority of respondents across all identity groups and languages identified *Fully and Equitably Funded Schools*, *Safe and Supportive Schools*, and *Inclusive and Integrated Schools* as their top priorities. Notably, Culturally Responsive Schools received the same overall number of rankings as Inclusive and Integrated Schools, but more respondents selected Inclusive and Integrated as their first or second choice.

How People Ranked Our Platform Issues



Spilling the Tea Campaign



Beyond our platform, we asked respondents to share other education issues that matter to them. The word cloud highlights the most common responses, including funding, safety, class size, and restorative justice. We incorporated these priorities to ensure our platform reflects the interests of our respondents and wove this language into our policy roadmap.

We were encouraged to see strong alignment between our platform and the priorities uplifted by survey participants. The New York City community clearly understands what is needed to ensure our schools are the best in the nation.



Beyond the Moment: Building the Future of NYC Public Education

Beyond the Moment: Building the Future of NYC Public Education offers a comprehensive and holistic approach to public education, outlining the conditions needed to ensure all NYC students are not just prepared to succeed, but to lead in an ever-changing world. That promise, however, can only be fulfilled if we, as a city, commit to creating the conditions every young person needs to thrive. This means investing in school communities that are emergent, dynamic, joyful, and welcoming—spaces that reflect and celebrate the beautiful diversity of our city. It means surrounding students with the support, care, and love they deserve, and empowering them to turn their dreams into reality.

Our vision centers immigrant and asylum-seeking students, students of varying immigration statuses, disabled students, trans and gender non-conforming youth, Muslim students, and all those historically harmed by structural racism—especially Black students.

We also recognize the profound policy moment we face in New York City, with threats from the federal government, a potential transition in city leadership, and a state education department reevaluating the use of the Regents exam and redefining what it should mean to be a high school graduate. We believe New York City is uniquely positioned to transform the educational experience for its students.

Building on successful programs and initiatives—such as community schools, universal pre-K, FutureReadyNYC, Summer Rising, the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), universal meals, ethnic studies curricula, and a robust emphasis on literacy—our policy roadmap will, if fully implemented, provide the conditions and support for students to fulfill the Portrait of a Graduate established by NYSED. At the high school level, we already have models in the Consortium Schools, Internationals, Urban Assembly, and Outward Bound, that should be anchors for this work. This vision ensures that all students are academically prepared, creative innovators, critical thinkers, effective communicators, global citizens, and reflective, future-focused leaders.¹



A Proven Strategy for School Improvement: Community Schools

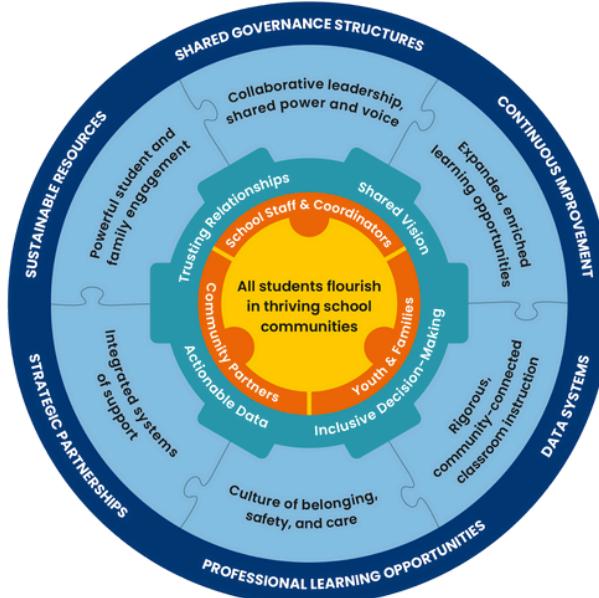
Community schools are a comprehensive education reform strategy designed to enhance the academic experience of all children in public schools. NYCPS currently supports 421 Community Schools across all five boroughs, serving students in grades K–12. This evolving approach to education is backed by more than 30 years of data demonstrating its effectiveness and justifying continued investment.

Every Community School provides a range of integrated support services tailored to the needs of its neighborhood—for example, mental health services, food pantries, and dental and vision care. This model represents not just a place, but a set of partnerships with local community-based organizations dedicated to supporting the whole child, the family, and the broader community.

Community schools provide both a strong model for responsive school governance and a proven framework for creating the conditions for successful schools, as outlined in our policy roadmap. The next administration must sustain and expand a robust, multi-pronged community school strategy in NYC.

The visual below illustrates the recently developed Essentials Framework, which represents the multiple interdependent elements that work together in service of its core constituents: children.

Essentials for Community School Transformation



Beyond the Moment: Building the Future of NYC Public Education

We believe a strong public education system in New York City requires investments in the continuum of services that begin in Early Childhood Education, seamlessly continue in K-12, and culminate in CUNY. We honor and uplift the work of groups like ECE On the Move, New Yorkers United for Childcare, and the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) of CUNY as policies that complement our vision for Racially Just Public Schools. It is proven that when we make significant investments in education, communities reap the benefits with improved local economies and reduced costs in social safety nets and emergency services.



Early Childhood Education: We stand in solidarity and fully support universal child care, as [defined](#) by the Empire State Child Care coalition, as a public good that covers children up to the age of twelve while adequately compensating the workforce, most of whom are women of color.²



Higher Education: There is a clear need for city engagement in higher education and more municipal governance of our public higher education system. Through the creation of a Department of Higher Education, as proposed by the NYC Union of Students, NYC will be better equipped to build a pipeline from Kindergarten to CUNY and coordinate across public and private universities to make higher education more affordable and accessible for all NYC students.³



People's Plan: We stand in solidarity and fully support the [Affordable Futures-Real Public Safety](#) Budget Demands of the NYC People's Plan.⁴



The Leadership NYC Schools Deserve

First 100 Days in Office

Decisions made in the first 100 days of the incoming administration will set the tone for New York City. Making clear and emphatic statements and policy decisions regarding the above issues will be key to ensuring NYC students and families feel safe and supported under a new mayor and everyone understands that there is a genuine intention to support equitable practices in our schools. With the Trump administration issuing executive orders and federal guidance targeting places like New York City, urgent action is needed to protect our schools and communities from Trump's dangerous education agenda. We must continue to be a beacon of hope against Trump's anti-public education policies.

This includes:

- Rejecting Executive Orders That Undermine Public Education: New York City must reject Trump-style policies that undermine public education—attacks on bilingual programs, equity initiatives, and the rise of exclusionary discipline. We need to invest in, not defund, schools serving immigrant and low-income communities. We must also double down on the teaching of honest, inclusive history through ethnic studies and curricula on race, class, and civil rights, and expand diversity initiatives to address ongoing school segregation.
- Protecting Immigrant Students and Families: There should be no cooperation with federal immigration enforcement (ICE) in school settings. Any collaboration would be a direct betrayal of NYC's sanctuary status. We must strengthen immigration guidance, School Response, and Federal Preparedness Policies, and offer more trainings.
- Protecting Trans Students: We must protect students who have been made vulnerable by the Trump administration's hateful rhetoric and policies, and acknowledge that a small number of elected parent leaders in NYC have also perpetuated the rhetoric targeting transgender student rights, jeopardizing inclusive policies that ensure all students feel safe and supported in school. We must also implement these policies with fidelity, transparency, and family participation.



