



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

News Release

For Immediate Release

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AFC Calls for Removing Police from Schools and Re-envisioning School Safety Under the DOE

June 18, 2020 (NEW YORK CITY) — Today, Kim Sweet, Executive Director of Advocates for Children of New York (AFC), issued the following statement in response to recent statements by City Council Members and the President of the Teamsters Union Local 237 about removing police from schools:

We support City Council Members' call to move responsibility for school safety to the DOE and urge the City to remove all NYPD officers from schools, shifting funding to education and social services that will support a new vision of safety in schools. We must ensure all students – especially Black students, who are disproportionately harmed – are truly safe and supported in school.

Before schools closed due to the pandemic, the NYPD – instead of clinically trained mental health professionals – had already intervened in more than 2,250 incidents involving students in emotional crisis, and even handcuffed some of these students. Black students were most disproportionately harmed; 58% of the students handcuffed were Black, even though Black students are only 25% of the total NYC public school population.

When students return to classrooms, they will need to have schools where they face social workers and therapists instead of police, where they receive mental health supports and services instead of handcuffs, and where they are welcomed to a restorative, trauma-informed setting instead of greeted by metal detectors.

About Advocates for Children of New York (AFC)

Since 1971, Advocates for Children of New York has worked to ensure a high-quality education for New York students who face barriers to academic success, focusing on students from low-income backgrounds who are at greatest risk for failure or discrimination in school because of their poverty, disability, race, ethnicity, immigrant or English Language Learner status, sexual orientation, gender identity, homelessness, or involvement in the foster care or juvenile justice systems. AFC uses four integrated strategies: free advice and legal representation for families of students; free trainings and workshops for parents, communities, and educators and other professionals to equip them to advocate on behalf of students; policy advocacy to effect change in the education system and improve education outcomes; and impact litigation to protect the right to quality education and compel needed reform.