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A Look at New York City School Safety¹

The over-policing of New York City schools, paired with school zero tolerance policies, drives youth directly towards the juvenile and criminal justice systems. While the city over-invests in expensive policing measures for schools that are disproportionately low income, black and Latino, these schools remain under-resourced in fundamental areas that harm student learning. Students in these schools also are more likely to be subjected to zero tolerance policies that involve police personnel in minor, non-criminal incidents and rely too heavily on suspensions.

1. At the start of the 2005-2006 school year there were 4,625 **school safety agents** (SSAs) and at least 200 armed police officers in New York City's public schools. These numbers would make the NYPD's School Safety Division the fifth largest police force in the country—larger than the police forces of Washington D.C., Detroit, Boston or Las Vegas.
2. At least 93,411 students attending at least 88 schools must pass through **permanent metal detectors** to enter their school buildings each day.
3. Since Mayor Bloomberg implemented the “**roving**” **metal detector program** in 2006, the city's budget for school safety equipment more than doubled.
4. New York City has more **SSAs per student** than other cities have police officers per citizen. For example, New York City has twice as many SSAs per student than San Antonio has police officers per citizen.
5. During the 2004-2005 school year, 82 percent of children attending high schools with permanent metal detectors were **black or Latino**, compared to the 71 percent average citywide.
6. The city spent an average of \$9,602 on each student at a school with permanent metal detectors, compared to the citywide average of \$11,282 per student. At schools with metal detectors and more than 3,000 students, the city spent only \$8,066 per student.
7. Police and SSAs get involved in twice as many **non-criminal incidents** in schools with permanent metal detectors than in schools without them.
8. High schools with permanent metal detectors issued 48 percent more **suspensions** than schools without metal detectors.
9. High schools with permanent metal detectors are **overcrowded**, with 18 percent more students than seats.

¹ New York Civil Liberties Union and American Civil Liberties Union (2007). *Criminalizing the Classroom: The Over-Policing of New York City Schools*.

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