



BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT VANESSA L. GIBSON

**New York City Committees on Education & Public Safety
Oversight: Examining School Safety and Crossing Guard Operations at DOE Schools
April 29, 2026**

Good afternoon and thank you to Chair Eric Dinowitz, Chair Oswald Feliz, and the members of the City Council's Education and Public Safety Committees for convening this important hearing today to examine whether we as a City are doing enough to ensure that students, teachers, and other school staff are safe in and on their way to their schools.

When parents send their children to school every day, they are trusting us to make it our highest priority to ensure they are safe in the City's care. This means we must have adequate staffing levels among school safety officers and crossing guards. We have seen too many stories of schools without sufficient staffing experiencing violence, vehicle collisions, or criminal activity. There are thousands of incidents which school safety agents are required to respond to every year, and these are dealt with professionally with coordination between DOE and NYPD personnel.

We ask our school safety officers to do numerous tasks, stretching them very thin. They operate metal detectors to confiscate weapons and other contraband, check identification of visitors, monitor security cameras, coordinate emergency response, conduct hallway patrols, de-escalate and break up altercations, report incidents, and more. This is difficult job, and our officers deserve commendation for their efforts. However, there has not been a sufficient level of staffing to ensure that every student in every school is kept safe.

There is a budgeted headcount of 4,065 school safety agents, but there is a 12% vacancy rate, meaning that there are nearly 500 vacancies. According to Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch, the NYPD is losing 37 agents per month and is struggling to hire more.¹ This is a significant decline in the number of school safety agents from prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, when there were about 5,000 active agents in April 2020.² Furthermore, there is a significant number of school safety agents who are calling out on a daily and weekly basis due to sick leave, vacation time, and comp time due to forced overtime that necessitates NYPD bringing in floating agents and pulling personnel from some schools to staff higher priority locations.

Similarly, the headcount for school crossing guards has fallen over the past several years, including the elimination of 483 vacant positions in 2023. Citywide headcount is approximately 2,300, a 400-position decline from previous levels, with 150 of these positions currently vacant. There are some schools that have no crossing guards to help protect students as they walk to their school buildings.

¹ <https://pix11.com/news/local-news/nypd-struggling-to-hire-retain-school-safety-agents/>

² <https://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/city-eliminates-hundreds-of-vacant-school-safety-positions-after-more-than-20-percent-decline-in-safety-agent-staffing-in-citys-public-schools-over-three-years-march-2023.pdf>

Crossing guards direct traffic, manage pedestrian flow, and report unsafe traffic conditions, helping to prevent incidents outside of and nearby schools during morning and afternoon hours. However, despite this important role, crossing guards are paid \$18 per hour and work part time at four hours per day during two shifts, and they are capped at 25 hours per week. Because of this low pay and bifurcated work schedule, there is significant turnover among crossing guards and numerous vacancies in these positions.

From a recent survey of principals in The Bronx's Community School District 12, 31 schools have reported an insufficient number of crossing guards to meet their needs, including six schools that reported having no crossing guards. This is an unacceptably low level of staffing that has resulted in incidents outside of our schools, including students having been hit by vehicles.

The first step that we must take to deal with these issues is to increase transparency so the public knows what is going on in the schools regarding the headcount of these positions and how they are deployed.

Introduction 457, which I have introduced along with Councilmember Althea Stevens, would require the NYPD to create a deployment map of the stationed crossing guard locations across the city and to post that map on the department website. This bill will enable the public to examine the number of crossing guards assigned to their children's schools and in their neighborhoods, giving them the tools to better advocate for their communities. I urge the Council to pass this legislation to ensure that the public has full information about crossing guard deployment.

Additionally, Introduction 788, sponsored by Chair Dinowitz, would require the City to report on the turnover of school safety agents. This would improve transparency about how experienced these agents are and how many agents are leaving these positions each year. This can help the City create appropriate strategies for recruitment, retainment, and deployment of school safety officers, to best utilize the assets that we have to achieve positive outcomes.

Overall, it is clear that the number of school safety agents and crossing guards are insufficient to meet the current demand in our schools and school communities. The City must increase the headcount of these positions, especially considering the decline in staffing levels over the past 10 years. Any level of violence and disorder in our schools is unacceptable, and we must make sure that the school safety division has the sufficient staffing and resources to keep our students safe. I urge the Council to increase the budgeted headcount and pass these important pieces of legislation to protect our young people.