

Out of School Youth Coalition

*Advocates For Children Brooklyn Young Mothers' Collective
Children's Aid Society Next Generation Center Citizens Advice Bureau Fedcap
The Collective of Researchers on Educational Disappointment and Desire Turning Point*

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Stuck in the Middle: The Problem of Overage Middle School Students in NYC *Report calls on NYC DOE to address issues confronting overage middle school students*

New York City. The Out of School Youth Coalition, a coalition composed of social service providers, advocates and researchers, released a new report documenting the problem of overage middle school students in New York City. The report was written by Advocates For Children of New York (AFC).

The New York City Department of Education (DOE) does not make public data showing overall numbers for this population, but evidence indicates the problem is substantial. For example, nine middle schools in the Bronx reports that approximately 26% of their students are overage.

“Both educators and advocates are increasingly concerned about the overage middle school population,” said Kim Sweet, Executive Director of AFC. “When you have sixteen-year-olds who can’t get out of seventh or eighth grade, it isn’t good for anybody. The DOE needs to focus attention on this problem.”

Carol Boyd, Parent Leader with the NYC Coalition for Educational Justice (CEJ), says, “The report further confirms what CEJ has been stating for over a year. There needs to be comprehensive middle school reform. CEJ calls on the DOE to incorporate the report’s recommendations into their Campaign for Middle School Success.”

“The lack of program options for overage middle school students is particularly problematic for children who are involved in the child welfare system,” reports Cara Chambers, Supervising Attorney with the Kathryn A. McDonald Education Advocacy Project, The Legal Aid Society, Juvenile Rights Practice. “Many children in foster care fall behind in school because they are forced to change foster homes and schools so frequently. By the time they reach middle school, many of these children have been held over multiple times, have huge gaps in their knowledge base and suffer from low self esteem. Many become truant or drop out.”

The report profiles a diverse cross-section of overage middle school students, identifies promising practices for addressing the problem, and provides detailed recommendations to the DOE. “This report shines a spotlight on one particular component of the middle grade crisis that hasn’t gotten enough attention. Overage middle-schoolers have been a phantom population and these children are definitely ‘stuck in the middle,’” stated Ms. Boyd.

To download the full report, please visit: www.advocatesforchildren.org.

For additional information, the following persons are available to speak to the press:

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