



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

News Release

For immediate release

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Response to Release of Suspension Data for the 2024–25 School Year

November 11, 2025 (NEW YORK CITY) — *Maria Odom, Executive Director of Advocates for Children of New York (AFC), issued the following statement in response to the release of the New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) suspension data report for the 2024–25 school year:*

We are glad to see that the number of suspensions issued to New York City students fell by 2.1% last year, but we cannot ignore that this decline was not felt equally across the system. In fact, students experiencing homelessness and students in the foster system were suspended at slightly *higher* rates than they were the year before. For example, NYCPS issued roughly 115 suspensions for every 1,000 students in foster care last year—more than quadruple the rate at which schools issued suspensions to students not in foster care and up from approximately 106 suspensions per 1,000 students in the foster system in 2023–24. Disparities by race and disability status also remain stark: Black students made up less than 20% of overall enrollment in 2024–25 but received 47% of all superintendent suspensions, up from 44.6% the year before; students with disabilities, who comprise 22.4% of the student population, received 46.6% of superintendent suspensions in 2024–25, up from 43.1% in 2023–24.

When a student is suspended, the root causes of the incident often go unaddressed and any harm caused goes unrepaired. While the City has made investments in recent years to better support students' social-emotional needs and provide schools with resources to implement alternatives to suspensions, there is still much work to do. The next Administration must continue to expand practices like restorative justice that prevent conflicts from escalating and hold students accountable for their actions while keeping them in the classroom where they belong, starting by extending the \$6 million in one-year City funding for restorative justice that will run out in June 2026. The adoption of restorative practices, which help tackle the root causes of behavior, is correlated with improved academic outcomes, school climate, and staff-student relationships.

We urge Mayor-elect Mamdani to ensure that *all* students have access to mental health services and behavioral supports at school so they are not suspended for unaddressed mental or behavioral health challenges. Every school should have a school-based mental health clinic or a partnership with a community-based mental health provider to ensure students can receive

timely care. In addition, NYCPS should hire at least one behavioral specialist per district so there's someone with expertise schools can call upon to help support students. Finally, rather than continuing to fund the Mental Health Continuum on a year-by-year basis, the City should commit to long-term, stable funding for this initiative, which currently helps students at 50 schools in the Bronx and Brooklyn access essential mental health services. Allocating funds for only one year at a time creates instability for schools, students, and clinicians and makes it more difficult to run quality programs.

By expanding access to school-based mental health clinics, hiring behavioral specialists, and investing in practices proven to help students resolve conflict, Mayor-elect Mamdani can help make the City's schools places where all young people can thrive.

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.