The Leadership NYC Schools Deserve

- Protecting Students with Disabilities: Guarantee that all mandated special education services—such as speech and occupational therapy, classroom aides, safe and effective transportation, and specialized instruction—are fully funded and delivered without delay, regardless of federal inaction. Local Investment: Increase city funding for special education to offset federal cuts, particularly in under-resourced schools where the burden on families and staff is greatest. Oversight and Accountability: Strengthen local monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are developed and implemented with fidelity, transparency, and family participation.
- Protecting students exercising constitutional rights: fighting the federal government's attempt to infringe on, stifle, and penalize the right to speech, assembly/protest.

Visionary Leadership for Racially Just Public Schools

Under the current model of mayoral control, parents, students, and educators are too often excluded from shaping education policy. To chart a new path forward, we identify four critical areas where the next mayor must lead with transparency and community engagement: appointing a Schools Chancellor, selecting members for the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP), assembling a strong education transition team, and strengthening internal NYCPS infrastructure. Crucially, the process of selecting the next Chancellor must center the voices of families, students, educators, and community members. We offer clear recommendations for how the next mayor can lead this process in a way that reflects the values and needs of New York City's diverse public school communities.

Choosing the Next Chancellor: A Democratic Process

- Chancellor Search Committee: Create an inclusive Search Committee composed of students, parents, educators, and educational experts to support the identification and screening of potential candidates and to select criteria for their selection. This committee should also include representatives from the offices of the City Council, the NYC Comptroller, Public Advocate, and state officials. A draft criteria can be found in Appendix A.



The Leadership NYC Schools Deserve

- Authentic Public Engagement: Host town halls (at least one in every borough), gather survey feedback, and leverage social media tools to understand the qualities and priorities the next Chancellor should have that best represent the communities they will serve. This includes developing a clear feedback loop process to ensure transparency and clarity about how ongoing feedback is being incorporated into policy decisions.

Choosing Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) Members

To promote transparent, accountable, and community-centered governance in NYC public schools, we propose a clear process and criteria (see [Appendix B](#)) to guide mayoral appointments to the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP). Appointees must reflect the city's diversity, have expertise in key areas of policy-making, and demonstrate a strong commitment to racial equity, educational justice, and democratic public education. By following these guidelines, the Mayor's Office can ensure the PEP is both representative and accountable to the communities it serves, while supporting a transition toward a more democratic and stable school governance structure. The PEP should act as more than an advisory body to the chancellor in order to help guide and give feedback on recommendations from the commission on future governance models.

Building an Education Transition Team

The next mayor will be responsible for leading a system of nearly 1 million students, close to 150,000 employees, and nearly 1800 schools. A knowledgeable education transition team will be crucial to ensuring the mayor is ready to take leadership of NYCPS on day one. This team should include student, teacher, and parent representatives, education justice advocates, education service providers, and education policy and research experts. ([See Appendix C](#))

Central Office Leadership

We propose that the next Chancellor maintain the divisions that are already established and restore the Division of Teaching and Learning either with a deputy chancellor or within the division of [innovative] leadership. We also believe there is no necessity to require superintendents to reapply for their jobs, although they all understand that they serve at the will of the chancellor. Nevertheless, those superintendents that have received poor evaluations from their Community Education Councils or that have received votes of "no confidence" should be asked to reapply and go through a community driven hiring process. ([See Appendix D](#))



Building the Future

Beyond the Moment: Building the Future of NYC Public Education

We are committed to a holistic approach to educational justice, recognizing that each plank of our platform is essential and must be pursued simultaneously. This roadmap is organized to address the broader structural and systemic conditions shaping education before moving to the school- and classroom-level experiences of students, teachers, and families. At the foundation, we affirm that fully and equitably funded schools are the cornerstone of racially just education. Schools must also remain truly public and safeguarded from privatization. Equally critical is building a more democratic school governance system to ensure that NYC schools are engaged, accountable, and responsive to the communities they serve. With these foundations in place, our system can more effectively create inclusive, integrated, culturally responsive, and safe learning environments for every child.



Fully and Equitably Funded Schools

We must fully fund schools now, and we must do so using resources our city and state have neglected to use in the name of austerity. Educational austerity measures are part of the educational racism apparatus. Across the city, state and nation, politicians send their children to private and selective schools that provide the small classes, enrichment, hands-on education and care that all children deserve, while refusing to invest the same funds in the predominantly Black, Brown, and low-income students in public schools. This underfunding holds racial inequity firmly in place by design and political will. In order to truly achieve educational equity for all students, New York must close the resource gap and ensure an equitable distribution of funds to all public schools.

Address chronic underfunding

- Fully fund [Fair Student Funding](#) at 100% for all schools every year with an increase in the dollar amount of the grade level base weight every year.
- Support and advocate for state legislation that taxes the wealthy to fund public schools.
- Advocate for NYC to receive state transitional aid funding to make up for the cost of charter school expansion — a loss of over \$3 billion in state aid since 2011.
- Implement remaining recommendations of the [Fair Student Funding Working Group of 2022](#).
 - Increase the base foundation amount such that this funding is sufficient to fund at least two administrators, a school secretary, school counselors (at the ratio of pupil to counselor recommended by the American School Counselor Association, a social worker, a librarian and a nurse at each school).
 - Increase the poverty weight.
 - Eliminate the inequitable, additional subsidy provided to the specialized high schools.
 - End the extremely disruptive policy of forcing schools to give back funding mid-year if their enrollment does not match the projected level.
 - Phase in budget changes for schools that receive a significant reduction in FSF disbursement so that they do not see dramatic cuts from year to year.
 - Evaluate the Fair Student Funding formula so that schools are not incentivized to overcrowd their classrooms and buildings.



Fully and Equitably Funded Schools

- Evaluate the per pupil based funding (i.e., Fair Student Funding formula) and its effect on class size and model a new funding formula based on per class based funding using class sizes required by law.
- Advocate to secure full Foundation Aid dollars, including the cost-of-living adjustments denied NYC in the most recent revision of the state formula.
- Ensure that the formula has sufficient weights for students in temporary housing, those who have recently arrived from other countries, and other high-needs categories.
- Commit to joining the fight for increased revenues in NYS by taxing the ultrawealthy. Support the package of revenue options supported by the [Invest in our NY Coalition](#).

Ensure that the NYC lowers class size to the levels required by state law

- Implement the recommendations of the [Class Size Working Group](#), appointed by Chancellor Banks and which proposed many realistic, cost-effective proposals to lower class size.
 - These proposals include providing sufficient space through a more aggressive, accelerated capital plan in overcrowded areas, and more equitably adjusting enrollment between nearby schools.
- Space should be created by moving PreK and 3K classes from overcrowded elementary schools into nearby Community Based Organizations and Early Childhood Centers that have thousands of empty seats.
- Reform the City Planning process so that schools are built along with market value and affordable housing, rather than years afterward or not at all.
- Require that DOE and the School Construction Authority comply with Local Laws 167 and 168 of 2018, to accelerate the process of school siting and ensure a more transparent and adequate capital plan. Make school buildings and playgrounds functional, accessible, and safe.
- Fully fund the school capital plan to eliminate school overcrowding, allow for class size reduction, and upgrade all facilities to be mold-, asbestos- and lead-free, properly ventilated and accessible to students with disabilities.
- Provide clean, lead-free water fountains, fully equipped kitchen/lunchrooms, and better food options that include healthy lunches with fresh fruit and vegetables as well as halal lunch.
- Stock middle and high school bathrooms with free menstrual products.
- Assess schools air-conditioning/ heating capacity, and create a fund pool to upgrade all units.



