



Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council

Tweed Courthouse *52 Chamber Street, New York 10007/Email: InfoCPACNYC@gmail.com

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February 10, 2022

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

Dear Chancellor Banks,

While Covid-19 has taken center stage in discussions on school safety, many of our parents are deeply concerned by the increased physical violence within our schools and in the surrounding community. The press has been filled with reports of the uptick in weapons confiscated from students at our schools, as children carry them both for offensive and defensive purposes. Fear of violence is adding to student anxiety and mental health issues. While many students feel safe in our schools, many feel very unsafe on their commute to school. **The Chancellor's Parents Advisory Council (CPAC)**, which represents all the PAs and PTAs in the New York City public school system, and through them all our parents, **urges you to work with Mayor Adams and various public institutions and community organizations to enhance school safety.** 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 remind participants of safety protocols and underscore the importance of monthly school safety meetings.
- 2) Hold regular townhalls on school safety in schools, communities, districts, and boroughs.
 - a. Townhalls should focus on safety issues within schools, in the larger school community, and during commuting times.
 - 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, regular school safety team meetings, building council meetings, shared space meetings, and SLT meetings to discuss campus-wide safety concerns and campus-wide safety plans. Minutes of these meetings should be made available to the entire school community (including parents, students, and all school staff).

- c. Townhalls should be organized in October or November by superintendents, principals/school safety committees, and PAs/PTAs.
 - d. Townhalls should include school safety professionals, members of student councils, representatives from the NYPD/FDNY/local precincts, community organizations, and local political leaders who focus on education and improving student safety (these may include community board members, City Council members, Borough President's education divisions and District Attorney education liaisons).
 - e. 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) Work with the NYPD and local community groups such as [Save our Streets](#) to promote gang mediation and work to get weapons, especially guns, out of schools and off our streets.
 - 4) Request that the NYPD have an enhanced presence on subway lines, bus stops, and the streets around our schools during hours that students are commuting to school. While the press has rightly focused on street violence and guns, we would also like to draw attention to inappropriate behavior by fellow commuters faced by many of our students on their journey to and from school.
 - 5) Ensure that school safety committees within each school (and school campus) conduct an annual review on whether to keep metal detectors or scanners in their school. We know that some student groups have urged the PEP and CPAC to remove them, and we understand that this is a complex discussion, but given the uptick in violence and confiscation of weapons, we believe it to be imperative that the decision on whether to continue with metal detectors be a school- and campus-level decision.
 - 6) Work with the Department of Health and other mental health organizations to create checklists for parents and teachers to help them identify signs of possible student mental health issues, drug use, or gang affiliation.
 - 7) Step-up anti-drug efforts within our schools – drug education, drug prevention, and drug rehabilitation services.
 - 8) Provide more resources for parents through our schools and Parent University to help parents support their students – from effective safety precautions to anti-drug efforts.
 - 9) Encourage increased involvement by fathers in both middle school and high school by providing mechanisms for their engagement. Students need to see more male role models.

We would welcome the opportunity to speak with you further on this issue.

With much appreciation,

The Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council

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