



HEALING-CENTERED SCHOOLS TASK FORCE

RECOMMENDATIONS TO BRING HEALING-CENTERED EDUCATION
TO NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS DURING THE 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR

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ABOUT THE HEALING-CENTERED SCHOOLS TASK FORCE

The Healing-Centered Schools Task Force launched in June 2021 in response to decades of educational inequity and childhood trauma impacting New York City’s students - injustices exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Task Force unites students, educators, parents, community groups, mental health providers, and elected officials to study how the City can implement healing-centered educational practices during the 2021-22 school year. The Task Force convened to identify and demand steps the City must take over the next year to remove harmful practices from public schools and build structures that support staff wellness, parent involvement, and student growth and healing.

Task Force Representatives met over a period of six weeks to develop their Recommendations. The Task Force received briefings on issues impacting educational equity, hosted and reviewed feedback from seventeen community listening sessions, and reviewed education research and policy platforms. They developed their Recommendations through a collaborative process that prioritized the contributions and decisionmaking power of Youth Representatives.

The Task Force also met with DOE Deputy Chancellor of School Climate & Wellness LaShawn Robinson to seek her team’s feedback on the Recommendations and to understand potential obstacles to implementation and success. Deputy Chancellor Robinson’s feedback informed the Task Force’s Recommendations.

THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE is a non-voting member of the New York City Council with the right to introduce and co-sponsor legislation. The Public Advocate also serves as an ombudsman for city government, providing oversight for city agencies, investigating citizens’ complaints about city services and making proposals to address perceived shortcomings or failures of those services. Along with the Mayor and the Comptroller, the Public Advocate is one of three municipal offices elected by all the city’s voters.

THE HEALING-CENTERED SCHOOLS WORKING GROUP is a coalition of parents, students, educators, mental health providers, and advocates who believe that every school-based interaction with students and parents/caregivers should be healing-centered. We have witnessed the impact of trauma on our communities and our students’ ability to learn, and we have seen how our students suffer when schools lack the tools to respond to trauma. We believe that a healing-centered approach to learning will make New York City schools safer and more supportive environments for all students, not just those who have been impacted by trauma.

TASK FORCE REPRESENTATIVES

The Healing-Centered Schools Task Force is structured to prioritize the leadership and decision-making of our young people, parents, and front-line educators - those most impacted by the need for healing-centered schools. Our Task Force is led by the following Representatives, who were selected because of their passion for healing-centered educational change and their commitment to the City's school communities.

Task Force representatives were selected by a committee of staff from the Office of the Public Advocate and members of the Healing-Centered Working Group and were evaluated based on responses to the following questions: (1) What does the term "healing-centered schools" mean to you? (2) What healing-centered educational practices will you advocate for as a Task Force Representative? (3) What networks are you connected to and what boroughs or constituents do you feel you represent?

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

KENEISHA BUCKLEY is a 16 year-old youth leader at the Urban Youth Collaborative. She is committed to fighting for pro-choice policy and to defund the New York City Police Department.

JADE ENTIEN is a senior student at the Dreamyard Preparatory High School and a youth advocate with Sistas & Brothas United. Identifying as non-binary, Jade prides themselves on advocating for safer schools for queer students of color. They advocate for removing police from schools and providing robust mental health support of students and staff.

LIANA GARCIA is an 18 year-old youth leader, co-founder of The Defiance, and youth advocate with the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group and Youth for Justice. She is an Afro-Latinx teen from the Bronx who believes in liberation for all people of color, no matter their sexuality, gender identity, religious beliefs, or any other identity. She graduated from Bronx Leadership Academy 2 in June of 2021 and is a freshman at Medaille College studying psychology.

RAYNE HAWKINS is a Youth Advocate for Parents Supporting Parents New York and Moms United for Black Lives. She graduated from James Baldwin in June of 2021.

STEPHANIE PACHECO is a youth leader, co-founder of The Defiance, a youth advocate with the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group and a youth leader with Teens Take Charge. She is from the Bronx and has been advocating for youth voices to be included in decision making meetings and policies for nearly three years. She continues to work with other youth members to fight for equity in education, abolition, and justice for the most marginalized communities in NYC.

PARENT REPRESENTATIVES

TAJH SUTTON is a veteran arts educator, community organizer, youth advocate and author with a focus on policy, activism and shifting paradigms for Black queer MaGes and children. She currently serves as the Program Director at Teens Take Charge, Outreach & Communications Coordinator for Students Break The Silence, President of Community Education Council District 14 (CEC 14), and on the steering committee for Black Lives Matter at School NY and Parents for Responsive Equitable Safe Schools (PRESS NYC).

AMY TSAI is a graduate of Fresh Meadows, Queens, mom of five NYC public school students, a Parent Leader with the New Settlement Parent Action Committee, and a CEC member for Citywide Council for District 75. As a resident of the Bronx for sixteen years raising five children, education and disability justice have been her passions, dedication, and commitment.

EDUCATOR REPRESENTATIVES

SHAVON GLOVER is a member of the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group and a middle school educator of 24 years in her beloved District 5. She is a passionate human who seeks to authentically empower scholars and families to become their own change agents through love, healing and knowledge.

ILONA NANAY is an educator in District 12 and proud member of MORE-UFT's Health Justice Working Group and Teachers Unite. She advocates for community health and health justice in schools, community-driven policymaking, and the adoption of anti-racist and non-punitive practices in schools.

COMMUNITY & CULTURAL GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

NICOLE HAMILTON is a radical educator, trainer, curriculum designer, youth worker, circle keeper and community builder. Nicole believes that working in close partnership with schools builds the trust, transparency and accountability needed to do the hard work of shifting school culture. Nicole brings ten years of experience in direct service provision from her roles as the Program Director of a multi-site after school program, Director of School Based Programs and Partnerships and currently as the Director of Community Partnerships for Girls for Gender Equity, a non-profit organization in Brooklyn.

VANESSA LEUNG is the Co-Executive Director of the Coalition for Asian-American Children & Families and has been Chair of the NYC Panel for Educational Policy since 2014. She also sits on the Advisory Panel for the Brooke Astor Fund for New York City Education. She has served the education community through her career, advocating on behalf of Asian Pacific American students and English Language Learners in New York City public schools. She holds a bachelor's degree from New York University and a master's degree from Columbia University's Teachers College.

MENTAL HEALTH REPRESENTATIVE

RUEZALIA WATKINS is an Education Services Specialist at Vibrant Emotional Health. She helps to find solutions to increase access to instruction and services for students facing emotional, behavioral, attention and mental health challenges. She is one of the founding creators of the Parent Empowerment Program and a current board member of Families on the Move of NYC.

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE

COUNCILMEMBER KEVIN CHRISTOPHER RILEY is from the Northeast Bronx, where he continues to reside and serve as representative to the 12th City Council District (Baychester, Eastchester, Olinville, Co-op City, Edenwald, and Williamsbridge in the Northeast section of the Bronx). Following his graduation from Mount Saint Michael Academy, he attended the SUNY College at Old Westbury to pursue his B.A. in Politics, Economics and Law and obtained his M.P.A. in Public Affairs and Administration from Metropolitan College of New York. During this time, Kevin dedicated time to generating positive relationships with the youth working for the New York Foundling as a Skills Coach, mentoring young men on life skills and making them cognizant of their social surroundings.

