

# POLICING-FREE SCHOOLS

WWW.POLICINGFREESCHOOLS.CA

CONNECT@POLICINGFREESCHOOLS.CA

November 7, 2023

## TO CITY OF TORONTO COUNCIL MEMBERS:

RE: Item - 2023.EX9.10 Update on the Toronto Community Crisis Service and Proposed Expansion Plan

My name is Andrea Vásquez Jiménez (she/her/ella), Director and Principal Consultant of Policing-Free Schools, we are dedicated to catalyzing systemic changes and a paradigm shift for the co-creation of transformative, healthy, equitable, life-affirming, liberatory, healing-centred and policing-free educational spaces. One of the ways we do this is by offering support to community organizers, educators, school boards, and post-secondary institutions in ending the practice of police and policing in school, college and university campus programs as an initial and necessary step along the continuum towards the end of all policing and carceral infrastructures, practices, policies, logics and culture, and the co-creation of educational spaces where all can learn and thrive.

With this stated, at Policing-Free Schools, we know that creating conditions for healthy communities, supports the co-creation of healthy schools and vice versa, particularly because schools are a part of our communities. Thriving and healthy community and educational spaces have ample support and resources, not more police presence or policing and carceral measures. Decisions that are made at city hall, either can support the co-creation of healthy schools or be detrimental to its creation.

**We are writing to you a letter in full support for City-wide 24/7 expansion of the Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS). The immediate expansion of the TCCS is evidence-based, in alignment with City of Toronto's commitments, it is fiscally responsible and most importantly will save and support people's lives. We urge you to fund this expansion now, not in 2025, as almost half of the city is still not served by the TCCS. We ask all City of Toronto Council Members to vote to expand City-wide by summer of 2024 and allocate additional funds to create a TCCS that is also responsive to educational spaces.**

Most recently, released October 24th, was the [1 Year Evaluation Report](#) which reflected findings related to TCCS pilot experiences and outcomes after 13 months of operation, from March 31, 2022 to April 30, 2023. TCCS had an 78% overall diversion rate with no police involvement over the 13-month period. TCCS data indicate that of all the calls (all sources) that resulted in dispatch of a Community Crisis Team (CCT), police attendance was requested by CCTs in only 2% of dispatches.

# POLICING-FREE SCHOOLS

WWW.POLICINGFREESCHOOLS.CA

CONNECT@POLICINGFREESCHOOLS.CA

This specific TCCS data is in addition to the [overwhelming evidence including multiple reports and research](#) indicating that civilian-only, consent-based, community-led, peer-oriented crisis service continuum, including non-police mobile teams are necessary.

In June 2020, [City Council adopted 36 decisions](#), one of those decisions, #12 was that, ***“City Council direct the City Manager to develop plans to invest in critical community and social services that better address the root causes of safety and security, and ensure any savings identified from policing reforms are allocated to the following areas...”***, and of those areas included ***“...investment in initiatives to support people experiencing mental health crisis”*** as well another City Council decision, was #18b: ***“...a process whereby when Crisis Assistance Intervention Service is established, that the City would subtract the cost of this new service from future Police budgets”***

With this said, in today’s agenda EX9.10 and specifically item #6, *states that “City Council request the Province of Ontario to fund the expansion of the Toronto Community Crisis Service in alignment with the 75/25 cost-sharing funding model for public health services and to increase investments to close the service gaps in mental health services...”*

**Regardless of how the province moves forward, will you follow through in alignment with the City’s commitments and ensure that any necessary funds for the City-wide 24/7 expansion of the TCCS are deducted from the Toronto Police budget as was promised in 2020 by Council? There is more than enough funding for the City-wide expansion of TCCS.**

In June 2020 another decision made by Council was #5, *“City Council request the Toronto Police Services Board to implement a 24-hour/7-days-a-week program across Toronto for its Mobile Crisis Intervention Team (MCIT) Program”*. We know that this is not evidence-based, it is harmful, fiscally irresponsible and not in alignment with the city’s commitments.

The narrative that any amount of money is needed to support the expansion of specialized police-led or police-involved mental health teams such as MCIT is

# POLICING-FREE SCHOOLS

WWW.POLICINGFREESCHOOLS.CA

CONNECT@POLICINGFREESCHOOLS.CA

non-evidence based, fiscally irresponsible and harmful –it is already known that it is deadly when police are involved in wellness checks and mental health crisis calls. [CBC Report on Deadly Force](#), shows most Canadians killed in police encounters since 2000 included those with mental health issues. Divesting those funds from programs such as the MCIT and investing those funds into the TCCS is another opportunity to ensure that it is properly funded and resourced.

Remember, police overwhelmingly are servicing calls where police are not necessary and even by **Canadian Civil Liberties Association** in their report in 2021, titled *Rethinking Community Safety–A Step Forward for Toronto* asking for police to be detasked and [urging the City of Toronto to shift resources](#) and responsibilities away from the police and towards alternative crisis response and social support mechanisms and echoed by others including John Sewell, [Former Toronto Mayor](#). This is one of multiple opportunities to do just that–increase supports and resources not more policing. As well, the [CCLA states interactions that police have with people, “...facing mental health challenges uses up \\$150M in policing resources...”](#). This is in addition to the Auditor General’s [report](#) released in June 2022 titled: *Review of Toronto Police Service - Opportunities to Support More Effective Responses to Calls for Service A Journey of Change: Improving Community Safety and Well-Being Outcomes*, which makes a **conservative estimate that if even some of these calls are redirected towards non-police responders, the police force could save an estimated 85,000 staff hours over a five-year period**. Funds that again can be reinvested into what is actually evidence based.

**Properly fund and resource the TCCS.**

**What we need is your political will.**

Andrea Vásquez Jiménez, (she/her/ella), M.Ed  
**Director and Principal Consultant,  
Policing-Free Schools**