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MAYOR ADAMS LAUNCHES NYC'S FIRST-EVER JUVENILE JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARD

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Adams and New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) Commissioner Jess Dannhauser today announced the launch of the city’s first-ever Juvenile Justice Advisory Board to advise and provide recommendations to the mayor, the City Council, and ACS on issues related to juvenile justice. The 20-member board — 13 of which are appointments — follow Mayor Adams’ [signing of Intro. 436](#) in March, establishing the new advisory board and providing for annual reporting to the mayor and the City Council speaker.

Today’s announcement builds on the Adams administration’s work towards improving outcomes for all youth in New York City. Recently, New York City expanded the successful Fair Futures model, which provides one-on-one coaching and tutoring to those whose lives were touched by foster care from sixth grade through age 26 to include youth involved in the juvenile justice system. ACS has also made several enhancements in detention, including the creation of a new school-based team that is responsible for encouraging young people to attend school, which has significantly improved engagement and attendance across both secure facilities.

“Public safety and justice are the prerequisites to prosperity, and our administration has already taken significant strides in making our city safer and more prosperous for all New Yorkers — especially our young people,” said **Mayor Adams**. “The city’s first-ever Juvenile Justice Advisory Board will give young people a voice in juvenile detention and let their voices be heard by their city government. These appointees bring a wealth of experience in juvenile justice, mental health, and public safety to ensure our young people have a fair shot to succeed.”

“We are excited to launch the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board and to do so with the singular focus of supporting the city’s young people who are justice-involved,” said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom**. “The board will provide guidance and recommendations for helping every young person involved in the system secure the support they need as they transition into being young adults and adults. Thank you to Nancy for helping lead this effort and to all those that will join in on this important work.”

“New York City is working to expand opportunity and improve outcomes for all young people. As Mayor Adams often reminds us, when we invest in our youth, including those in the juvenile justice system, they can do anything — even lead the greatest city in the world,” said **ACS Commissioner Dannhauser**. “The new Juvenile Justice Advisory Board includes individuals with lived experience, as well as other experts, and I am confident that their recommendations will help further the city’s efforts to strengthen the juvenile justice system.”

“The Juvenile Justice Advisory Board is a significant milestone in our commitment to fostering a brighter future for our juvenile population,” said **New York City Department of Probation Commissioner Juanita Holmes**. “Together, we are paving the way for positive change, collaboration, and innovative solutions to ensure that our young individuals have the support and resources they need to thrive. We are embarking on a transformative journey, empowering voices, embracing diversity, and nurturing a safer, more inclusive city for all.”

“As the agency overseeing the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Crisis Management System and working side by side with a powerful roster of youth-focused CBO partners, DYCD is proud to join our esteemed colleagues on the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board,” said **New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) Commissioner Keith Howard**. “We look forward to advancing Mayor Adams’ vision and commitment to young people by recommending new, upstream solutions that support our youngest New Yorkers — especially those most at risk or already justice-involved.”

“We owe our young people engaged in the juvenile justice system a responsive and thoughtful plan to lift them up and guide them towards a path to lifelong success,” said **New York City Department of Education Chancellor David C. Banks**. “The robust roster of individuals appointed to the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board will represent a range of perspectives, including individuals with a background on mental health. I’m eager to witness the impact of this village of support for our young people and commend the city leaders who are prioritizing this work.”

“Identifying opportunities — including at the community level — to reduce youth involvement in the justice system is key to building community safety,” said **Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice Director Deanna Logan**. “I am grateful for Mayor Adams’ leadership in creating the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board. I look forward to collaborating with this diverse team of interdisciplinary experts to develop recommendations for comprehensive supports that effectively serve New York City’s justice-involved youth, creating opportunities to thrive and reach their full potential.”

“We know that to build a healthier city, we need to center the needs of our young people,” said **New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasan**. “Bringing together interdisciplinary experts for the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board will help establish a foundation for the future and support the wellbeing of the city’s justice-involved youth.”

Chaired by ACS Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Youth and Family Justice Nancy Ginsburg, the advisory board includes members with different types of expertise in the juvenile justice system, including attorneys who specialize in defending New York City youth, mental health professionals, advocates, and individuals personally impacted by the juvenile justice system.

“It is pivotal to empower our city’s young people to have voices in determining the policies that impact their health and well-being,” said **New York City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams**. “I’m proud the council enacted legislation to create a new Juvenile Justice Advisory Board that includes input from parents and directly impacted young people, which can pave the way for a more holistic approach to youth justice. I thank Youth Services Chair Althea Stevens for her leadership on this important bill, and I look forward to their critical work.”

“I’m excited that through the juvenile justice advisory board we will be able to provide guidance and support to our justice-involved youth and their families, to cultivate an equitable system that promotes voice and choice,” said **New York City Councilmember Althea Stevens**. “Although I am excited about the introduction of this advisory board, this is just the first step to develop new preventative and diversion strategies to ensure young people stay out of their system. We must get to a place where we are investing in our young people on the front end, so we don’t need to invest in them on the back end.”

