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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement on the Death of Romy Vilsaint, Haitian 5th grader at P.S. 361K

The Haitian community is outraged by the death of Romy Vilsaint, a fifth grader at P.S. 361 in Brooklyn. Vilsaint was physically bullied and beaten in school, and subsequently died from injuries he sustained. While the death of the 12-year-old Vilsaint is the most recent and widely publicized case of a Haitian student victim of school-related bullying and violence, students of Haitian origin are continuously mistreated in the school system. There is indeed a long history of anti-Haitianism in the New York City public schools. It must stop!

Schools are supposed to be safe spaces, not the place where our children go to die.

The Haitian community along with Romy Vilsaint's family demand that the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) conduct a thorough investigation to uncover the events surrounding his death. Furthermore, we want the NYCDOE to make appropriate policy decisions and take instructional actions to rout out the anti-Haitianism that exists in the school system. Schools should be where our children go for their education, to develop good character and build healthy social connections, and to learn to be good and contributing citizens, **but not to die.**

UNDERSIGNED BY THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS:

The CUNY Haitian Studies Institute, Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project, Haitian Studies Association, Haiti Cultural Exchange, Haitian Educators League for Progress, Association of Haitian Physicians Abroad, KOSANBA, NYS Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte, Haitian American Alliance of New York, Haitian Leadership Forum, HAFECE, HABNET, HAC, Haitian Americans United for Progress, Espas Kreyòl, Little Haiti BK, Haitian Centers Council, Diaspora Community Services, Life of Hope, INCIDIAH, Haitian Diaspora United.

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