Fully and Equitably Funded Schools

Invest in programs that increase equity and improve outcomes

- Greatly expand and increase funding for Community Schools and utilize the model to scale up integrated student supports, collaborative leadership and parent engagement outreach.
- Provide high-quality universal after-school programs, especially for students with disabilities, students in temporary housing, students in foster care, and students with limited financial means.
- Significantly expand and increase funding for adult education and family literacy programs.
- Provide a well-functioning laptop to every NYC student who needs one.
- Evaluate early college models, such as P-TECH and as well as career/technical education programming and expand those that have been shown to be effective.



Truly Public Schools

We believe in the power, vision, and scope of our public schools. New York City has the largest public school system in the country, and the nation's largest city should respond in kind. When we say "public," we also mean democratic, dynamic, vital, and responsive to the needs of every New Yorker. We believe that every public school can meet and exceed the expectations set for them without market-based privileges such as lotteries or tuitions. When resources are diverted from our public schools, we undercut the City's most enduring social safety net and harm the children and families of New York. We believe that defunding public schools in service of private or charter schools is a false choice all too pervasive in our city.

In addition, NYC schools have too often suffered massive data breaches because of sloppy and illegal practices by DOE and their corporate vendors, including data of students who have long graduated and whose data should have been deleted by the vendors years ago. New York has a fairly strong state student privacy law that was passed in 2014, and yet the DOE often fails to comply with the law and instead outsources personal data to too many private companies – more than 500 as of June 2025, in ways that enable students' personal information to be breached, commercialized and otherwise misused.

Opposition to Charter School Expansion & Privatization: Halting the growth of privatized education and redirecting resources to public schools.

- Support a moratorium on public funds for charter school expansion, given concerns about their continuing and unresolved civil rights violations, and the loss of funding, and space for the public school system. Funding charter schools are already costing the DOE more than \$3 billion a year, plus over \$100 million annually to help pay for their rent.
- Halt co-locations of charter schools in public schools, especially in low-income communities of color, where they deprive vital space for smaller classes, 1:1 counseling, related services, recreation, arts, and science
- Advocate for the state to end NYC's obligation to provide space for charter schools in public school buildings or help pay for their rent in private spaces – the only district in the state or nation with this requirement



Truly Public Schools

- Demand that NYC receive state transitional aid funding to make up for the cost of charter school expansion , the only school district in the state denied this funding, depriving the city schools of over \$3 billion since 2011
- Candidates for elective office should refuse to take campaign funds from corporate charter networks and advocates for school privatization

Charter School Accountability & Transparency: Ensuring fair oversight, financial integrity, and ethical practices among charter schools.

- Request a state audit to determine the impact of large charter networks' growth in NYC and statewide
- Request an audit to investigate the abuse of charter schools inflating their own rents to receive higher payments from DOE; and to analyze the underpayments of matching funds provided to public schools for facility enhancements compared to co-located charter schools' spending for the same purposes.
- Advocate to change the state charter laws to ensure more accountability and transparency
- End the practice of making student and family personal information available to charter schools for recruitment without written parent consent

Protect Student Privacy and Defend against the Growing Corporate Influence on our schools: NYC schools and Central DOE must rigorously protect student privacy by reducing the number of vendors that have access to personal student data, without parental consent.

- DOE must post online and provide parents in backpack mail with a comprehensive Parent Bill of Rights that explains their and their children's privacy rights under State and Federal Law
- Each vendor that receives this data must have enforceable contracts with serious penalties for non-compliance, to ensure that they are safeguarding the data according to the state student privacy law, including data minimization, data deletion, rigorous security protections, and prohibiting its use or release for commercial purposes.



Truly Public Schools

- Each vendor that receives this data must have enforceable contracts with serious penalties for non-compliance, to ensure that they are safeguarding the data according to the state student privacy law, including data minimization, data deletion, rigorous security protections, and prohibiting its use or release for commercial purposes.
- The use of Generative AI products and services with access to personal student data must be minimized until and unless there are strict and enforceable guidelines, embedded in contracts, as well as rigorous oversight by DOE to ensure that the data is not mined to improve these products, and is protected from further misuse or disclosure.
- Any Gen AI product used in schools or by DOE officials or administrators must also be independently analyzed to ensure it does not employ racially discriminatory algorithms, has peer-reviewed research to show that it improves learning and/or student engagement, and that it will never be employed for high-stakes decision making.
- Any Gen AI product used in schools must also be discussed by the School Leadership Team to validate that these conditions are met, and to ensure parent and teacher buy-in.



Engaged Schools

The Need for Democratic Governance Citywide

Building democratic governance would:

- Empower Students, Families and Educators: Decision-making should be shared among educators, parents, and students through elected bodies that are representative of their constituents and connected to school communities.
- Increase Transparency: Budget decisions, policy changes, and leadership appointments must be made in the open, with accountability measures in place to prevent corruption.
- Promote Stability: Schools suffer when policies shift dramatically with each new mayoral administration. A governance model based on community input ensures continuity and long-term planning.
- Combat Educational Inequities: Addressing racial and socioeconomic disparities requires policies rooted in local needs, not dictated by mayoral politics.

Transition to a Democratic Governance System

The next mayor should recognize the importance of building a more democratic governance system, with real checks and balances and more community voice. Cities like Chicago, Newark, and Detroit, offer models to transition towards school governance models that lean into partnership between communities and elected leaders, rather than systems like State or Mayoral Control, which strip decision-making power from students, parents, and educators.

Immediate Mayoral Actions:

- **Convene and fund** an independent commission of advocates, experts, and researchers to engage communities around building a truly democratic school governance system to replace mayoral control.
- **Implement a transparent and inclusive process** for choosing the Chancellor (See Leadership section, pg. 18)

State Level Advocacy:

- **Strip the Mayor of unilateral Power to Appoint the Chancellor and majority of PEP Members:** The mayor currently appoints the Chancellor and the majority of the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP), ensuring they will rubber-stamp policies whether or not they have evidence behind them or will benefit students.

Engaged Schools

- **Increase Student Representation:** Students must have a voice in education policy decisions that affect their futures. This means granting them meaningful voting power on the PEP, Citywide and Community Education Councils, and ensuring they have independent support and mentorship to develop their leadership.
- **Implement a Transparent Oversight System:** School governance decisions must be subject to independent review to prevent financial mismanagement and corruption, including an Independent Inspector General and Ombudsperson.

A System That Works for NYC Families and Educators

The following principles should guide both the actions in the mayor's power under current law and the administration's advocacy for a new governance system.

Parent Leadership & Governance: Elevating parent voice in decision-making structures and supporting leadership bodies.

