



**CITY EMPLOYEES UNION LOCAL 237**  
AFFILIATED WITH THE  
**INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS**  
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October 29, 2020

To the Members of the New York City Council:

I write to express Local 237's continuing, grave concern over the plan to remove our city's School Safety Agents from the supervision of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and place them under control of the Department of Education (DOE). The plan is ill conceived and politically motivated, and threatens the safety and security of our students. It should be abandoned.

The transfer of the Agents, members of Local 237, was first proposed – purely and simply – as a budget gimmick to satisfy demands to “defund the police.” In a fit of political grandstanding that did nothing to address legitimate concerns over the George Floyd case, certain City Councilman foolishly promised in June to punish NYPD by cutting its budget by “one billion dollars.” Looking in haste for line items that could help them accomplish this result, they hit on the transfer of the School Safety force and budget from NYPD to DOE.

The illogic of responding to the crisis over the George Floyd case by targeting School Safety is obvious. The School Safety force is more than 80% Black and Hispanic. 70% of the Agents are female. The idea that this force is part of any national pattern of police mistreatment of minorities is farcical and defamatory. A poll reported by Gotham/NY1 shows 76% of students in schools with large black majorities give a favorable rating to their School Safety Agents. A commitment to “police reform”, or a goal of bettering NYPD's image with minority communities, would suggest *keeping the School Safety force inside the NYPD*.

Councilmembers should ignore dishonest rhetoric linking School Safety Agents or NYPD to disproportionate discipline of minority students, a problem which troubles our entire community. Councilmembers are reminded that School Safety Agents have nothing to do with disciplining or suspending students. That is the work of Principals – or the Department of Education.

The public relations fraud of the proposed transfer of 5,000 Agents from NYPD to DOE would be reason enough to stop it now. But the grave danger of the plan is that the safety of students and school personnel will be undermined.

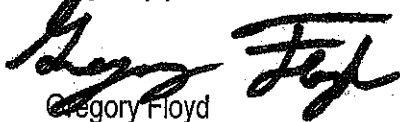
It must not be forgotten that School Safety Agents were once under the control of the Department of Education (then the Board of Education), until 1998. That system failed miserably. DOE's laxity in hiring practices and supervision brought members onto the force who were unfit to be charged with protection of children and adolescents. There was chaos and violence in the schools. The takeover by NYPD brought

professionalism and security to the school system. Crime has been steadily reduced. Local 237 and then-Commissioner Kelly collaborated in 2008 to make School Safety Agent a competitive Civil Service title, with an entry exam requirement. The force has been sharply upgraded.

Clear thinking counsels us to keep the security personnel in our schools under the overall command and control of the NYPD. We live in turbulent times in a turbulent city. We are regularly reminded of terrifying threats to children in their school environment, and the crucial importance of the reaction time and professionalism of school personnel in emergencies. We now have in our school system a force well trained in law enforcement and security, and as representative of the population they protect as any force in the country. Turning this work over to an unprepared DOE is foolhardy. I'm confident that sober-minded mothers of New York City's students, concerned for their kids' security, will take this view of the matter.

As I've said, George Floyd's and similar cases justifiably raised concern this summer over the issue of police-community relations. Some valuable proposals have been made, but in the emotion of the moment some very foolish ideas also took hold, with the counter-productive result of endangering the very people who most need protection. The rash public-relations plan to remove School Safety from NYPD was one of these bad ideas. Local 237 and our School Safety Agent members ask Councilmembers to shelve the plan now.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregory Floyd', written over a printed name.

Gregory Floyd

President, Teamster Local 237, I.B.T.

cc. Hon. Mayor DeBlasio  
Hon. Comptroller Stringer  
Hon. Public Advocate Williams  
Chancellor Carranza