Prior to being elected to represent the New York City Council's 12th district, Kevin worked for the Speaker of the New York State Assembly, Carl E. Heastie, working directly with community groups, leaders, and organizations for over a decade. In 2019, he founded a non-profit organization, Music Over Violence, which seeks to address violence and social injustice within his community. In conjunction with his Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity brothers, Kevin founded a nationwide organization called The Dad Gang to work towards eliminating the stereotypes surrounding black fatherhood.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Healing-Centered Schools Task Force wishes to thank all the students, parents, educators, advocates, and community members who attended our community listening sessions.

The Task Force also wishes to thank the following individuals and organizations whose research and advocacy informed our Recommendations:

Dignity in Schools Campaign – New York
Sistas & Brothas United
Urban Youth Collaborative
The Brotherhood Sister Sol
YA-YA Network
Teens Take Charge
Class Size Matters
Educators for Excellence
NYC Men Teach
New York Immigration Coalition
Parents for Responsive Equitable Safe Schools
MORE-UFT Health Justice Working Group

Advocates for Children
NYC Coalition for Educational Justice
Alliance for Quality Education
IntegrateNYC
New Settlement Parent Action Committee
The Education Justice Research and
Girls for Gender Equity
Organizing Collaborative
NYC Culturally Responsive Education Working Group
Coalition for Asian-American Children & Families
Thomas Finkelpearl

Finally, the Task Force wishes to thank the following members of the Office of the Public Advocate and the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group who supported the Task Force's community outreach, research and development, and drafting efforts.

Office of the Public Advocate
Elizabeth Kennedy, Deputy Public Advocate for Education & Opportunity
Edgardo Solomon Acevedo, Deputy Public Advocate for Justice, Health Equity, and Safety
Terence Miller, Community Organizer
Gwen Saffran, Policy and Legislative Associate
Brian Polanco, Bronx Borough Advocate
Jibreel Jalloh, Brooklyn Borough Advocate
Phillip Ellison, Manhattan Borough Advocate
Sabine French, Queens Borough Advocate
Fitim Shabani, Staten Island Borough Advocate

Healing-Centered Schools Working Group¹
Chauncy Young, Director, New Settlement Parent Action Committee
Katrina Feldkamp, Staff Attorney, Bronx Legal Services
Kim Famous, Parent Leader
Tanesha Grant, Parent Leader
Rasheedah Harris, Parent Leader
Ayishah Irvin, Parent Leader
Chaplain Sandra Mitchell, Parent Advocate
Hope Newton, Parent Advocate
Theresa Roberts, Parent Leader
Tom Sheppard, Parent Leader
Rocio Zumaya, Parent Leader
Ella Beckman, Legal Intern, Bronx Legal Services
Jozefina Preci, Legal Intern, Bronx Legal Services
Nelson Mar, Senior Staff Attorney, Bronx Legal Services

¹ Bronx Legal Services and Legal Services NYC, coalition members of the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group, did not contribute to the development of recommendations, including recommendations pertaining to legislation and budgetary asks.

WHY WE NEED HEALING-CENTERED SCHOOLS NOW: AN OPEN LETTER TO MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO AND CHANCELLOR MEISHA ROSS PORTER

Dear Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Ross Porter,

Our Healing-Centered Schools Task Force writes to demand that you to adopt healing-centered educational practices during the 2021-22 school year. We come from all aspects of the New York City public schools community and, together, unite the voices of families from every borough; Black, Latinx, Asian-American students, parents, educators, and advocates; families of students with disabilities; queer students; immigrant and multi-lingual families; and unhoused families. As a coalition representing a diverse range of voices from across the City, we have reached the urgent conclusion that our schools need healing-centered change now. Without this change, we will not only perpetuate the trauma and racial and economic inequality our students experience. We will compound these harms by forcing students to attend segregated, under-resourced, and punitive schools even as they carry the traumatic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The stress and trauma that New York City students have endured during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis underscores the need for healing-centered schools. Every New York City student has been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. A recent study from the United Hospital Fund found that between March and July 2020 alone, 4,200 of New York State's approximately 4 million children experienced a parental or caregiver death due to COVID-19.² Of these deaths, 57 percent were in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens. Black and Latinx children have been disproportionately affected, experiencing parent and caregiver deaths at twice the rate of their white and Asian peers. In addition, Black students endured additional individual and collective trauma as our country has engaged in a heightened national discourse about anti-Black racism and police violence against Black communities.

But the need for healing-centered schools predates the COVID-19 crisis. One in four children in classrooms nationwide has experienced some form of childhood trauma, including interpersonal traumas like abuse or parental separation and systemic traumas like poverty, family separation, or persistent exposure to racism. Childhood trauma impacts learning, development, and social-emotional skills. Staff, who support our students and who have also endured significant trauma over the past year, may experience vicarious trauma as a result. When schools don't know how to support students with trauma, they risk making these problems worse. Unprepared schools may respond punitively to behavior that needs support or neglect a student's academic needs. But schools that use healing-centered practices can help reverse the effects of trauma, boost academic engagement, and promote social-emotional well-being. We need those practices now.

Healing-centered schools are schools that have removed harmful structures like punitive discipline, school policing, metal detectors, and exclusionary or biased curricula and have intentionally adopted, through community-led processes, trauma-responsive classroom practices, integrated mental health and wellness supports, restorative and supportive responses to behavior, parent and student engagement,

² Suzanne C. Brundage and Kristina Ramos-Callan, "COVID-19 Ripple Effect: The Impact of COVID-19 on Children in New York State," United Hospital Fund (Sept. 30, 2020), available at https://uhfnyc.org/publications/publication/covid-19-ripple-effect-impact-covid-19-children-new-york-state/?mc_cid=d4ca165a42&mc_eid=205f46a7bd.

anti-racist and culturally-responsive curricula, and strengths-based learning through an emphasis on opportunities for enrichment and creative expression, multi-modal learning, and social-emotional well-being. Healing-centered schools are not one size fits all – they are holistic learning environments that have undergone an individualized, whole-school culture shift co-created through the valued input of students, parents and caregivers, and staff.

Critically, healing-centered schools also recognize that schools have historically been and often continue to be sites of trauma for students. Rooted in the work of Dr. Shawn Ginwright, the healing-centered approach views trauma not as an isolated, individual experience, but as a systemic reality rooted in structures of oppression. The healing-centered approach offers a holistic response to trauma by educating the school community about the impact of trauma, investing in the leadership of impacted community members to lead change, and implementing practices that support students' strengths and growth.

The New York City Department of Education has taken small steps in support of healing-centered schools. You uplifted the Community Roadmap to Bring Healing-Centered Schools to the Bronx as a resource in your Bridge to Schools Plan, rolled out free training for all staff on trauma-responsive educational practices from the University of Chicago's TREP Project, and launched a Family & Community Wellness Collective to support the short-term leadership of 947 parents who want to learn more about healing-centered practices and bring those practices into their schools. You have invested in these practices because you know they provide the path toward healing and success that our students deserve. But these small steps are not enough. Today, we call on you to do more.

With these Recommendations, we outline a series of steps that you can take **this school year** to begin to build healing-centered education for all New York City public school students. If implemented, these Recommendations will lay a foundation for building successful healing-centered change in the coming years. Our Recommendations are separated into twelve key areas that are necessary to create a healing-centered environment. At the end of this document, we include a timeline for implementation and a set of demands to ensure that the DOE is accountable to the Task Force's community-driven Recommendations. Included in those demands is a proposal for quarterly meetings between the Task Force and the DOE where you can report on the status of your efforts to implement these Recommendations.