- Engage parents in policy development more authentically at the school, district, and citywide level through School and District Leadership Teams, including but not limited to the hiring of principals and the selection of District Superintendents
- Establish and fund an independent entity to provide support for CECs and other parent leadership entities
- Equalize Parent Association funding through pooled funds or additional funds to the lowest-income schools
- Commit funding for parent/guardian training and engagement on anti-racism, implicit bias, CRSE, Restorative Justice, and other equity initiatives
- Connect parents and families with adult education opportunities that support their learning and leadership.

Access & Communication: Removing barriers to participation and ensuring all families can engage effectively.

- Make school, district, and citywide parent meetings accessible remotely to all parents
- Provide technology and support to make school, district, and citywide parent meetings accessible remotely to all parents



Engaged Schools

- Require multilingual outreach, interpretation and translation, accessible venues, and other practices that facilitate the full participation of multilingual learners and immigrant families, and families and students with disabilities
- Conduct targeted and comprehensive outreach to families of children with disabilities

Family Engagement & Community Connection: Deepening meaningful, culturally responsive, and inclusive family-school relationships.

- Overhaul and revamp the Division of Family and Community Empowerment to serve parents more effectively; require the division to evaluate central parent engagement efforts and share and report data publicly.
- Expand research-based models of transformative, culturally responsive family engagement
- Require and support schools to conduct yearly tours of their neighborhood for school staff, in partnership with parents and neighborhood organizations
- Ensure that school accountability tools require schools to assess the quality of family engagement, with a focus on families who are historically excluded, in order to determine barriers to participation; and support schools to develop an inclusive and welcoming environment for the most marginalized populations of parent.

Engage youth as key partners in decision making at all levels

Youth leaders have been on the cutting edge of social justice policy and activism throughout this country's history, yet their voices are perhaps the most marginalized. In New York City, youth leaders have organized, made policy recommendations and attempted to work within the system, but city leadership has consistently ignored their advocacy. As those most directly impacted by the decisions about their education, it is crucial that students have a meaningful voice in shaping their future beyond the existing structures for youth representation that provide only decorative or tokenized opportunities for students.



Engaged Schools

Student Representation & Governance: These initiatives aim to give students real decision-making power and presence in school governance structures:

- Give students voting power, and a means of electing representation on the Panel for Education Policy and any other education decision-making bodies under the mayor's purview.
- Advocate for changes in state law immediately to ensure students have similar voting power and means of electing representation on community education councils.
- Create a mechanism for students to choose representation on school governance entities.
- Mandate student representation on the hiring board for new faculty members.

Student-Centered School Practices: Redesign school culture and practice around student voice and participation:

- Invite students to sit in on faculty meetings related to academics and curricula.
- Provide training and support to schools on student-centered design practices so that they center young people when creating and evaluating programs or courses.
- Engage students in cultivating student agency and understanding their rights within schools.
- Create a safe space for students to share both positive and negative feedback, especially students of marginalized identities such as students of color, documented and undocumented immigrant students, and transgender, gender-nonconforming, and LGBTQ students.

Access & Equity: These address practical barriers and expand support resources for student success:

- Provide free unlimited MetroCards for students.
- Expand youth-led college access centers using the Student Success Center model.



Inclusive and Integrated Schools

Integrated Schools

New York City continues to allow systemic racism to perpetuate segregation within our schools and their communities. Despite multiple calls for change from advocates, multiple City-led task forces, and multiple protests led by students, City leadership overall has lacked the political will and moral fortitude to intentionally address the levers of segregation that remain and are sustained by the status quo. We call for the following demands to address school segregation and its consequences in our schools and foster Real Integration.

Integration, Enrollment, and Admissions Reform: Ending segregation, creating inclusive admissions, and ensuring fairness in school placement.

- Appoint a Deputy Chancellor of School Integration to facilitate coordination of integration efforts and the implementation of the 2019 School Diversity Advisory Group (SDAG) recommendations.
- Identify opportunities for school mergers and more evenly adjust enrollment between nearby schools of the same grade levels, which will help in complying with the class size law, as well as improving school integration, and ensuring that all students receive an equitable, quality education. Implement the 62 previously adopted recommendations using the 5 Rs of Real Integration framework of the School Diversity Advisory Group, and demand accountability for progress.
- Adopt and implement⁷ the 25 recommendations from the second School Diversity Advisory Group report.
- Reinvest in NYC's citywide diversity initiatives that led to successful district-wide integration plans, such as in District 15.
- Invest in Local Law 225 of 2019 to create diversity working groups in every district, supporting community-based integration planning.
- Commission an independent analysis of the specialized high school admissions exam (SHSAT) for racial and gender bias.
- End the discriminatory practice of using the SHSAT as the sole criterion for admissions for the five specialized high schools that are not mandated to use it according to state law, and then advocate with the state legislature to widen the admissions process for the three specialized high schools that are mentioned in state law.

Inclusive and Integrated Schools

- Invest in transitional schools, International schools, bilingual programs where conducive to the community's intention to create inclusive districts.

Educator Diversity & Workforce Equity: Recruiting, supporting, and retaining a diverse, inclusive educator workforce.

- Recruit, support, and retain educators of color by:
 - Funding certification for teachers licensed in their country of origin;
 - Expanding access to the teaching pipeline for people of color, speakers of minority languages, and immigrants;
 - Increasing pathways to bilingual and ENL certification;
 - Ensure that more principals of color are hired as that has been shown to lead to higher rates of retention for teachers of color.
- Recruit and support transgender and gender-nonconforming teachers.
- Commission a panel to study the long-term decline of Black teachers and other educators of color in NYC public schools, and publicly share findings.

7

Systemic Accountability & Data Transparency: Monitoring, reporting, and addressing inequities across programs and student groups.

- Commit funding and support for all superintendents to address disproportionality in:
 - Disciplinary practices;
 - Access to advanced courses and academic enrichment programs;
 - Ensure proper data collection on students' ethnic groups and publicly report disaggregated data to expose and address systemic inequities.

Inclusive and Integrated Schools

Inclusive Schools

Education policy in NYC has historically marginalized students across various identity markers: students with disabilities, multilingual learners/English Language Learners, immigrant students, students in temporary housing, students in foster care, incarcerated students, undocumented students, overage and under-credited students, and students in racially and economically marginalized communities. This persistent marginalization has also exacerbated both historical and ongoing patterns of school segregation, contributing to New York City's status as one of the most segregated school systems in the country.

Equitable Enrollment & Resource Distribution: Addressing overcrowding, improving budgets for under-enrolled schools, and promoting integration.

- More equitably adjust enrollment between schools, to lessen overcrowding in overutilized schools, allow for smaller classes, and prevent students from having to eat lunch in the morning or late in the day. Balancing enrollment would also provide a more adequate budget for currently under-enrolled schools, and lead to more diversity and integration across the system

Support for Students in Temporary Housing or Foster Care: Protecting the rights and educational stability of highly mobile and vulnerable students.

- Guarantee transportation so students in foster care can remain in their schools
- Ensure that all schools and Family Welcome Centers honor the rights of students in temporary housing; provide training on the McKinney-Vento Act, which allows for the waiving of proof of address and immunization requirements in certain cases, among other stipulations

College Access & Postsecondary Opportunities: Expanding knowledge and support to marginalized and underrepresented students.

