

As school leaders, the months that have passed since the COVID-19 crisis gripped New York City have been some of the most challenging of our careers. Our staff, our students, and many of our own families have suffered unspeakable loss, and yet we have not been able to come together as communities to mourn and support one another.

Not surprisingly, the virus has disproportionately ravaged New York's most vulnerable communities, home to so many of our black, brown, and immigrant students.

As if a once-in-a-generation health crisis weren't enough, the murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police reminds our students of the NYPD's own sordid history of murdering and terrorizing black and brown New Yorkers; evidenced by the similar fates of Eric Garner, Kalief Browder, and Akai Gurley, and the dark era of stop-and-frisk.

Our students are civically engaged. They participate in and follow the protests that demand accountability and justice. They watch as the police--who they are asked to trust as their protectors--indiscriminately deploy tear gas, ram protestors with squad cars, pepper spray peaceful demonstrators and compliant journalists, and flash white power symbols to approving colleagues. The NYPD's human rights abuses are on full display as they assert once again their indifference toward black and brown citizens' immeasurable grief, and their intolerance for expressions of justified rage.

When our children finally return to the classroom, these crises will have left them in need of unprecedented levels of support from us, both academic and emotional. Instead, they will return to schools with budgets that have been gutted by over \$827 million dollars. They will return to schools without adequate access to social workers, mental health and counseling services, restorative justice programs, arts programs, sports teams, and after school programming.

At the same time, the NYPD will see its budget substantially increased. When our students emerge from the collective trauma of COVID-19 and rampant police brutality, they'll be met by faces wearing an NYPD uniform; on the corner, at the bus stop, in the subway, and at the doors of their schools. This will trigger feelings of fear, anger, and anxiety – not safety. After all, what evidence do black and brown students have that they can trust law enforcement officers?

The priorities of our city and state in this budget are clear. Children last, NYPD first.

We would be remiss in our duties to our students if we did not use what power we have to join their efforts to convince those who remain indifferent that “Black Lives Matter.” In light of that responsibility, we demand that the governor, mayor, and city council pass a budget that puts children first during this crucial time. That means drastic increases to public school and social service budgets, and sharp cuts to the NYPD's budget. Increased school budgets should include funding for:

- all schools to develop anti-racist professional learning plans specific to the needs of their school community;
- building an Ethnic Studies Curriculum that centers on the history of people of color and racism in America;
- a restorative justice coordinator for every school to help dismantle the school to prison pipeline; and

- hiring guidance counselors and social workers to achieve a 1:100 ratio, who can work directly with children impacted by COVID-19 and police violence.

In addition, we call for:

- abolishing culturally biased teacher certification exams
- recruiting a teaching and leadership staff that reflects the diversity of our public school system
- reviewing the approved vendor list and procurement policies to promote purchasing from black and minority owned businesses that support our communities
- placing School Safety officers under the training and supervision of the Office of Safety and Youth Development and retraining them as school peace officers with a focus on de-escalation, mediation, and restorative practices;
- reinstating COMPASS, SONYC, Beacon and Cornerstones summer programs, and Summer Youth Employment Programs; and
- restoring the planned 3-K expansion.

In Solidarity,

[To sign: [Click here](#) - response are updated manually a few times a day]

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Cyndra Davis - Paraprofessional Brooklyn

Adam Grumbach - Principal Urban Academy

Diana Amoroso - Teacher Park East High School

Joell Baxter - Parent and PTA co-president Park Slope Collegiate

Christine Fryer Teacher - High School for Law Advocacy and Community Justice

Becky Walzer - Co-Director Urban Academy HS

Kori Goldberg - Teacher The Brooklyn New School

Matthew Driscoll - Teacher M260 The Clinton School

Charlotte Vinson - Teacher The Young Women's Leadership School of the Bronx

Thomas Backner -Social Worker P.S. 89/I.S. 289 & School of the Future

Kimmerly Scott - Parent / CEC15 Member MS 88

Diane Thole - Teacher School of the Future

Alex Draper - Teacher Brooklyn

Virgil Talaid - Teacher District 07

Jamie Wilen - Teacher Williamsburg Prep

Adelaida Rojas - School Social Worker South Bronx International Middle School

Alea Idhe – Teacher John J. Pershing I.s. 220

Heather Foster Mann – Principal 13K133

Alyssa Roye - Principal PS 270 DeKalb School

Deborah Nikrad - Assistant Principal PS 172

Kyle Brillante – Principal The Highbridge Green School

Pedro A. Grant -Teacher Brooklyn Frontiers High School

Rosario Orengo - Teacher Leader Urban Assembly Unison School

Amelia Costigan, Reyhan Mehran, and Miriam Nunberg - Steering Committee, District 15 Parents for Middle School Equity

