

## Legislation Text

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Authorizing the joint City Council Committees on Public Safety and Education to hold public hearings to examine statistics for in-school violence protocols, student-to-student violence, parent-to-parent violence, and teacher safety.

WHEREAS, Schools in the School District of Philadelphia have been facing a violence problem among students since the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, On January 22, 2023, the Philadelphia Inquirer published a story “Philly parents are increasingly coming to school to settle student fights, threaten teachers” detailing how an increased level of tension among parents has created escalations in violent conflicts; and

WHEREAS, Kevin Bethel, Chief of School Safety within the District, reported that because the schools have unarmed security forces, they have begun to rely more heavily on the Philadelphia Police Department to help resolve situations; and

WHEREAS, There has been several occurrences where parents have been involved in altercations on school grounds where staff, students, or other parents were injured. An incident occurred at Thomas Edison High School on November 10, 2022, in which a fight between students escalated when angry family members showed up at the school. The situation ended in the arrest of two individuals; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia School District has failed to consistently report on both crime and violence, which stifles the implementation of citywide measures. The lack of statistics coupled with the evident issue of in-school violence showcases the need for public hearings by this Council body; and

WHEREAS, Teachers have communicated that they feel unsafe, and there was a significant shortage of school staff in the 2022-2023 school year. Without measures to protect teachers from in-school violence, the number of teachers returning each year could likely decrease; and

WHEREAS, The District is continuing to refer to situations of in-school violence as isolated incidents, but parents are expressing safety concerns. A general increase in gun crimes and violence throughout Philadelphia has contributed to a general sentiment of fear among families and residents. Now is the time to recognize this issue and progress toward solutions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF PHILADELPHIA, Does hereby authorize the joint City Council Committees on Public Safety and Education to hold public hearings to examine statistics for in-school violence protocols, student-to-student violence, parent-to-parent violence, and teacher safety.