

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

TASKFORCE TO COMBAT HATE REPORT



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In 2024, Speaker Adrienne Adams appointed me to serve as one of the co-chairs of the City Council’s first-of-its-kind Task Force to Combat Hate. I was honored to be entrusted by the Speaker and our colleagues with this responsibility, and firmly believe that fostering belonging, inclusivity, and compassion is central to the Council’s work.

The creation of this Task Force reflects the Council’s commitment to safeguarding every New Yorker while strengthening the bonds across our diverse communities.

The Task Force adopted an active-listening approach to our work. In the past two years, we have focused on listening and learning from students from all backgrounds about their experiences with hate and bias, the impacts on their lives, the support they sought, and what they believe is needed to make New York City and their schools safe and welcoming.

The following report details my reflections and proposed policy solutions from these conversations.

I hope that these policy solutions can serve as a guide to my colleagues and the new mayoral administration. In this time of deep division, I am proud of the work the Task Force conducted to uplift the experiences of the city’s students.

I look forward to building this work in partnership with New Yorkers and ensuring that our city leads with courage, solidarity, and care.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

Established in 2024, the New York City Council Task Force to Combat Hate reflects the Council's renewed commitment to protecting the safety and well-being of every New Yorker while strengthening connections across our city's diverse communities. The Task Force was led by Co-Chairs Council Members Shahana Hanif and Erik Dinowitz and included Council Members Linda Lee, Shekar Krishnan, Nantasha Williams, and Alexa Avilés. Given the vastness of the issue, the co-chairs chose to focus their efforts on speaking directly with high school students.

During the 2024-2026 Council Session, the Task Force invited students from across New York City to City Hall to share their experiences with hate and bias, the impacts of these incidents on their lives, the support services they have sought, and the changes they believe are needed to make their schools and communities safer and more welcoming for all. Guided by these conversations, the Office of Council Member Hanif has put developed policy recommendations and budget priorities to meaningfully address hate, discrimination, and community safety throughout New York City public schools.

SUMMARY OF TASK FORCE ACTIVITIES

Roundtables

During the 2024–2025 Council Session, Task Force Co-Chairs Council Members Shahana Hanif and Erik Dinowitz convened five roundtables to gather input on students' experiences with hate crimes and bias incidents both inside and outside of schools. Participation was intentionally aligned with heritage and awareness months, uplifting communities during key moments of recognition while centering the voices of students most directly impacted. The Task Force convened affinity groups including Arab American, Jewish American, Black, Asian, and LGBTQ students. A clear throughline across these forums was students' desire to move away from punitive approaches like detention or suspension, and instead foster meaningful conversations that address why certain language or actions are harmful, derogatory, or rooted in hate. Students also emphasized the importance of sports as a powerful way to build relationships, create shared experiences, and foster understanding among diverse groups of students.

The Task Force also visited Eagle Academy for Young Men, gaining insight into how the school's emphasis on fraternity serves as a model for deterring bullying and fostering a supportive environment. Together, these engagements created a critical platform for students to share their lived experiences, highlighting challenges and gaps in existing support systems. These conversations informed policy recommendations, strengthened connections among students, educators, and policymakers, and fostered a shared commitment among young people to confront hate and build safer communities.

Policy Discussions

The Task Force co-chairs also engaged directly with practitioners to deepen their understanding of effective interventions. Co-Chairs Hanif and Dinowitz joined Speaker Adams in speaking at the launch of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's 2025 Digital Terrorism and Hate Report Card, which evaluates how major digital platforms are responding to the spread of hate online.





CURRENT STATE

The NYC Department of Education’s biannual Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination Reports indicate a troubling rise in hate-based incidents across public schools. Religious-based incidents increased significantly, from 92 in the 2021–2022 school year to 162 in 2022–2023. DOE data also shows persistently high rates of hate violence related to race, ethnicity, and national origin, with more than 1,000 such incidents reported between September 2023 and January 2024. Gender, sexual orientation, and disability remain substantial areas of concern as well, with over 500 incidents recorded in the same period.

