



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Response to Release of NYC FY 19 Preliminary Budget *Budget Would Cut Key Supports for Students who are Homeless*

February 1, 2018 (NEW YORK CITY) — Today, Kim Sweet, Executive Director of Advocates for Children of New York (AFC), issued the following statement in response to the release of the City's Fiscal Year 2019 Preliminary Budget:

We are appalled that the Mayor's Preliminary Budget would eliminate funding for the DOE Bridging the Gap social workers for students living in shelters. Just yesterday, while testifying in Albany, Chancellor Fariña highlighted these social workers as a key accomplishment. The Bridging the Gap social workers are providing critical support to students who are homeless, including providing counseling services, connecting students with academic support, and helping to combat chronic absenteeism.

Over the past five years, the number of students in temporary housing in NYC schools has increased by 50 percent to more than 100,000 students. During this time period, the only increase in DOE staffing targeted to serving this population was the addition of the 43 Bridging the Gap social workers who are only funded through the end of the 2017-2018 school year.

The high number of students in temporary housing is a crisis that requires more of the City's attention and resources. We call on the City to appoint high-level leadership, including a DOE Deputy Chancellor for Highly Mobile Students, to drive system-wide change; to fund 100 Bridging the Gap social workers to assist students living in shelters at schools with high populations of these students; and to begin placing DOE social workers at shelters, including the new shelters the City is opening, to help address barriers to education. Such an infusion of leadership and resources is needed to achieve equity and excellence for students who are homeless.

About Advocates for Children of New York (AFC)

Since 1971, Advocates for Children of New York has worked to ensure a high-quality education for New York students who face barriers to academic success, focusing on students from low-income backgrounds who are at greatest risk for failure or discrimination in school because of their poverty, disability, race, ethnicity, immigrant or English Language Learner status, sexual orientation, gender identity, homelessness, or involvement in the foster care or juvenile justice systems. AFC uses four integrated strategies: free advice and legal representation for families of students; free trainings and workshops for parents, communities, and educators and other professionals to equip them to advocate on behalf of students; policy advocacy to effect change in the education system and improve education outcomes; and impact litigation to protect the right to quality education and compel needed reform.