- Expand college access through training for educators on opportunities and access for marginalized populations

Inclusive and Integrated Schools

Support for Parenting Students: Ensuring pregnant and parenting students stay in school and receive legal protections and childcare support.

- Increase the number of Living for the Young Family through Education (LYFE) slots offered to parenting students
- Implement comprehensive training for school personnel on the legal rights of pregnant and parenting students

Re-engagement & Adult Learning: Providing educational opportunities for older youth and adult learners in the community.

- Provide re-engagement options for older youth without a high school diploma
- Expand adult literacy education (ABE, HSE, ESOL) for families and community members

Students with Disabilities

We call for an end to ableism in NYC schools and to the segregation, stigmatizing, warehousing, invisibilizing, neglect, and criminalizing of students with disabilities.

Staffing, Capacity & Service Delivery: Expanding personnel and infrastructure to meet legal obligations and student needs.

- Clear the backlog in special education evaluations by expanding the amount of IEP teachers, social workers, and school psychologists assigned to each school
- Fill the shortages of special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers, especially bilingual special education teachers and providers
- Fund related-services programs in schools so that parents and caregivers are not forced to seek those services through other outside contractors or out of the district
- Increase hiring of individuals with disabilities and provide students with disabilities a pathway to a career in education, so that students with disabilities can receive support and educational services from educators with disabilities
- Support the necessary legislative and policy changes required for updating decades-old school bus contracts that are impeding the City's ability to provide safe and reliable yellow bus service for all students, especially students with disabilities.

Inclusive and Integrated Schools

Equity, Inclusion & Anti-Discrimination: Ending systemic bias and ensuring inclusion for students with disabilities.

- Stop the over- and under-referral, and the racial disproportionality of referrals of students to special education, through clear guidance, training, and support for all school staff.
- Require the inclusion of students with disabilities in all school activities and events so that they may participate with their peers to the fullest extent.
- Ensure that students with disabilities receive positive behavioral supports and are not suspended or disciplined for behavior exhibited as a result of their disability, by providing ongoing training, coaching, and monitoring of school staff.

Early Childhood & Program Access: Ensuring foundational support from the earliest years and increasing access to specialized programs.

- Provide a preschool special education classroom seat for every child who needs one.
- Expand specialized programs such as the Nest and Horizon programs for students with autism and bilingual special education programs, especially in low-income communities of color.

Student Rights, Legal Compliance & Transition Planning: Delivering the supports students are legally entitled to, and preparing them for post-secondary life.

- Provide all students with disabilities the instruction, related services, and special education supports that they have the right to receive.
- Provide all students with disabilities with the transition supports required by law to prepare them for life after high school (e.g., financial literacy, independent living skills, and college and career planning).

Integrated and Inclusive Schools

Multilingual Learners and Immigrant families

The city's neglect and disregard for NYC's immigrant students has condemned many of them to failure in the school system: Multilingual Learners currently have the highest dropout rate of any student population in NYC, despite the fact that when given the right support, they outperform native English-speaking students. It is time to end policies that exclude and silence Multilingual Learners and immigrant families, and fully fund programs and services that meaningfully educate and engage newcomer immigrant students and caregivers.

Access, Equity & Graduation Pathways for MLLs: Expanding educational opportunities and reducing barriers to graduation and higher education.

- Improve graduation rates for multilingual learners and expand access to higher education by offering quality programs and expanding access to supportive high school programs for newcomer and undocumented students that meet their needs. The NYCDOE must increase MLL access to transfer schools, night schools, and college prep programs across all boroughs.
- Ensure that multilingual learners have access to all educational enrichment and advancement opportunities provided to English-proficient students.
- Promote completion of the NYS Seal of Biliteracy to ensure that more multilingual learners and former ELLs attain this recognition upon graduation.
- Advocate for changes to policies at the state and federal levels such that multilingual learners, particularly students with interrupted formal education (SIFEs), are not subjected to unreasonable testing requirements.

Bilingual, Dual Language & Inclusive Programming: Building robust, accessible, and culturally responsive programs for language development and home language maintenance.

- Fully fund and expand existing bilingual and dual language programs from 3K to 12th grade in the top 20 languages spoken in school communities and ensure that all MLLs are guaranteed a seat.
- Ensure that multilingual learners retain and develop their home language while learning English.



Integrated and Inclusive Schools

- Create a pipeline for multilingual educators and explore pathways for undocumented college graduates to attain positions in schools.

Family & Community Support Services: Empowering immigrant families through digital access, language support, and community integration.

- Provide digital readiness, adult literacy, and family supports to help immigrant families integrate into their communities and schools
- Fully fund and expand translation and interpretation services to support the diverse NYC immigrant population, including languages of limited diffusion
- Provide funding to develop and launch language services coops for African Languages of Limited Diffusion (LLDs), for Asian LLDs, for Indigenous Latin American LLDs, and for deaf immigrant students.

Workforce Development: Bilingual & ENL Staff: Addressing critical shortages in qualified, multilingual educators and support staff.

- Address the shortage of bilingual and ENL teachers as well as bilingual social workers and service providers

Legal Compliance & Disability Identification for MLLs: Ensuring rights and services are upheld for MLLs with disabilities.

- Implement an accountability mechanism and enforce laws requiring accurate assessment and identification of multilingual learners with disabilities, including translation and interpretation services for the IEP process, Section 504 plans, and other documents.



Culturally Responsive Schools

Schools that invisibilize, demean and fail to educate youth of color perpetuate racial injustice. There is a cultural gap in NYC public schools: 85% of students are Black, Latinx and Asian, yet only 40% of the teachers reflect this diversity; 83% of books used in K-8th grade curricula are by white authors; and 51% of those books have white main characters.⁸ This gap presents a developmental challenge for students striving to establish their identity and sense of self. It also presents an academic challenge, as students engage less deeply and achieve at lower levels when their identities and experiences are not represented in the classroom.

Culturally Responsive & Sustaining Education (CR-SE): Institutionalizing and resourcing CR-SE as the foundation of curriculum, instruction, and school culture.

- Anchoring all CR-SE work in the NYSED CRSE Framework.⁹
- Fully re-invest in the NYC Department of Education's definition of Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education¹⁰ by rebuilding capacity within NYCPS to support professional development and capacity building.
- Require that all new curriculum purchases, including teacher materials, library books, and book lists, are culturally responsive and aligned with the NYC DOE's definition of culturally responsive-sustaining education
- Fund Ethnic Studies courses in all NYC middle and high schools that include intersectional topics such as Black LGBTQ history, and ensure schools have the resources needed for these courses
- Mandate an advisory program in every school, with a culturally responsive, locally determined curriculum based on population, languages spoken, and need

Anti-Bias, Anti-Racist, and Healing-Centered Professional Learning: Deep, ongoing staff development rooted in equity, justice, and community experiences.

- Continue, expand, and deepen ongoing anti-bias, anti-racist, trauma-informed and healing-centered professional learning that has a strong grounding in the experiences of communities of different nationalities, cultures, languages, abilities, immigration statuses, racial groups, genders, socioeconomic status, religion, and other identities.
- Provide training for all staff on disability justice and gender justice, to ensure stronger support for youth with disabilities and LGBTQIA+ youth.