Our students need healing-centered change now. We demand and emphatically urge you to implement these Recommendations and build the schools our students deserve.

Sincerely,
The Healing-Centered Schools Task Force
July 2021

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Healing-Centered Schools Task Force demands that the City and the Department of Education take steps in the following twelve key areas to build healing-centered education during the 2021-22 school year.

SCHOOL REOPENING

We recognize that every part of our school communities, from students to staff to administrators, has experienced trauma during the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, we recognize the disproportionate individual and collective trauma Black and brown communities have endured during this time as the pandemic has exacerbated historic inequities and as our country has engaged in a heightened national discourse about anti-Black racism and police violence against Black communities. As our world re-opens and our communities rebuild, we have an obligation to reimagine and transform our schools. Only by implementing a healing-centered approach can our school communities begin to heal this trauma and confront how our schools have been historically harmful to Black and brown students, students with disabilities, and so many more marginalized groups. A healing-centered school reopening is a key first step towards healing from our collective trauma. We can create a healing-centered reopening by acknowledging past harm and equipping school communities with the tools and training to support all students. Failure to do so will only compound the trauma of the past year.

- **WE DEMAND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE ISSUE AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE HARM THAT STAFF AND FAMILIES EXPERIENCED LAST YEAR**, take responsibility for the DOE's role in perpetuating that harm and exposing staff and families to increased risk, and apologize for that harm.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE PROVIDE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES WITH RESOURCES, TOOLS, STAFF, TRAINING, AND COACHING** to support the social-emotional needs of students as they transition back to a full in-person learning environment. Provide a clear, restorative reopening plan, including transparency about cleaning protocols, to the public and seek continuous feedback.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE REBUILD TRUST** and support staff and families by providing school communities with the following resources:
 - Expand funding and other resources to support increased parent and student engagement. Family engagement resources should be used to support building school-family relationships and host community discussions about what support parents and students need to return to full in-person learning.
 - Multi-lingual families and families with limited English proficiency have been denied consistent and meaningful access to education information during the pandemic. In addition, the DOE has relied on communication methods, such as email and social media, that are not accessible to many families. To remedy this, translate all school reopening and COVID-19 safety protocol documents into the top ten languages represented in each school district, including languages not covered by the City's current language access protocol, and distribute those documents via snail mail, virtual correspondence, messaging apps, and phone calls.

- Develop and provide access to a directory of neighborhood-based employment, food, childcare, and housing resources.
- Fund and distribute personal protective equipment for staff and students.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE PROVIDE A SPECIFIC PLAN** for resuming citywide, full-time, in-person learning:
 - During the **first three weeks**, school buildings and classrooms must focus on healing, socioemotional learning, and mental health as much as possible. Academic learning should not be prioritized during this time.
 - During **weeks four and five**, continue with the structure outlined above and integrate student-directed projects to support learning.
 - For the **remainder of the school year**, integrate a wellness or healing period into the school day for all students, continue to provide students and families with the resources outlined above, and integrate the parent and student voice, restorative justice, and mental health supports outlined in these Recommendations.
- **WE RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES** when implementing the Task Force's Recommendations for School Reopening:
 - Resources from PRESS NYC, including the ["Our Deal Breakers"](#) presentation
 - [2020 Recommendations for a Wellness & Healing-Centered School Re-Opening](#), authored by the Education Justice Research and Organizing Collaborative, NYC Coalition for Educational Justice, the Alliance for Quality Education, the New Settlement Parent Action Committee, and IntegrateNYC

HEALING-CENTERED TRANSFORMATION & PLANNING

Transforming our schools into trauma-responsive environments that support healing requires school-wide, district-wide, and citywide shifts in how we envision education. We cannot treat this shift as a “one size fits all” change. While all schools must strive towards a common end-goal of dismantling structures of harm and building spaces for healing and growth, each school’s journey will vary based on their particular community’s needs, resources, and strengths. Integrating healing-centered values across all aspects of the DOE and dedicating resources to healing-centered transformation will help schools adopt trauma-responsive practices, prioritize the voices of families and front-line educators, and adopt the school culture and policy changes their school communities need to feel supportive.

- **WE DEMAND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE COMMUNICATE TO ALL SCHOOLS THE EXPECTATION THAT THE DOE WILL, AS A WHOLE, BEGIN TO SHIFT TOWARD HEALING-CENTERED AND TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE PRACTICE.**
 - Create a shared definition of healing-centered education, including indicators of healing-centered practice in multiple aspects of the learning environment, and make that definition and related resources available in multiple languages. Collaborate with the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group and community-based organizations that have partnerships with schools to develop this definition and milestones for assessment.
 - Establish a timeline with milestones for measurement and assessment.
 - Direct Executive Superintendents and Superintendents to oversee growth of healing-centered practices in schools within their district, including by:
 - Implementing and supporting district-level supports described below;
 - Developing community-informed goals for healing-centered change in their district;
 - Hosting district-wide professional development and collaboration opportunities;
 - Directing all schools to conduct an assessment to determine their alignment with healing-centered and trauma-responsive education; and
 - Overseeing development of Comprehensive Education Plans (CEPs) and budgets that align with healing-centered values.
 - Designate central staff responsible for overseeing implementation and rollout of these practices during the 2021-22 school year.
 - Uplift the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group’s Transformation Team model for school-based change.³
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE CHANCELLOR INTEGRATE HEALING-CENTERED VALUES**, examples of healing-centered best practices, and measurable outcomes and inputs into the Chancellor’s CEP Guidance for 2022-23 school year.

³ Healing-Centered Schools Working Group, Community Roadmap to Bring Healing-Centered Schools to the Bronx (June 2020), pp. 30-31, available at <https://bit.ly/RoadmapToHealing>.

- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE PROVIDE A SET NUMBER SCHOOLS**, selected based on those with highest need according to surveys and needs assessments, with a consultant, capacity-building support, and coaching to support them through the multi-year transition process to becoming healing-centered.
 - Based on the Task Force’s assessment of available professional development and coaching resources, this intensive pilot should be rolled out by identifying 3-5 districts where 5-10 schools can pilot a model.
 - Conduct needs assessments to evaluate schools’ current alignment with healing-centered values and trauma-responsive practice, inventory current initiatives that align with healing-centered values, and assess the school community’s goals for what a healing-centered and inclusive school looks like for them.
 - Prioritize community schools and schools with the fewest school safety agents as pilot sites. Because these schools are more likely to center parent and student voice and to have removed harmful structures, they are in the best position to build a successful healing-centered environment. Schools leading healing-centered efforts in other ways should also be prioritized to receive this funding.
 - Capacity-building and coaching contracts must not go to nonprofits that have no relationship to school communities. Organizations with existing ties to school communities should be prioritized.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE INVEST IN THE LEADERSHIP** of students, parents, and front-line staff to (1) host conversations in their schools about harmful practices that must be removed and healing-centered practices that should be built and (2) plan healing-centered change. We anticipate this will cost approximately \$14 million and will include:
 - Two stipends per school for parents who participate in school-based Transformation Teams, at a total cost of approximately \$1.8 million.
 - Increase stipends for parents who participate in School Leadership Teams to \$250 per parent.
 - Two stipends per school for students who participate in school-based Transformation Teams, at a total cost of approximately \$1.2 million.
 - Per-session planning hours for staff involved in healing-centered planning, at a total projected cost of \$10.4 million.
 - Resources, including printed materials, and other administrative costs that Transformation Teams need to lead healing-centered change, at a total projected cost of \$900,000.
 - Uplift model schools that have successfully begun to implement healing-centered practices and compensate their Transformation Teams to train other schools, including by providing a per-session rate to educators who host workshops for other educators.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE CREATE DISTRICT-LEVEL SUPPORTS FOR HEALING-CENTERED CHANGE.** We anticipate this will take approximately \$6.16 million and will include:
 - Hiring Multiple Healing-Centered Change Coordinators in every district, at a projected cost of

\$4 million, in well-paid staff positions that include union protections and benefits and that do not require bachelor's degrees and prioritize hiring recent school alumni. Coordinators should be assigned no more than five schools.