Juvenile Justice Advisory Board Appointees:

Nancy Ginsburg is the deputy commissioner of the division of youth and family justice at ACS, overseeing a continuum of community-based services aimed at preventing youth from entering the justice system, as well as non-secure detention, ACS’s two secure detention centers, and the Close to Home juvenile justice placement system. She previously oversaw the adolescent intervention and diversion project at The Legal Aid Society in New York City, where she worked for 30 years, and served as a member of the New York State Raise the Age Implementation Task Force, the mayor’s leadership team on school climate and discipline, the New York City School Justice Partnership Task Force, the New York City Council Gun Violence Task Force, and the Task Force on the Future of Probation in New York State. Ginsburg earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Pennsylvania and her J.D. at Albany Law School.

Juanita Holmes is the commissioner of the New York City Department of Probation. She previously served in the New York City Police Department (NYPD) as chief of training, chief of patrol, and chief of collaborative policing, after having overseen the NYPD’s school safety division and domestic violence unit. In the NYPD, Holmes created the highly successful “Girl Talk” mentorship program, where NYPD officers serve as surrogate families to at-risk young women and girls. She also founded the NYPD’s Blue Chips program, which utilizes mentorship, personal enrichment, and sports to help bridge the gap between the police and youth. Holmes earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from St. Joseph’s College and graduated from the Police Management Institute at Columbia University.

Karina Christiansen PhD is the deputy executive director of Office of Neighborhood Safety at DYCD. Karina has been working in New York City government since 2017, starting at the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, where she focused on gun violence prevention policy and co-developed the Atlas Initiative. The mission of Atlas is to improve public safety and to enhance the capacity of community-based organizations to serve people at the highest risk of violence. As the deputy executive director of the Office of Neighborhood Safety at DYCD, she supports the development and implementation of community-based public safety and quality of life initiatives centered around community leadership, healing, and trust. She has a Ph.D. in Public Health from Johns Hopkins University’s Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Deanna Logan serves as the director of the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, previously serving as general counsel and deputy director of crime strategies, where she coordinated multiagency efforts with the

courts to meet the requirements of the city's Criminal Justice Reform Act. She has worked with Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark to create and oversee the Rikers Island Prosecution Bureau, with the New York City Department of Correction to reform and strengthen internal discipline at the jails on Rikers Island, and in the Office of the New York County District Attorney on felony cases involving narcotics violations, domestic violence, sexual assaults, and child abuse. Logan received a B.A. in political science from Boston University and her J.D. at New York University School of Law.

Kristila Brace currently serves as co-acting assistant commissioner of the Bureau of Health Promotion of Justice-Impacted Population at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). The bureau aims to reduce the negative social and health consequences of criminal legal system involvement through innovative policy and practice change. Previously, Dr. Brace served as regional director of mental health, executive director of the crisis prevention and intervention unit at DOHMH, director of crisis assistance, and training/director of the health engagement and assessment program at DOHMH. She has also worked as a behavioral intervention specialist for the New York Foundling's Developmental Disability Division and was the director of the Bronx Community Reentry Center (Federal Halfway House). Dr. Brace earned her B.A. and M.A. from John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Dr. Brace received a doctorate in clinical forensic psychology from the California School of Forensic Studies at Alliant International University.

Sandeep Kandhari has served as the litigation supervisor of the Center for Family Representation's youth defense practice since 2019. He previously served in various roles with The Legal Aid Society, where he litigated juvenile delinquency cases from pre-petition hearing to post-dispositional hearings. Kandhari received a B.A. from the New York University Stern School of Business and a J.D. from the New York University School of Law.

Deborah Rush is an attorney with the Bronx adolescent, intervention, and diversion practice of The Legal Aid Society. Having served in this role since 2004, she represents adolescents prosecuted in the Bronx Supreme Court. Rush received a B.A. from Colgate University and a J.D. from Rutgers University Camden School of Law.

Elisabeth Bernard is a staff attorney with the school justice project of Advocates for Children of New York, having previously been an agency attorney with ACS and a youth and community programs coordinator with the Center for Court Innovation. Bernard received a B.A. in criminology from Long Island University, an M.A. in youth studies from the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Professional Studies, and a J.D. from CUNY Law School.

Dr. Akeem Marsh is a child and adolescent psychiatrist serving as assistant medical director for New York Foundling's Home for Integrated Behavioral Health. He previously served at Bellevue/NYU Occupational Environmental Medicine Clinic, working closely with ACS' secure detention centers, and recently co-edited a book, "Not Just Bad Kids: The Adversity and Disruptive Behavior Link," which aims to provide child welfare professionals with tools that can be applied to their clinical work. Dr. Marsh received his B.D. from the CUNY School of Medicine at the City College of New York and a M.D. from SUNY Health Science Center at Downstate College of Medicine.

Jayne Bigelsen has served since 2019 as vice president of advocacy and legal and previously as director of anti-human trafficking initiatives for Covenant House of New York, an organization that provides immediate

needs for youth experiencing homelessness or sexual exploitation, including housing. She received a B.A. in psychology from Brandeis University, a master's degree in applied developmental psychology from Fordham University, and a J.D. from Harvard Law School.

Alex Griffith serves as director of court partnerships and strategy for Exalt, an organization that supports youth ages 15-19 who have been involved in the criminal justice system with skill development, navigation of the education and justice systems, paid internship placements, and resources to avoid further justice system involvement. He received a B.A. from John Jay College and completed Columbia Business School's executive education nonprofit leadership program.

Rev. Wendy Calderón serves as the executive director of the Urban Youth Alliance International, a faith and community-based organization that services youth and their communities. She received a B.A. from Brown University and is currently completing an M.P.H. degree program through the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health.

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