Middle schools account for the largest share of overall complaints and incidents, while only 22.3 percent occur in high schools. Although incidents have slightly declined between 2024 and 2025, the continued prevalence of hate-motivated harm—particularly amid rising antisemitic, Islamophobic, and other bias-driven crimes citywide—underscores the urgency for a stronger, system-wide response.

New York City has taken steps to address hate violence in public schools. In October 2024, the DOE launched an Anti-Hate Hotline to provide students, educators, and families with an accessible reporting mechanism. In November 2024, the City Council adopted Resolution 95, led by Council Member Shahana Hanif, calling on the DOE to develop a comprehensive religious diversity curriculum in collaboration with faith-based organizations. Additionally, the Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes (OPHC), established in 2019 within the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, continues to coordinate community-driven strategies to address bias and support impacted communities.

Despite these initiatives, the scale and persistence of hate in New York City schools demonstrate the need for deeper policy reforms, targeted interventions, and stronger coordinated support systems. Strengthening prevention efforts, expanding education on bias and identity, and improving accountability mechanisms remain essential to ensuring safe, inclusive learning environments for all students.

For further reference, you can access the New York City Department of Education’s Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination Reports at the [New York City Department of Education website’s Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination Reports page](#).



RECOMMENDATIONS

From our conversations with students, three key themes consistently emerged: proactive inclusion, incident response, and media literacy and global connections. While the Council does not have direct legislative authority over school curriculum, the following recommendations are directed toward both the Council and the Mayor.

PROACTIVE INCLUSION

Recommendations for the Mayor:

- Develop a Department of Education pilot program in a NYC high school to work with educators directly on how to train all school staff in de-escalation and trauma-informed care, with specialized training for youth peer mentors. Models such as [Chicago Peace Warriors](#) offer useful examples.
- Expand in-school curricular offerings that equip students with skills to build healthy relationships, and to practice de-escalation and conflict resolution.
- Fund comprehensive de-escalation training for all school staff—including teachers, paraprofessionals, and social workers—to better prepare them to respond to and report hate-based incidents, and to support community stabilization afterward.

Recommendations for the Committee to Combat Hate:

- Hold a joint hearing with the Committee on Education focused on bias-based incidents in schools, centering testimony from students across the city as well as the broader public.
- While the Task Force centered student experiences, this issue spans multiple committees; opportunities for additional joint hearings should be assessed and pursued.

MEDIA LITERACY AND GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

Recommendations for the Mayor:

- Expand arts programming that engages students in current events and exposes them to diverse perspectives.
- Incorporate media literacy into classrooms by promoting the use of the [State's media literacy toolkit](#), encouraging participation in [News Literacy Week](#), and supporting [curriculum development](#) in this area.

Recommendations for the City Council:

- Engage educators to develop recommendations on how to better support teachers in connecting historical context to current events in the classroom, and ensure they have the resources and training to do so effectively.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Recommendations for the Mayor:

- Task the [Center for Creative Conflict Resolution](#) with developing hate prevention and incident response plans that outline best practices for school administrators.
- Restore funding to essential education programs, particularly [restorative justice initiatives](#) and the [Mental Health Continuum](#), as outlined by the [Coalition for Equitable Education Funding](#) (\$12M).
- Fund Peer Educator Train-the-Trainer programs for restorative justice interventions in the 15 schools with the highest rates of student-to-student bullying, harassment, intimidation, and discrimination, as reported by the New York City Department of Education under Local Law 51.

THE WORK AHEAD

The Taskforce to Combat Hate operated without dedicated funding or full-time staff, which limited the scope of its work. A key recommendation of the Task Force is to invest more fully in these efforts moving forward. This report recognizes that in January 2026, Speaker Julie Menin established the Committee to Combat Hate, which now oversees the Mayor's Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes, the Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism, and the Mayor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships. We are encouraged that the Task Force's work has since been formalized and resourced.

Looking ahead, this work must include organizing robust oversight hearings that engage a diverse cross-section of New Yorkers, ensuring that those most impacted by hate and bias are central to identifying solutions and shaping policy.



FOOTNOTES

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