



## Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council

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### **CPAC Parent Advisory Council Board**

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August 11, 2022

Chancellor David Banks  
Department of Education  
Tweed Courthouse  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Chancellor Banks,

Last February CPAC approved [a letter](#) to you and Mayor Adams expressing our concern regarding the uptick in school violence, urging a renewed focus on school safety. As we prepare for a new school year, school safety remains a top priority. We wish to focus on some of our key recommendations, which are actually required under [Chancellor's Regulation A-414](#) and/or discussed in NYS Comptroller's unfavorable [Audit of NYC DOE Safety Planning](#) published in June 2019. We urge you to:

- 1) Organize an annual meeting no later than October among all stakeholders (the Chancellor, the Director of School Safety, superintendents, principals, UFT chapter leaders, and PA/PTA presidents) to discuss the NYC School Safety Plan, including reminding participants of safety protocols and underscoring the importance of monthly school safety meetings. This annual meeting could also serve to meet one of the recommendations laid out by the NYC Comptroller. In the audit, the State Comptroller discussed guidance from the NYS Education Department stating that District Plans (here, District refers to NYC) “must be made available for a 30-day comment period and that the DOE must hold a public hearing each year.” (See p. 20). We believe this annual meeting needs to be publicized more broadly throughout the school community. Holding the public comment period and annual meeting over the summer while schools are not in session (as occurred in both 2021 and 2022) ensures minimal parental participation.
- 2) Hold regular townhalls on school safety in schools and districts, preferably no later than October.
  - a. The requirement for annual school safety meetings is generally ignored at most schools. According to CR A-414 (1F) “Each Principal must ensure that its School Safety Committee holds at least one annual meeting which is open to all parents in that school. The meeting shall be conducted for the purpose of allowing parents to raise and discuss safety concerns regarding the school...” This meeting should focus on safety issues within school, in the larger school community, and during student commutes.

- b. All parents, students, and staff in co-located schools on the same campus, including D-75 and D-79 schools, should be invited to the same townhall meeting to discuss campus-wide safety concerns and campus-wide safety plans.
  - c. Minutes of these meetings should be made available to the entire school community (including parents, students, and all school staff).
  - d. These meetings should be either hybrid or fully virtual meetings to maximize the number of parents who can participate, with interpretation and translation services offered.
- 3) Ensure that monthly school safety meetings are actually held, and PA/PTA presidents (or their designee) are invited to attend.
- a. While monthly school safety meetings are required under CR A-414 (1B) and PA/PTA presidents (or designees) are mandated members, PA/PTA presidents have complained for years that they are rarely invited. The NYS Comptroller’s Audit laid bare the truth that “documentation did not support that meetings were held monthly (as required by the City Regulations), were well planned, or covered meaningful topics. Additionally, available documentation generally showed poor attendance.” (p. 2) The Audit then described in detail a host of issues in school safety documents and procedures.
  - b. CPAC believes the DOE needs to take school safety seriously, ensure that monthly school safety meetings take place, are well-attended, and that safety planning documents are current, accurate, and complete. We agree with the Comptroller’s recommendation that schools provide meeting minutes, that a minimum number or percentage of members be in attendance at each meeting, and that the DOE review School Safety Committee information to ensure the meetings take place and cover meaningful safety information (see p. 14-15 of the audit). We believe that superintendents should hold school principals accountable and ensure that meaningful monthly safety meetings are taking place.
- 4) Establish a task force within the DOE, including members from CPAC, to review the many failures outlined in the Comptroller’s Audit and address them.

We all believe that the safety of our children is paramount, but parents remain concerned that the DOE is woefully unprepared for school violence.

With much appreciation,

The Chancellor’s Parent Advisory Council

Approved by the membership at its August 11, 2022 meeting

Cc: Mayor Eric Adams, First Deputy Chancellor Daniel Weisberg, Deputy Chancellor of Family and Community Engagement and External Affairs Kenita Lloyd, Chief of School Culture, Climate and Well-Being Jawana Johnson, Office of Safety and Youth Development Senior Executive Director Mark Rampersant, School Safety Division Commanding Officer Christian Rangel