Culturally Responsive Schools

School Culture & Student Support: Building affirming, student-centered environments that honor all identities.

- Establish and support Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) throughout the school system
- Ensure that all schools have gender-neutral bathrooms that are accessible and safe.
- Eliminate gender-biased and heteronormative school dress codes while accommodating students who adhere to cultural and religious preferences.
- Ensure that all interactions with students and families are healing-centered and honor the knowledge, beliefs, and practices of the community.
- Ensure accommodations for students practicing their faiths in accordance with state law.

Curriculum

A curriculum is not a neutral, inert document. What and how our children are taught shapes not only measurable outcomes but also how they feel at school and who they become. Research reflects that children learn best through hands-on exploration and play, that older students thrive when they have access to a broad range of enrichment opportunities, and that standardized testing does not accurately measure student understanding or progress. Culturally responsive instruction is learner-centered, developmentally appropriate, flexible, and differentiated, and allows students to engage in meaningful and joyful ways.

Instructional Quality & Teacher Support: Strengthening teaching practices through professional development, collaboration, and resources.

- Provide ongoing training to all teachers around age-appropriate, evidence-based literacy instruction that is grounded in the science of reading and ensure all students who need extra help in reading can access evidence-based literacy interventions such as Orton-Gillingham.



Culturally Responsive Schools

- Implement a comprehensive, research-based strategy for strengthening instruction in struggling schools, including Lead Teachers, common planning time, expanded learning time, and more, tied to additional funding to compensate teachers for out-of-contract hours.
- Allow for teacher autonomy in implementation of curriculum to allow for sufficient teacher flexibility to be able to ensure that they can meet all their students' individual needs.

Curriculum & Assessment Reform: Shifting toward inclusive, experiential, and developmentally appropriate learning models.

- Support schools to ensure students have access to performance-based, portfolio, and alternative assessments instead of high-stakes standardized testing, to ensure accountability for educating a wide range of students.
- Limit the time spent on test prep, screeners, and commercially produced benchmark assessments, and implement accountability measures to ensure that such tools are useful for educators.
- Ensure that any curriculum purchased via DOE contract is evaluated by DOE teachers to be: culturally responsive and sustaining, privacy protective, developmentally appropriate, available in many languages, and to include project-based or experiential learning opportunities.
- Eliminate the use of AI in the classroom, unless a particular product has been proven to protect student privacy and improve student engagement and learning [see above].

Well-Rounded, Inclusive Education: Ensuring all students have access to a rich, holistic educational experience.

- Increase daily access for all students to visual and performing arts, technology, sports, cooking, life skills, health and wellness, civic and financial literacy, and other non-academic classes.
- Offer age-appropriate comprehensive sex education for all students that is inclusive of all students across various gender and sexuality spectrums.



Culturally Responsive Schools

- Prioritize the high-quality instruction of languages other than English in middle and high schools.
- Expand work-based learning opportunities.

Child-Centered School Practices: Supporting age-appropriate developmental needs and student well-being.

- Advise schools to implement at least one hour per day of center-based or choice-based projects or play time for all elementary students.
- Ensure access to recess for all middle school students.
- Limit screen-based instruction for all students.



Safe and Supportive Schools

Fully fund efforts to build nurturing and supportive school communities through culturally responsive mental health services and support. Eliminate policies and practices that criminalize and dehumanize youth.

NYC Public Schools must be safe, welcoming spaces. As such, police have no place in public schools. We embrace the vision of school safety created by the Black and Latinx young people who are most impacted by school policing.¹¹ We demand the removal of police from schools – not a restructuring, reassignment, reorganization, re-creation or retraining of the current punishing and demeaning system. We call for the redirection of the \$400+ million spent annually on school policing to create truly safe and supportive school communities through robust mental health services, social and emotional support systems, and restorative justice. We seek to dismantle the school-to-confinement pipeline¹² in all of our schools, especially in schools with majority Black and Latinx students.

End the policing, criminalization and dehumanization of youth in schools

- Remove all police (School Safety Agents), scanning, metal detectors, cameras and invasive security measures and surveillance from schools, and redirect the funds to the policies below.
- End arrests, summonses, and juvenile reports except for student behaviors that pose a real and immediate threat of serious physical injury to the school community.
- Advocate for schools to be sanctuaries that bar all non-local law enforcement from entering, including ICE and CBP.¹³
- End the policy of handcuffing and restraining¹⁴ students in emotional crisis or distress.¹⁵
- Require de-escalation techniques and mental health interventions to be used instead of calling EMS or police.
- Revise Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) regulations such that an MDR must take place before removing a student with a disability from class or school in any of the following three circumstances: Three or more days of removal in a row, Five or more removals in 40 school days, or, Seven or more removals in the school year PLUS a pattern.



Safe and Supportive Schools

Use the savings from ending school policing to create a culturally competent, healing-centered mental health service continuum by leveraging the evidence-based structure of Community Schools.

- Hire at least one Restorative Justice Coordinator in every school.
- Increase the number of culturally competent, trauma-informed, multilingual mental health support staff to a ratio of 1 per 100 students, including but not limited to psychologists, health educators, school nurses, social workers, community outreach workers, etc.
- Create well-paid, supportive positions in schools for Black and Brown community members that don't require bachelor's degrees: Paraprofessionals, Youth Advocates, Parent Coordinators, Community Outreach Coordinators.
- Empower school communities (students, teachers, principals, and parents) to oversee the hiring and training of staff, and increase positions for Black and Brown community members.
- Train every DOE employee in collaborative problem-solving, de-escalation techniques, trauma-informed practices, anti-racist conflict resolution, restorative justice, human-centered management and socioemotional development.
- Pay stipends to young people and families to get trained and lead peer mediation, circle keeping, and restorative justice.
- Expand the number of school counselors who are equipped to provide comprehensive in-school support to students who experience sexual violence.
- Implement the Movement of Rank and File Educators (MORE) Caucus Health Justice Agenda.

Overhaul the suspension policies and practices that exclude children from their classrooms, result in hundreds of thousands of lost days of instruction each year, and disproportionately impact Black students and students with disabilities.

- Eliminate suspensions for Level 1-4 infractions.
- Eliminate all disciplinary removals in pre-K through 5th grade.
- Decrease the maximum length of suspensions for Level 3-5 infractions.
- Mandate guidance interventions and supports before the use of suspensions.
- Overhaul the suspension hearing offices and process.
- End dress codes and zero-tolerance policies.



Safe and Supportive Schools

When disciplining students, educators must always consider if a student's challenging behaviors are caused by or substantially related to a disability or traumatic socio-emotional context. Administrators and educators must always consider what disability- and trauma-informed behavioral supports are appropriate and should be offered instead of punitive discipline, such as mental health services, restorative justice, or individual counseling.



Conclusion

This policy roadmap lays out a vision for New York City public schools that not only prepares students to succeed—but to lead—in a rapidly changing world. Fulfilling this promise requires a deep commitment to creating joyful, welcoming spaces that reflect and celebrate the vibrant diversity of our city. Every young person deserves to thrive, surrounded by the care, support, and love needed to turn their dreams into reality.

