



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
INDEPENDENT BUDGET OFFICE

110 William Street, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10038

[www.ibo.nyc.gov](http://www.ibo.nyc.gov) • [iboenews@ibo.nyc.ny.us](mailto:iboenews@ibo.nyc.ny.us)

**Testimony of Logan Clark, Assistant Director of Budget Review  
New York City Independent Budget Office**

**To the New York City Council Committee on Public Safety  
On Intro 0532-2024 to Expand the School Security Guard Program for Nonpublic Schools  
Monday, September 23, 2024**

Good morning Chair Salaam, Ranking Member Ariola, and other esteemed members of the Public Safety Committee. My name is Logan Clark, and I am the Assistant Director of Budget Review at the New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO). My portfolio at IBO covers analysis of the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), in addition to other citywide operational costs. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I am here today to provide analysis on Intro 0532-2024, which concerns the reimbursement of nonpublic schools for the cost of security guard services, paid for through DCAS's budget. The Intro would expand eligibility of the program to smaller schools, which IBO estimates would double the total potential cost of the program. IBO estimates that the total potential cost of this legislation to the City could be an additional \$19.8 million if all eligible nonpublic schools opted in, bringing the total possible program cost up to \$39.6 million annually. However, even with the current program, spending remains below the capped levels.

**Current Program**

Under Local Law 2 of 2016, the City allows for nonpublic schools with more than 300 students to apply for reimbursement for costs of security guards. It is a multi-tiered program, allowing for schools with greater numbers of students to apply for more security guards. Schools are required to hire security guards according to the prevailing wage schedule set by the City Comptroller and DCAS maintains a prequalified vendor list. Assuming 180 days of school as required by state law, the cost of a security guard for a full school year would be at minimum \$36,114 depending on the guard's years of experience. The program is currently capped at \$19.8 million annually; however, as the table below shows, the City has not ever reached this limit. As of the 2023-2024 school year using data from the New York State Education Department, the total number of eligible schools is 277, and under the tiered system, equates to a total possible reimbursement for approximately 460 security guards across all schools. This would amount to a total of \$16.6 million, if the guards are hired at the lowest possible prevailing wage. For context from the most recent closed fiscal (and



school) year, in 2023 the payments to schools totaled \$16 million. However, in the four prior fiscal years, actual spending fell farther below the cap of \$19.8 million.

<b>Actual Spending for the Security Guard Program for Nonpublic Schools Has Remained Below the Cap for the Last Five Fiscal Years</b>		
<i>Dollars in millions</i>		
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>School Year</b>	<b>Total Cash Expense</b>
2019	2018 - 2019	\$10,304,962
2020	2019 - 2020	\$6,949,195
2021	2020 - 2021	\$9,404,917
2022	2021 - 2022	\$12,205,375
2023	2022 - 2023	\$16,174,265
<b>Five Year Total</b>		<b>\$55,038,714</b>
<b>Five Year Average</b>		<b>\$11,007,743</b>
SOURCE: New York City Financial Management System <i>New York City Independent Budget Office</i>		

### Potential Expansion

The proposed legislation would allow for nonpublic schools with fewer than 300 students to apply, under the same level of reimbursement as the current lowest tier which allows for one security guard. As of the 2023-2024 school year, there are 548 schools that would newly be allowed to seek reimbursement under this change. Additionally, the cap on total reimbursements would be increased to \$39.3 million. At the lowest possible prevailing wage of \$36,114 per eligible school security guard, IBO estimates that the potential cost to the city could be an additional \$19.8 million annually for a total of \$39.6 million, or slightly over the proposed cap. It is important to note that some schools have quite low enrollments—for example, 41 schools have 20 or fewer students.

As previously stated, that would require full program participation by every eligible school, for every single day of the school year. It is important to note that the current cap has not been met in any of the previous years since its implementation in 2016, and that the estimated costs are the ceiling, assuming the lowest labor costs. There is potential for additional expense to the City, should DCAS fully reimburse schools paying well above the prevailing wage, or more schools become eligible.

<b>Number of Non-Public Schools in NYC by Enrollment Sizes and Potential Guards</b>				
<b>Size Ranges</b>	<b>School Years</b>		<b>Potential Guards</b>	
	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>Eligible Guards Per School</b>	<b>Total 2023-2024 Guards</b>
1 TO 299	564	548	1	548
300 to 499	140	148	1	148
500 to 999	99	94	2	188
1000 to 1499	24	24	3	72
1500 to 1999	5	5	4	20
2000 to 2500	5	5	5	25
2500 to 3000	0	1	6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>825</b>		<b>1,007</b>

SOURCE: IBO Analysis of New York State Education Department (NYSED) Information and Reporting Services (IRS) Nonpublic School Enrollment data (<https://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/statistics/nonpublic/>)  
*New York City Independent Budget Office*

Finally, greater transparency in the total number of schools receiving reimbursement would be helpful in tracking payments in the City’s financial data. For example, some payments are processed several years later, and there appear to be some charges out of miscellaneous codes which do not fully have all available recipient data. For the total number of participating schools, Council should require DCAS to publish data regarding the number of schools that have applied, and the number of schools accepted into the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and IBO is happy to answer any questions.