- Creating district-wide spaces where Transformation Teams within the district can connect with one another, collaborate on training, share ideas for change, and troubleshoot obstacles.
 - Allocating per-session hours to compensate staff members of Transformation Teams for attending district meetings, at a projected cost of \$2.16 million to cover two staff in each school for ten hours per year.
 - Partnering with community-based organizations to advance healing-centered change. Priority should be given to community-based organizations that have relationships with schools and the communities that those schools serve.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE LAUNCH A CITYWIDE ADVERTISING AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORT** to inform families and community members about Transformation Teams, supports for healing-centered change, and how they can get involved.
 - **WE DEMAND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE CONNECT WITH OTHER CITIES** across the state to form a network to support learning about healing-centered practices that have been implemented in schools across the state and to expand those practices.
 - **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE EXPAND THE FAMILY & COMMUNITY WELLNESS COLLECTIVE'S HEALING AMBASSADOR PROGRAM** to support long-term parental involvement in healing-centered transformation.
 - Partner with community leaders, including the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group, to expand this program.
 - Provide stipends to support Healing Ambassadors to continue hosting workshops throughout the school year to educate the school community about trauma-responsive educational practices and support efforts to implement those practices.
 - Connect the Healing Ambassador to the SLT, Equity Team, or Wellness and Sustainability Team to begin forming a Transformation Team.
 - Leverage district-level supports described above to promote collaboration between Healing Ambassadors.
 - **WE RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES** when implementing the Task Force's Recommendations for Healing-Centered Transformation & Planning:
 - Section III. "Creating Effective Organizational Change" of the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group's [Roadmap](#)
 - Girls for Gender Equity's [Police-Free Schools Toolkit](#)

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE & SUSTAINING EDUCATION

We are pleased the Department of Education has committed to a Universal Mosaic Curriculum. However, this is only the first step in creating a thorough, community-driven program of culturally responsive and sustaining education (CRSE) in schools. As per the DOE's own definition, CRSE is "a cultural view of learning and human development in which multiple forms of diversity (e.g., race, social class, gender, language, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, and ability) are recognized, understood, and regarded as indispensable sources of knowledge for rigorous teaching and learning."⁴ CRSE is a whole-school approach that informs all aspects of school operations from the hiring of representative teachers, to inclusive parent engagement programs, to personalized community engagement. While we emphatically agree that it is important for the curriculum to be more reflective of our Black and brown students, we know this alone is not enough. To fully achieve CRSE, schools must integrate cultural responsiveness in all operations beyond the classroom.

- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE REQUIRE REGULAR MEETINGS** (e.g., monthly or at the end of each marking period) between students and staff where students can provide feedback about their academic program, whether they felt it was culturally responsive, and how it can be improved.
 - These meetings should be conducted in the form of a restorative circle.
 - All meetings should be accessible in person and via zoom or other virtual platform. Meetings should be recorded and accessible after and archived on their school's website or a similar platform. This will give families greater access and decision making power.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE TRACK AND MONITOR INDICATORS OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND SUSTAINING EDUCATION** during staff observations and assessments. If negative feedback is provided by a student during meetings described above, that feedback should be shared with the teacher and administrators so that they can support the teacher in correcting and developing positive behaviors. Corrective action plans should be uniform and accessible to all, and should involve following up with students who previously provided feedback.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE CREATE A BOARD** responsible for compiling culturally responsive and sustaining education resources. This board should be made up of representatives from the different cultures and communities present in DOE schools. The board should connect with schools already engaged in this work as well as external academics and educators that can help identify resources.
 - Parents and youth serving on the board should be compensated for their time.
 - In addition to compiling education resources, the board will build out a collective vocabulary and framework that moves beyond diversity, equity and inclusion to name and contextualize anti-Blackness, xenophobia, Islamophobia, homophobia and transphobia, classism, elitism, meritocracy, coded language, and inherent bias.
 - Uplift resources identified by the board by placing them on ShopDOE and supporting, incentivizing, and encouraging schools to purchase them.

⁴ Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education. NYC Department of Education. Retrieved July 20, 2021, from <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/vision-and-mission/culturally-responsive-sustaining-education>.

- Fund culturally responsive and sustaining literacy resources and books identified by the board. Sufficient materials should be provided to allow for multiple classroom libraries within a school building.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE SUPPORT THE CREATION OF COMMUNITY-LED, SCHOOL-BASED CURRICULA** by using school censuses to assess the demographics of the school community. Assessing the demographics of the school community recognizes that members of the school community are not all necessarily a part of the local geographic community. The results of each census will help determine what curriculum materials best reflect the community.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE EMPOWER PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND STAFF** to lead CRSE work by providing stipends to students and parents and per-session payments to staff engaged in this work.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE CHANCELLOR INTEGRATE CULTURALLY-RESPONSIVE VALUES, BEST PRACTICES, AND MEASURABLE OUTCOMES AND INPUTS** into the Chancellor’s CEP Guidance for 2022-23 school year.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE INCLUDES THESE MANDATES IN THE PRINCIPAL’S COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST.**
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE DESIGNATE CENTRAL STAFF AND DISTRICT OR BOROUGH-BASED STAFF TO SUPPORT CRSE IMPLEMENTATION.** Inform families and staff that they can contact these staff members if administrators or district leadership do not follow CRSE mandates or otherwise fail to live up to the vision of equity and cultural responsiveness set forth by the DOE.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE DEDICATE \$100 MILLION** to provide targeted support to English Language Learners (ELLs) and ensure ELLs receive the legally required English as a New Language (ENL) or bilingual instruction they were denied during the pandemic.
- **WE RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES** when implementing the Task Force’s Recommendations for Culturally Responsive & Sustaining Education:
 - NYU Metro Center and the Education Justice Research and Organizing Collaborative’s [Culturally Responsive-Sustaining STEAM Curriculum Scorecard](#)
 - Section V. “Academic Healing-Centered Strategies” of the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group’s [Roadmap](#)

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AND RESPONSES TO BEHAVIOR

We demand a shift from the punitive culture in our schools towards a system of restorative justice, defined as “a theory of justice that emphasises seeking to repair rather than to punish where there is harm.”⁵ Through school-wide implementation of restorative practice, schools can establish clear community norms and provide students with age-appropriate responsibilities for maintaining a supportive classroom and school environment. When a norm is violated, the conflict is resolved in a communal, problem solving manner, calling in the student who violated the norm to be part of the solution. Restorative justice fosters emotional growth in children by providing opportunities to practice listening, communicating, taking personal responsibility, and exercising emotional self-regulation. Schools implementing restorative justice practices remind all students that they are a welcome and important part of the school community.