These priorities are not aspirational ideals—they are urgent, necessary responses to generations of segregation, educational racism, chronic underinvestment in public schools, and the recent erosion of democratic values under the Trump administration. Leadership may change, but our vision is built to endure. This roadmap offers a path forward, rooted in community and justice.

We are proud that this roadmap was shaped by the voices of NYC students, parents, educators, and community members. It should serve as a valuable resource for the new mayor and a call to action for the City Council, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), the New York State Education Department (NYSED), and state leaders.

We are ready to work in partnership with them—and with all New Yorkers—to make this vision a reality. By ensuring every NYC school is fully and equitably funded, rooted in the public good, and grounded in democratic engagement, we can build a system of inclusive, integrated, culturally responsive, safe, and supportive schools. Together, we can ensure every NYC graduate is equipped not only to thrive—but to lead.

WHAT'S THE TEA NYC?



Gratitude

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the 1,222 New Yorkers who took the time to respond to our survey and “spill the tea” on NYC schools. Your voices and insights made this roadmap possible.

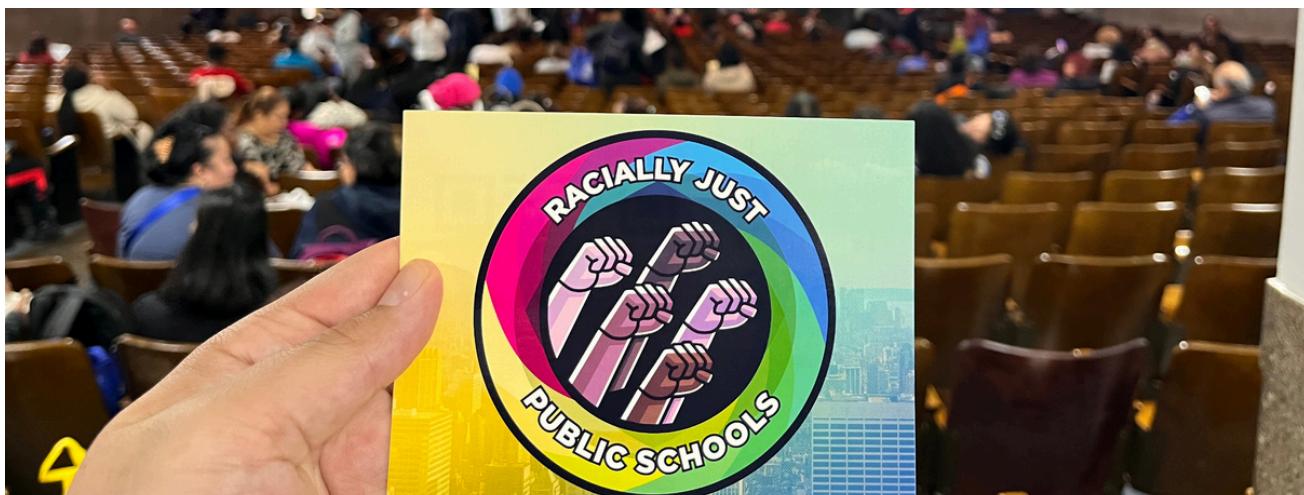
We are deeply grateful to the RJPS Policy Working Group for helping shape our bold vision, and to the RJPS Steering Committee for guiding our campaign, priorities, and goals—ensuring that all our efforts remain rooted in service to students. Thanks to Liberation Spaces LLC for preparing and organizing this report.

Special thanks to Felicia Singh and the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) for hosting our initial strategy and visioning session, a pivotal moment in launching this campaign.

To our core organizing team—Maria Bautista, Smitha Milich, Matt Gonzales, and Kaliris Salas-Ramirez—thank you for your tireless work in strategizing, organizing, and executing every step of this journey.

We also appreciate the current and former NYCPS education leaders and allies who generously shared their wisdom and perspectives. Your contributions strengthened this roadmap and made it more dynamic.

Lastly, we stand on the shoulders of many giants who have fought for education justice in NYC. We honor those with us today and those no longer here who paved the way for this work.



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8. <https://www.nyccej.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Diverse-City-White-Curriculum-3.pdf>
9. <https://www.nysed.gov/crs/framework>
10. <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/vision-and-mission/culturally-responsive-sustaining-education>
11. We follow the leadership of youth leaders from organizations that have been leading advocacy on this issue for decades, including Dignity in Schools Campaign-NY, Urban Youth Collaborative and Girls for Gender Equity.
12. Dr. Monique Morris, *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools*
13. Maintain and strengthen protocols to protect families from ICE and immigrant detention in school communities. Ensure full implementation and training on protocols in all schools.
14. "except when the behavior of such student creates an imminent and substantial risk of physical injury to such student or any other person, and shall limit the duration of such use to the period of time that the behavior of such student presents such risk; provided that school safety personnel or such precinct officer shall consult with the school's crisis intervention team regarding such determination."
15. Limiting all exceptions to imminent and substantial risk of physical injury and that any restraint is time limited to when the student presents the alleged risk

Appendix A: Qualifications of the Next Chancellor

Required Experience:

- **Experience working in the education field.** The Chancellor should have experience as a teacher, administrator, superintendent or professor. It would be preferable for the Chancellor to have extensive teaching and administration experience. In particular, we would like them to have worked with multiple grade levels, with a strong background in pedagogy, curriculum development and instruction for diverse learners. This means any candidate who requires a waiver should not be considered.
- **Experience managing large entities such as urban school districts, universities, or other youth-service agencies.** There are many pieces to the puzzle, and the Chancellor should have demonstrated the capacity to work with students, parents, teachers, principals and others in a democratic, efficient and effective manner. The chancellor should be an intersectional expert with experience in policy, leadership, instruction and authentic engagement.
- **A proven record of:**
 - Improving districts, (i.e. academic performance, organizational culture, parent involvement, etc.);
 - Designing and implementing inclusive programs that advanced equitable outcomes for historically marginalized students;
 - Building and sustaining partnerships between school districts/organizations, non-profits and the community;
 - Solving problems by bringing multiple stakeholders together and utilizing their suggestions or solutions;
 - Advocating for policies as seen in “RJPS Policy Roadmap for Racially Just Public Schools.”
- **Preferred Experience:**
 - Extensive knowledge of New York City’s school system, neighborhoods, and political landscape, including education finance policies.
 - Strong understanding of the city’s diverse historical, cultural, linguistic, and racial dynamics.
 - Ability to address the intersection of education with housing, environment, poverty, and other social issues, informed by knowledge of child and adolescent development.
 - Proven track record of racial, cultural, and linguistic competency in leadership.



Appendix B: Process for Appointments

I. Appointment Process for Panel for Educational Policy (PEP)

1. Public Call for Nominations

- The Mayor's Office will issue a public announcement inviting nominations and self-nominations from across NYC's five boroughs and sectors, with targeted outreach to community-based organizations, advocacy groups, higher education institutions, and parent networks.
- Applications can include: a personal statement outlining the nominee's philosophy on public education, a record of community engagement or leadership and a resume/CV.

2. Community Review Committee

- A temporary Community Review Committee (which can also be part of the transition team) will be convened to review applications. This committee will consist of:
 - Two representatives from the Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council (CPAC)
 - Two members from local Community Education Councils (CECs), and two members from the Citywide Councils
 - Two representatives from education advocacy organizations focused on racial and economic justice
 - Two youth representative
 - One educator/UFT representative
 - One higher education faculty member
 - One principal /CSA representative
 - This committee will provide a shortlist of finalists for each seat.

