



# student safety coalition

## graduation not incarceration

### A New Vision for School Safety

Advocates for Children of  
New York

Association of Legal Aid  
Attorneys

DRUM – Desis Rising Up  
and Moving

Dignity in Schools  
Campaign (DSC-NY)

Center for Community  
Alternatives

Legal Aid Society

Make the Road New York

National Economic and  
Social Rights Initiative

New York Civil Liberties  
Union

Pumphouse Projects

Teachers Unite

Urban Youth Collaborative

YA-YA Network

Good schools do more than keep students safe from physical harm; they provide children with the support they need to learn and thrive. An effective school discipline system should protect students from harm while promoting a healthy learning environment. Students who have been arrested even once drop out twice as often as other students. Yet too often, overly harsh discipline pushes young people out of the classroom and into the criminal justice system.

Coordination between school personnel and school safety officers (SSOs) must build on the shared goal of supporting the healthy development of children, and keeping them in school. To advance this goal, the Student Safety Coalition asks the Department of Education and the New York Police Department to revise their school safety agreement in line with the following principles:

1. The vast majority of school discipline matters can and should be handled by educators, not by police, SSOs, or the courts.
2. SSOs should work with school staff to address situations where there is a real and immediate threat to the physical safety of a member of the school community.
3. School staff should address student misbehavior through de-escalation techniques and guidance interventions.
4. Ticketing, handcuffing or arresting students, except under limited circumstances, undermines the mission of schools and can have lasting consequences for students.
5. Principals, teachers, students and informed community members should have a meaningful voice in deciding whether metal detectors belong in their school, with a clear process for their installation and removal and evaluating their impact on school climate.
6. Schools should seek and obtain parental consent before students are questioned by the police in school; any questioning should be conducted to minimize educational disruption.
7. Members of the school community, including students and parents, must be able to access and understand NYPD School Safety Division policies and regulations.
8. For schools to develop cultures that reflect these principles, school staff and SSOs must receive meaningful training, including in the areas of youth development, positive discipline techniques, cultural competency and sensitivity, accommodating students with disabilities, and recognizing and responding to bullying and harassment.
9. School policies, including training for SSOs, should be created and implemented with input from all members of the school community, including students and parents, to most effectively create and maintain a safe, secure, nurturing and orderly school environment.