For these practices to be successful, we need our schools to foster community, create trust among staff and students, and commit to integrating restorative practice values across the school environment. We have seen the DOE take steps toward implementing restorative justice in recent years, but those efforts have fallen short of delivering the true restorative practice our students need. In many schools, rather than being a process of healing and learning for our most vulnerable students and staff, restorative justice has become a catch-all term that means hosting a conversation without attempting to repair the harm that occurred or create meaningful accountability. In many other instances, schools directly employ other practices that conflict with the values of restorative practice. Instead of watered-down restorative practice, our schools need resources to implement restorative values across the school environment and support and time to employ full restorative approaches.

- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE DEDICATE \$118.5M TO THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAMMING EACH YEAR.** Funds should be provided directly by DOE central offices and should not be deducted from individual school budgets.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE ADOPT A SHARED DEFINITION OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICE,** including measuring outcomes for implementation and success.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE FUND AND OTHERWISE SUPPORT THE CREATION OF DEDICATED SPACES** in each school building where students can host circles and other restorative practices. These may overlap with the healing-centered spaces discussed below in Capital Projects & Tech Investments.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE COMPENSATE STUDENTS** to become restorative justice facilitators and peer mediators.
 - Student facilitators should have access to de-escalation training.
 - Student facilitators should be permitted to be present in dedicated restorative justice spaces on a regular basis to provide support to students.

⁵ A Model Code on Education and Dignity: Presenting a Human Rights Framework for Schools. Dignity in Schools Campaign 2019, PDF File p. 77. Retrieved July 20, 2021 from: https://dignityinschools.org/toolkit_resources/full-version-of-model-code-on-education-and-dignity/?toolkits=model-code.

- Compensation may be provided via a stipend, credit, or similar means.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE IMPLEMENT A CO-RESPONSE MODEL** for use in incidents of student-student or student-staff conflict and/or bullying. Under this model, a student facilitator will join a social worker or counselor in intervening, providing support, and identifying non-punitive measures to resolve the situation. Co-response can be provided as an immediate response to the conflict or in a follow-up conversation.
 - Social workers, counselors, or other staff participating in the co-response model should be trained in restorative practice.
 - Changes must be made as needed to the Discipline Code and related Chancellor’s Regulations to support implementation of this approach.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE FUND TRAINING** for whole school communities, including access for families, on mediation, restorative practice, and conflict resolution. Dedicate staff to facilitate and support trainings. Training should be provided over the course of approximately three weeks.
 - Training should conclude with whole-school community conversations about the shared commitments the community will make and the norms they want to establish.
 - Refresher trainings should occur each marking period.
 - Training should include experiential learning to build community.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE DEVELOP AND PILOT A SUSPENSION DIVERSION PROGRAM** that connects students with short-term support and long-term mental health care and reduces time spent out of the classroom.
 - This diversion program must not involve collaboration with NYPD, SSAs, ACS, or any other carceral or punitive institution.
 - Short-term support may include peer mediation.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE CONNECT WITH OTHER CITIES** across the state to form a network to foster learning about restorative justice practices that have been implemented in schools across the state and to expand those practices.
- **WE RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES** when implementing the Task Force’s Recommendations for Restorative Justice & Responses to Behavior:
 - [Youth Vision for Education Justice in NYC](#), authored by the Brotherhood/Sister Sol, Children’s Defense Fund New York, Dignity in Schools New York, IntegrateNYC, NYCLU’s Teen Activist Project, and the Youth Power Coalition
 - Section VI. “Non-Academic Healing-Centered Strategies” of the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group’s [Roadmap](#)
 - Tools 2.1 and 2.1 A of Girls for Gender Equity’s [Police-Free Schools Toolkit](#)

POLICE-FREE SCHOOLS

We demand that all police, including School Safety Agents, be removed from our schools. Police and policing are antithetical to the creation of a healing-centered environment that supports students’ learning and growth. Police presence in schools traumatizes Black and brown students who are often criminalized and harmed by police outside of schools. Moreover, police in schools do not keep our children or school communities safe; they merely create the illusion of security for people of privilege. The nearly \$450 million dollars that New York City spends to police and criminalize our students must be redirected towards making our schools healing-centered.⁶

- **WE DEMAND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE REMOVE POLICE INFRASTRUCTURE, CULTURE, AND PRACTICE FROM SCHOOLS** and invest in youth, parent, and educator-led solutions that center liberation and restorative justice. Policing positions of any kind have no place in schools. To divest from school policing, the City must:
 - Disband the School Safety Division and halt the harmful and costly plans to create a policing division in our city’s Department of Education.
 - Do not hire new School Safety Agents (SSAs) to replace those lost to attrition since January 2020, freeing up over \$50 million to reallocate to programs and resources listed throughout these Recommendations.
 - Eliminate the Youth Coordination Officer and School Coordination Agent positions, which surveil and criminalize young people.
 - Fully divest from metal-detection equipment and camera-surveillance technology.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE DISTRIBUTE THE MONEY SAVED** by disbanding the school policing budget, over \$450 million, across DOE schools, resulting in over \$250,000 for each school to engage in healing-centered transformation.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE BAN SCHOOL SAFETY AGENTS** from participation in athletics and enrichment programs.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE IMMEDIATELY STOP SHARING STUDENT AND FAMILY DATA** with the New York City Police Department.
- **WE RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES** when implementing the Task Force’s Recommendations for Police-Free Schools:
 - Girls for Gender Equity’s [Police-Free Schools Toolkit](#)
 - [Youth Vision for Education Justice in NYC](#), authored by the Brotherhood/Sister Sol, Children’s Defense Fund New York, Dignity in Schools New York, IntegrateNYC, NYCLU’s Teen Activist Project, and the Youth Power Coalition
 - Urban Youth Collaborative’s [infographics on Police-Free Schools](#)
 - Pages 75 to 77 of the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group’s [Roadmap](#)

⁶ New York City Can’t Wait: Shrink Policing in the Name of Public Health. Girls for Gender Equity. Retrieved July 20, 2021, from https://www.ggenyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Shrinking-Policing-in-the-Name-of-Public-Health_-GGE-Budget-Report-.pdf.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS & STAFF

We need every school to support community mental health. Student, parent, and staff mental health is integral to a healthy, productive, and trauma-responsive school community. Although a healing-centered school will use universal approaches like trauma-responsive classroom strategies to support all students' mental health, creating a healing-centered environment also means providing targeted mental health services for students who need them.

- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE, THE CITY COUNCIL, AND THE MAYOR ADVOCATE FOR, INCLUDE, AND BASELINE \$15 MILLION** in the FY 2022 budget to launch and sustain a Mental Health Continuum to support the significant behavioral health needs of students in high-need schools in designated neighborhoods. We further demand that the DOE use the \$5 million in currently allocated funds to invest in a [Mental Health Continuum](#) in thirty-three highest-need schools during the 2021-22 school year, particularly schools with the highest rates of NYPD child-in-crisis interventions and other indications of high need. A Mental Health Continuum model includes a team of clinicians working systematically with students and school staff to determine the appropriate level of care; coordinate with schools to respond to students in crisis while working to enhance each school's capacity to respond to the mental health needs of its students; provide direct, ongoing mental health support to students in school, as well as to families at home when needed; and help schools move to a public health rather than a law enforcement model to support an environment that fosters long-term behavioral change.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE BUILD MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-INS** into school and student schedules, including by establishing mental health check-ins or routines at the beginning of the day. For example, this may consist of a welcoming routine, morning meetings where staff can build relationships with students, or morning gatherings in each classroom facilitated by a consistent staff member who leads status checks, wellness boosters, or other supportive activities.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE LEVERAGE DESIGNATED HEALING-CENTERED SPACES** described in "Capital Projects & Tech Investments" or existing mental health spaces to support students' mental wellness:
 - Staff one or these spaces with qualified staff members and allow students to visit the space as needed throughout the day.
 - Host art therapy for members of the school community and to provide space for students to engage in mindfulness exercises or other activities that support social-emotional wellness and healthy coping.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE PROVIDE A MINIMUM RATIO OF ONE COUNSELOR AND ONE SOCIAL WORKER FOR EVERY FIFTY STUDENTS.**
 - Audit current counselor workforce and provision of IEP-mandated counseling services to determine how many counselors are unable to meet the IEP mandates on their caseloads. Leverage new hires to address IEP compliance issues.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE ESTABLISH CLEAR JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS** for these roles in schools, including expectations regarding culturally-responsive care, provision of care

without bias, and use of language access resources. Collaborate with the National Association of Social Workers and other community groups to develop these expectations.

- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE EXPAND ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH INSTRUCTION** and alleviate the burden on counselors and social workers to provide this instruction by supporting a cohort of educators to obtain their health education certification. Certified health educators should be staffed in highest-need schools and schools implementing healing-centered practices.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE EXPAND COLLABORATION WITH AND STUDENT ACCESS TO COMMUNITY-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BY:**
 - Partnering with DOHMH Family and Youth Peer Alliances to connect counselors and social workers to NYS Credentialed Family & Youth Advocates who can provide information, workshops, support, and referrals for community based mental health services requested by students and families.
 - Arranging for Children & Families Treatment & Support Service (CFTSS) providers, who work with students in the school, to have access to help those students during the school day, particularly in emergencies, where parental consent is provided.
 - Providing mental health staff, parent coordinators, and other support staff with training on New York State's Department of Health service delivery system and NYC programs that provide those services.
- **CURRENTLY, ARTICLE 31 CLINICS REACH ONLY A SMALL FRACTION OF STUDENTS IN EACH SCHOOL THAT CAN BENEFIT FROM THEIR SERVICES. WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE DIRECT THE OFFICE OF SCHOOL HEALTH TO MEET WITH ARTICLE 31 SCHOOL-BASED CLINICS** to determine how they can serve a wider group of students in their schools.
 - Integrate Article 31 clinics into the school community by seeking DOH approval for their participation in school-wide planning activities, parent association meetings, and similar structures.
 - Require DOH to provide services that reflect the cultural and linguistic needs of students and families in the school when delivering services through Article 31 clinics.
- **TO ADDRESS WORKFORCE CHALLENGES AND ACCESS TO COMMUNITY-BASED CARE, WE DEMAND THAT THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DIRECT FUNDS TO COMMUNITY-BASED CLINICS** to promote pay parity between school-based and community-based mental health professionals.
- **WE RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES** when implementing the Task Force's Recommendations for Mental Health Supports & Staff:
 - Advocates for Children's advocacy for a [Mental Health Continuum](#)
 - [Youth Vision for Education Justice in NYC](#), authored by the Brotherhood/Sister Sol, Children's Defense Fund New York, Dignity in Schools New York, IntegrateNYC, NYCLU's Teen Activist Project, and the Youth Power Coalition
 - Section VII. "Creating Healing-Centered School-Based Services" of the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group's [Roadmap](#)

PARENT & STUDENT VOICE

A core value of healing-centered education is that parents and students are experts on their strengths and needs. We demand that schools center parent and student voices in decisions about the school community, especially during healing-centered transformation. Student voices in particular must be respected and included in decisionmaking. For too long, youth voices, particularly Black, brown, and queer youth and students with disabilities, have been ignored and disrespected. A healing-centered transition will only work when there is sufficient buy-in from every group involved, and our communities will only buy-in if parents and students actually see that their voices are being valued and included in decisionmaking.

- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE REQUIRE EACH SCHOOL TO HOST REGULAR MEETINGS** (e.g., three times a year or at the end of each marking period) between students and staff where students can provide feedback about community engagement, student voice mechanisms, and the support that staff provide.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE LAUNCH JOINT INITIATIVE BY OFFICE OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** and Student Voice Manager to create and expand student councils and other school-based and district-based student advocacy groups.
 - Groups should be empowered to provide feedback to principals, Superintendents, and the Chancellor and should be scheduled to meet with their principal or other leaders as needed on a monthly basis.
 - Within each district, select student representatives from these councils to regularly meet with the Superintendent and Executive Superintendent.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE SUPPORT GREATER STUDENT AND PARENT PARTICIPATION IN THE CEP AND BUDGET DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**, including by supporting student and parent participation in related structures.
 - Revise CEP due dates to increase family engagement. Many deadlines are currently scheduled for summer, when it is hardest to engage families and community members.
 - Build community conversations and town halls into the CEP development process.
 - Designate a SLT member or non-SLT staff member with experience in budgets and grants, such as Senior Grant Officers, to support transparency and to answer any questions students, parents, or staff have about the budgeting process.
 - Launch a program run by the Student Voice Manager to engage students in CEP and budget development.
 - Launch a program run by the Student Voice Manager to increase student representative participation in Community Education Councils.
 - Create a compensated student role within SLTs.
 - Expand the number of staff supporting the Student Voice Manager to meet the demands of the above initiatives.

- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE EXPAND THE EQUITY TEAM MODEL TO EVERY DOE SCHOOL.** Equity Teams currently exist in only a small fraction of schools. Chancellor Ross Porter was critical in expanding Equity Teams in the Bronx. We admire her work on that front and implore her to continue that legacy citywide.
- **WE RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES** when implementing the Task Force’s Recommendations for Parent & Student Voice:
 - Section III. “Creating Effective Organizational Change” of the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group’s [Roadmap](#)
 - [Youth Vision for Education Justice in NYC](#), authored by the Brotherhood/Sister Sol, Children’s Defense Fund New York, Dignity in Schools New York, IntegrateNYC, NYCLU’s Teen Activist Project, and the Youth Power Coalition

WORKFORCE & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We understand that many school staff are overworked and often do not get the necessary support and resources to provide the individualized support that students need. This scarcity of human and material resources disproportionately impacts Black and brown school communities. This often leads to teachers and staff feeling unsupported and overwhelmed. We know that, when implemented correctly, a shift towards healing-centered practices will actually improve school morale and help reduce high rates of teacher burnout. To get there, we must equip school staff with both trauma-responsive training and adequate resources to support students. We also need more Black and brown teachers, social workers, and counselors who reflect our student communities.

- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE RECRUIT SCHOOL STAFF, INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH STAFF, WHO ARE MORE REPRESENTATIVE OF OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES.**
 - Create district-based programs to recruit, train, and support parents and local community members to become certified teachers and/or fill other staff positions.
 - Recruit multi-lingual school staff.
 - Modify hiring criteria to include consideration of whether applicant is a member of any of the communities that the school serves.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE BUILD HEALING-CENTERED PRACTICES INTO EDUCATOR EXPECTATIONS AND EVALUATIONS:**
 - Update school leader criteria and interview materials to include assessment of the candidate's knowledge of and ability to oversee and/or facilitate healing-centered change and practices.
 - Modify evaluations and observation rubrics to include metrics of whether healing-centered practices, as defined in DOE definition of healing-centered education, are being effectively implemented by the staff member.
 - Create a healing-centered rubric and evaluation that is directly tied to staff observations and includes qualitative and quantitative data such as metrics from observations and narratives from students about their experiences.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE TRAIN SCHOOL STAFF TO EMPLOY TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES** and de-escalate social-emotional or mental health challenges before they reach a crisis level.
 - First and foremost, maintain and mandate training for DOE staff about trauma-responsive educational practices. Provide this training in group settings and schedule opportunities for staff to reflect on training material together after completing the course. We project that this will cost \$4 million.
 - Make this training more accessible by incorporating it into the After School Professional Development Program and Continuing Teacher and Leader Education programming.

- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE EXPAND EXISTING ANTI-BIAS TRAINING FOR ALL STAFF.** Training should:
 - Include a first session that assesses the mindset of attendees.
 - Include a session(s) centered on unlearning existing mindsets and learning healing-centered practices.
 - Address race, power, and privilege.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE CONDUCT RETRAINING AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR STAFF** whose performance does not align with healing-centered values.
 - Retraining should be in-depth, should escalate if issues continue, and should be conducted in alignment with the school's healing-centered goals.
 - Trainings should be followed by classroom observations to ensure that lessons learned are being implemented.
 - Retraining and accountability should include a set timeline to check in on progress.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE SUPPORT AND EXPAND TRAINING FOR PARENT COORDINATORS** to ensure they are aware of DOE and community resources, are equipped with family engagement strategies, and can provide resources in multiple languages and media.
- **WE RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES** when implementing the Task Force's Recommendations for Workforce & Professional Development:
 - Section IV. "Educating the School Community About Healing-Centered Practices" of the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group's [Roadmap](#)
 - Section 2.4 of Girls for Gender Equity's [Police-Free Schools Toolkit](#)

ACCESS TO ART, ATHLETICS, AND OTHER EXTRA-CURRICULARS AND ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

Healing-centered schools focus on social-emotional well-being. For many students, art and other extracurricular activities provide critical outlets to express creativity, communicate emotions in a non-verbal manner, and build skills and identity. Access to these programs is particularly critical in the wake of the trauma and isolation that students experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the importance of enrichment programs, Black and brown schools are often under-resourced and unable to provide the enrichment opportunities offered in predominantly white, wealthier areas of the City. We must expand access to arts, athletics, and other extracurriculars to support healing expression and to foster the strengths-based approach that is integral to building a healing-centered school environment.

- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE DEDICATE ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ATHLETICS LEAGUE (PSAL) TO ALLOW HIGHEST-NEED SCHOOLS TO BUILD ATHLETIC PROGRAMS.**
 - Launch initiative to be administered by PSAL to examine inequity within high school athletics and increase outreach to highest-need schools with historically low rates of participation in PSAL.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS** to expand physical space needed for art, athletics, and enrichment programs:
 - We demand that middle and high-school specialty instructional spaces be configured so that they can be easily converted to use for art, enrichment, healing-centered activities, and trauma-informed practices during the two periods daily that these rooms are empty.
 - We demand that increased space utilization be part of the Principal's Compliance Checklist. Each principal should be responsible for finding space within their school that can be used for healing-centered activities for at least two periods per day. Space should be sufficient to hold a large group of students. Compliance should include a follow-up assessment to determine whether this designated space is actually being used for healing-centered purposes.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE CHANCELLOR UPDATE CEP GUIDANCE** to direct principals and SLTs to include students, parents, and staff in budget decisions pertaining to extra-curricular activities, enrichment programs, and art.
 - Similarly, modify existing budget criteria to require this input and to prioritize funding to support athletics and enrichment programs, including staff responsible for conducting those programs.
 - Provide examples of healing-centered art, athletic, and enrichment activities.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE EXPAND [Art for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities grants](#)** to sustain and expand partnerships with cultural organizations that provide programming for multilingual learners and students with disabilities.
- **WE RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RESOURCE** when implementing the Task Force's Recommendations for Access to Art, Athletics, and Other Extra-Curriculars and Enrichment Programs: Page 71 of the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group's [Roadmap](#).

CLASS SIZES & STAFFING

Large class sizes limits teachers' capacity to provide individualized attention to students and disrupt students' ability to focus. This is a racial and economic equity issue as overcrowding and understaffing occurs disproportionately in poorer, majority Black and brown schools. For our schools to be healing centered and trauma-responsive, students must receive more individualized care in a smaller, less overwhelming setting. We must reduce class sizes and increase the number of counselors and social workers to create a supportive environment for staff and students.

- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE REDUCE CLASS SIZES** to support learning and a healing-centered environment. Class sizes should be reduced consistent with the mandates of the Contracts for Excellence Law:
 - A maximum of 20 students per class in elementary school
 - A maximum of 23 students per class in middle school
 - A maximum of 25 students per class in high school
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE HIRE THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER OF TEACHERS** to support reduced class sizes and ensure compliance with applicable laws. In schools with a target utilization greater than 100%, fund a full-time classroom aide or other staff member for each classroom where the actual enrollment is greater than that classroom's target capacity.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE RE-ALLOCATE PRE-K CLASSROOMS** to community-based offerors to create space in primary schools.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE DEVELOP A PLAN FOR ACQUISITION OF THE FORMER BUILDINGS** of seventeen religious schools that recently closed and that could easily be repurposed as community schools. Provide a final report, including a timeline to acquire and convert these parochial schools, by the end of the 2021-22 school year.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE CONDUCT A STUDY ON HOW TO EXPAND CLASSROOM SPACE** to allow for smaller class sizes. Currently, limitations on classroom space prevent many schools from offering smaller class sizes or providing necessary supports.
 - As part of this study, determine necessary steps to ensure that highest-need schools have adequate space to designate a room(s) for healing-centered practices, restorative practices, creative expression, enrichment programs, etc.
 - Study the extent to which systemic inequity and historical bias have caused overcrowding through segregated enrollment and underfunding of school facilities.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE CITY AND DOE PRIORITIZE EACH DOE DISTRICT PLANNING TEAM TO CONDUCT AN ANNUAL ANALYSIS OF SPACE, CAPACITY, AND UTILIZATION** and meet public school needs before determining whether space can be provided to new or expanding charter schools.
- **WE RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RESOURCE** when implementing the Task Force's Recommendations for Class Sizes & Staffing: Class Size Matters and NYC Kids PAC's April 2021 FAQ, "[Why the Mayor should allocate \\$250 million to lower class size next year](#)".

SCHOOL SCHEDULE & APPROACHES TO LEARNING

A healing-centered school environment is one that dedicates school time to social-emotional well-being and learning styles that support students' growth and strengths. Schools must allocate time for social-emotional wellness, restorative justice practices, and other aspects integral to healing-centered education. Schools must also reduce time spent on classroom practices that do not support learning, growth, or social-emotional well-being. DOE leaders and school administrators must clearly communicate this shift in priorities and provide staff with the time they need to build a healing-centered environment.

- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE NOTIFY FAMILIES OF THEIR RIGHT TO OPT OUT OF STANDARDIZED TESTING.** This information should be included on the DOE website in multiple languages.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE EXPAND TIME** invested in restorative practice, relationship-building between staff and students, and mental health supports by scheduling advisory times for these practices to be held during the school day.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE EXPAND THE USE OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING FRAMEWORKS** by collaborating with parent and student groups to develop project-based learning models for schools to choose from.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE EXPAND THE NUMBER OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS AND CONSORTIUM SCHOOLS.**

CAPITAL PROJECTS & TECH INVESTMENTS

Under-resourced schools cannot be healing-centered schools. We demand more resources for our schools and greater investment in capital projects to ensure that school buildings are physically conducive to healing-centered pedagogy. This need is especially poignant in our Black and brown communities, where schools have been historically and disproportionately under-resourced. School staff cannot fully implement a healing-centered approach when they lack necessary human and material resources to make the building a safe, welcoming environment that is engaging, open, conducive to learning, and creates a sense of community.

- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE COLLABORATE WITH THE CITY COUNCIL AND THE COMPTROLLER TO CREATE A PUBLIC-FACING DATABASE TO TRACK CAPITAL INVESTMENTS** provided to each DOE school, disaggregated by City Council district. The database should flag schools that have gone the longest without receiving capital investments. This database will promote equity in capital investments and support public advocacy for capital improvements. This database can and should be created through the passage of legislation.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE COLLABORATE WITH THE CITY COUNCIL, THE COMPTROLLER, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CREATE A PUBLIC-FACING DATABASE OF VENTILATION IMPROVEMENTS** needed in or provided to DOE schools. This database can and should be created through the passage of legislation.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE IMPROVE BUILDING STRUCTURE BY:**
 - Funding repairs;
 - Partnering with the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs to beautify and restore schools, particularly those in historic buildings; and
 - Designating spaces for healing-centered activities in each school building.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE PROVIDE FREE, UNIVERSAL BROADBAND TO ALL DOE FAMILIES.** While broadband is being scaled out, provide free, reliable wireless internet and/or access to mobile hotspots.
- **WE DEMAND THAT THE DOE PROVIDE COMPETENT, FUNCTIONING REMOTE LEARNING DEVICES TO ALL FAMILIES.**
 - Devices should include keyboards and should be equipped to support a variety of learning functions, including streaming, camera access, microphone access, typing, and accessibility functions.
 - Provide assistive technology for students who require it to use both at home and in school. Conduct a needs assessment in all schools to determine whether they have adequate access to assistive technology.
- **WE RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY AND THE DOE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RESOURCE** when implementing the Task Force's Recommendations for Capital Projects & Tech Investments: Pages 62-65 of the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group's [Roadmap](#).

ACCOUNTABILITY & IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As members and representatives of the New York City public schools community, this Task Force commits to holding the City and the DOE accountable to the community demands reflected in these Recommendations. Because a healing-centered approach values transparency and prioritizes the decisionmaking power of impacted students, parents, and educators, implementation progress must be shared with the public on a regular basis. The following timeline and accountability measures will ensure that the City and the DOE are taking meaningful steps to build the schools our communities deserve.

- **WE DEMAND QUARTERLY MEETINGS WITH DOE LEADERSHIP** during the 2021-22 school year to receive updates on the implementation of these Recommendations. The Task Force will provide questions and a request for specific updates prior to each meeting, including an update on the status of the DOE's progress along the timeline outlined below.
- **IN ORDER TO PROPERLY IMPLEMENT THE TASK FORCE'S RECOMMENDATIONS DURING THE 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR, THE CITY AND THE DOE SHOULD FOLLOW THIS TIMELINE:**
 - **By November 1st 2021:**
 - Issue a school reopening plan, including an apology for harm caused and dedicated resources to support and rebuild trust with staff and families.
 - Create a shared definition of healing-centered education with milestones for measurement and assessment. Designate staff responsible for rollout of this definition at the central, borough, and district level.
 - Create a shared definition of restorative practice with milestones for measurement and assessment.
 - Announce funds to support student, parent, and staff involvement in healing-centered change.
 - Establish school meetings, staff assessment metrics, designated staff, and student, parent, and staff stipends to support culturally responsive and sustaining education.
 - Establish regular meetings between students and staff to increase student voice. Launch recommended Student Voice Manager and Office of Family and Community Engagement initiatives to expand student councils and increase student and parent participation in CEP and budget processes.
 - Update the Principal's Compliance Checklist consistent with the Recommendations' demands.
 - Ban School Safety Agents from participation in athletics and enrichment programs and cease data-sharing with the NYPD.
 - Invest in and launch a Mental Health Continuum in thirty-three highest needs schools.
 - Notify families of their right to opt-out of standardized testing.

- **By January 3rd 2022:**
 - Identify and launch school pilot sites for intensive healing-centered transformation.
 - Form and launch a board to compile community-led, culturally responsive and sustaining education resources.
 - Train students and work with schools to launch student restorative justice facilitator, peer mediator, and student co-response programs.
 - Modify school schedules to allocate time for mental health check-ins, restorative practice, and community-building.
 - Update job descriptions and expectations for mental health staff to ensure clarity and include expectations regarding culturally-responsive care, provision of care without bias, and use of language access resources.
 - Update educator expectations, evaluations, recruitment criteria, and accountability practices to reflect healing-centered values and the need for a diverse workforce that reflects school communities.
 - Expand PSAL funding and launch a PSAL initiative to examine inequity in access to athletics.
 - Provide functioning, fully accessible devices and free, universal broadband to all DOE families.
 - Continued progress on earlier items.
- **By March 31st 2022:**
 - Develop Chancellor's CEP guidance consistent with the Recommendations' demands.
 - Announce the extension and expansion of the Family & Community Wellness Collective's Healing Ambassador Program.
 - Announce the maintenance and expansion of staff training on trauma-responsive educational practices and racial bias.
 - Host restorative justice trainings for school communities.
 - Announce the expansion of Art for ELLs and SWD grants.
 - Provide a fully developed plan to reduce class sizes consistent with the mandates of the Contracts for Excellence Law.
 - Collaborate with the City Council and the Comptroller to pursue legislation to launch databases to track capital investments in schools and needed ventilation improvements.
 - Continued progress on earlier items.

- **By June 27th 2022:**
 - Provide a fully developed plan for the removal of School Safety Agents from the DOE and from New York City schools. Provide a plan for investing saved funds in healing-centered change.
 - Develop and pilot a suspension diversion program that prioritizes mental health support and does not involve punitive practices or partnership with carceral agencies.
 - Begin forming a state-wide network with other school districts to share ideas and information about restorative and healing-centered practices.
 - Provide a fully developed plan to increase the counselor and social worker task force to reach the ratio recommended by the Task Force.
 - Provide a fully developed plan to increase student access to school-based mental health services through collaborations described in these Recommendations.
 - Fund school repairs and healing-centered spaces in school buildings.
 - Continued progress on earlier items.
- To ensure the long-term success of healing-centered transformation implemented pursuant to these regulations, the DOE should follow a five-year implementation timeline to support the growth of individual schools.
 - **Year 1:** Assess each school’s alignment with healing-centered practices and values. Identify needs and available resources for training and planning. Identify partnerships to leverage healing-centered growth. Identify a set of ten to fifteen outcomes to measure.
 - **Years 2 to 4:** Build on partnerships and planning. Identify and implement new healing-centered practices to adopt and prioritize. Measure and assess outcomes, using resulting information to shift gears as needed.
 - **Year 5:** Be able to measure success along all outcomes proposed in Year 1.

Throughout the next year, the Task Force will also partner with the Office of the Public Advocate and the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group to hold the City and the DOE accountable to these Recommendations through a variety of actions, including pursuit of legislation, public rallies and other events to celebrate the DOE’s implementation progress or to condemn the DOE’s failure to implement these Recommendations, and community education events. During Summer 2022, the Task Force will publish a report outlining the DOE’s implementation progress.