Tania Z Kamensky - SLT member The Brooklyn New School

Jamie Blaylock - Teacher Brooklyn NY

Ashleigh Staton - Teacher Leader High School of Art and Design

Lindsey Yang – Teacher PS 169 Sunset Park School

Shakira Lleras -Coach Hamilton Grange Middle School

Cruz Vargas-Sullivan - R&D Analyst Central

Sam Maslow - Teacher of Students with Disabilities Lab High School

Erin Orr - Arts Educator PS130 Brooklyn

Maria Cadillac - Teacher BNS/146 Brooklyn

Meena Miller – Teacher Urban Assembly Unison School

Tamara Boyiatzis - School Counselor Academy for Young Writers

Shannon Moody Thompson - Teacher of Speech Improvement Evergreen Middle School

Edgar Lin – Principal Brooklyn

Brian Ennis – Teacher Williamsburg Prep High School

Sarika Narang – Teacher Elmhurst, Queens

Nancy Reynoso – Parent PA Member Urban Academy

Rachel Jacobs - Teacher Leader Academy for Young Writers

Tanisha Brown - Assistant Principal Academy for Young Writers

Amy L Tate - PTA Co-President PS 146 Brooklyn New School

Arlette Williams - Parent Coordinator Brooklyn

Lily Lamb-Atkinson-Teacher P373K - The Brooklyn Transition Center

Jonathan Spear - Parent & SLT Chair Beacon High School

Carrie McLaren -Parent D15 Coalition for Equitable Schools

Heidi Goodson - Assistant Professor of Mathematics Brooklyn College CUNY

Emily Heyden – Teacher Brooklyn

Keri Cerio - Senior Program Manager Central

Gabriella Giaconial – Teacher PS 142M

Emily Giles -Teacher and Restorative Justice Coordinator Prospect Heights Brooklyn

Bryan Cockrell - ENL Teacher KAPPA International High School

Emma Bonk Teacher Evergreen Middle School for Urban Exploration

Allison Holton -Teacher Bushwick

Marc Lapointe - Instructional Specialist Civics For All

Jose Dobles - Program Manager Office of Community Schools

Greta Schwerner -Teacher Brooklyn New School

Lindsay Manolakos - Teacher Leader Academy for Young Writers

Marcia Edmonds - Assistant Principal Park East High School

Corinne Cornibe – Teacher Academy for Young Writers

Caitlin Gnann - Teacher Academy for Young Writers

Benjamin R Cutler – Teacher Kappa International

Jessica Lilly -Teacher Williamsburg Preparatory School

Lori Gordon Teacher Evergreen Middle School for Urban Exploration

Scott Chesler – Teacher School of the Future

Sharon Goodman -Teacher Leader Arts & Letters

Neisha-Ann Johnson - Guidance Counselor Park East High School

Dana Jones – Teacher High School for Community Leadership

Kevin Conway - Principal Millennium Brooklyn High School

Jessica Mazo - Community School Director

Anna Catherine Rutledge -PTA co-president Brooklyn New School

Chloe Smock – Teacher LREI

Jamie Kubiak – Teacher Park East HS

Michael Shadrick - Principal Williamsburg Prep

Naomi Smith - Principal Central Park East II

Elizabeth Phillips - Principal PS 321

Theresa Luongo - Assistant Principal Central Park East 2

Tabari Z Bomani - Principal Nelson Mandela High School

Jessica Jenkins - Principal West End Secondary School

Jackie Allen Joseph - Former Principal PS 261

Katherine Brown - Assistant Principal School of the Future

Andres Rodriguez - Assistant Principal Lyons Community School  
Peter Karp - Principal Institute for Collaborative Education

Jonathan Foy - Executive Director of Equity and Transformation Office of Equity and Access

Cal Hastings - Chief Schools Officer NYC Outward Bound Schools

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Erica Paley - Assistant Principal PS/MS 219

Bennett Lieberman - Principal Central Park East HS

Claire Sheehan – Principal Cascades High School Manhattan

David DeCamp - Principal Professional Pathways High School

Aurora Kushner - School Coach NYC Outward Bound Schools