3. Public Forums and Vetting

- Finalists will participate in borough-based public forums to discuss their vision, values, and commitment to educational equity.
- Feedback from these forums will be synthesized and provided to the Mayor's team prior to final appointments.

4. Mayor's Final Selection and Commitment

- The Mayor will make final appointments from the vetted pool, prioritizing transparency and alignment with the criteria below.
- Appointees must take a pledge to uphold the values of educational equity, anti-racism, and democratic governance.



Appendix B: Process for Appointments

II. Appointment Criteria:

Appointees to the PEP must meet the following qualifications:

1. Core Qualifications

- **Deep Knowledge of Public Education:** Experience working in or in close partnership with NYC public schools, including as a parent leader, educator, counselor/social worker, advocate, or researcher.
- **Demonstrated Commitment to Equity and Justice:** A proven track record advancing racial justice, disability rights, language access, immigrant rights, LGBTQIA+ inclusion, and/or economic equity within education or adjacent sectors.
- **Community Accountability:** Strong relationships with historically marginalized communities and evidence of sustained, trust-based community work.
- **Sectoral Expertise:** Appointees must represent one or more of the following sectors:
 - Experienced **parent leadership** within public schools
 - Former **public school educators** or administrators
 - **Higher education faculty** in education, science, social policy, or public health
 - Experts in **education leadership and policy**
 - Practitioners from the **human services or youth development** sectors
 - Members of **nonprofit education advocacy organizations**
 - **Civil rights and education lawyers** with expertise in IDEA, Title VI, Title IX, and the NYS Education Law

2. Representation and Diversity Goals

- Appointees will collectively reflect the racial, linguistic, cultural, geographic, and socioeconomic diversity of New York City.
- At least one appointee will have personal or professional experience advocating for students with disabilities and the implementation of IEPs.
- At least one appointee will be a bilingual or multilingual advocate.
- At least one appointee should be the parent of a student in District 75.

III. Accountability and Tenure

- Appointees must participate in annual public education retreats/professional development on racial justice, conflict resolution, disability justice, education law, education finance and democratic governance.



Appendix C: Transition Team

Description of Transition Team

A transition team for an incoming mayor tasked with reshaping the leadership of New York City public schools must center community-driven governance, racial justice, and educational equity. This team should be a diverse, cross-sector group reflective of the communities most impacted by public education policies and practice.

1. Educators and School-Based Staff:

- Veteran public school teachers from culturally responsive, inclusive classrooms (particularly those with experience in dual-language, special education, and restorative justice models).
- Progressive school leaders (ie, principals from Consortium and community schools) who have demonstrated success with student-centered, project-based learning and community partnerships.
- Union representatives from the UFT and CSA who are committed to progressive change and school-based empowerment.

2. Parent and Caregiver Leaders:

- Leaders from citywide parent councils (CECs). Parent leaders should be able to apply to the transition team.
- Parents of students with individualized education plans (IEPs; D75), English Language Learners (ELLs)/immigrant students, trans and gender nonconforming who understand firsthand the gaps and strengths in services and supports.

3. Students:

- High school students from diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds across boroughs, including representatives from the Urban Youth Collaborative, NYC Youth Power Coalition, Teens Take Charge, former student PEP members, and restorative justice youth programs like The Circle Keepers.
- Students with disabilities and LGBTQIA+ student leaders who can speak to intersectional school experiences.

4. Advocacy Organizations and Think Tanks:

- Representatives from groups like AQE (Alliance for Quality Education), Coalition from Community Schools Excellence, IncludeNYC, Sinergia, CACF, Education Council Consortium, etc. All identified as partners in the work of RJPS.
- Civil rights attorneys and advocates familiar with education law, student rights, and equitable funding formulas.
- Former Panel for Educational Policy members with a proven voting record of support for historically marginalized groups, equitable policies, and integration efforts.



Appendix C: Transition Team

Description of Transition Team (cont)

5. Higher Education Professionals and Researchers:

- Faculty from CUNY, SUNY, Teachers College, and NYU with expertise in urban education, special education, bilingual education, and public policy.
- Nationally recognized scholars in critical pedagogy, culturally responsive education, and education finance.

6. National Advisors and Former System Leaders:

- Former superintendents, chancellors, or state education commissioners who have led transformative, community-led reforms (e.g., from Oakland, Chicago, or Boston).
- Advisors with expertise in community schools, participatory budgeting, and democratic school governance.

Purpose and Function of the Transition Team:

- Conduct a transparent audit of current DOE initiatives, identifying what should remain, what must be reimaged, and what should be dismantled—through a racial and educational justice lens.
- Design clear accountability measures for the mayor and DOE leadership, prioritizing data disaggregated by race, ability, language, and income.
- Establish criteria and a process for selecting the next Chancellor and senior cabinet members—grounded in values of anti-racism, inclusion, transparency, and community partnership. The search committee should use this to guide their work in choosing the chancellor.
- Facilitate listening sessions across boroughs with educators, families, and students to inform transition priorities.
- Produce a public-facing transition report outlining short-term and long-term goals for moving NYC toward community-driven control and dismantling the remnants of top-down, mayoral-centric governance.

This transition team would not only advise but also model a new standard of co-governance, laying the groundwork for a future in which NYC's public schools are led with, by, and for the communities they serve.



Appendix D: Context on School Governance Changes

Context on School Governance Changes

In January of 2022, Chancellor David Banks overhauled the NYC DOE's senior leadership structure early in his tenure by streamlining the cabinet from 15 to just seven top roles, appointing.

In Fall 2024, the Division of Teaching and Learning was dissolved following the departure of Deputy Chancellor Quintana. Deputy Chancellor Christina Foti was appointed to lead the newly formed Division of Inclusive and Accessible Learning (DIAL), launched in June 2024 to unify and strengthen services for students with disabilities and multilingual learners under one division.

After three mayoral terms under Michael Bloomberg—during which his appointees routinely approved every proposal and contract—the education law was amended to require a written notice stating the reasons for removing an appointee. While this was a step toward accountability, it did not prevent a mayoral administration from pressuring appointees to leave. For example, under Bill de Blasio, a mayoral appointee who voted against an administration proposal was excluded from briefings and key communications, and was strongly encouraged to resign—ultimately doing so. True independence for appointees requires explicit protections against retaliation by the administration.

Like its predecessors, the Adams administration has experienced frequent leadership turnover at the NYC Department of Education. The resignation of Chancellor David Banks and the appointment of Chancellor Melissa Aviles-Ramos—amid rumors of corruption and the mayor's indictment—heightened community concerns over the lack of stability and long-term direction.

Frequent cabinet reshuffling disrupts strategic planning, weakens the DOE's ability to serve nearly one million students, and erodes public confidence in sustained instructional progress. Experts stress that effective school governance in New York City depends on a stable, high-performing cabinet to ensure continuity and resilience. Yet across three different mayoral administrations, that stability has never materialized, as each mayor has repeatedly reorganized and restructured leadership, often multiple times within a single term.



