

March 21, 2023

The Honorable Eric Adams
Mayor, New York City
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Adams:

We are writing out of concern that the FY 24 Preliminary Budget leaves out funding for a number of current initiatives that provide critical support to students and families:

- Mental Health Continuum in 50 high-needs schools (\$5M)
- Outreach to immigrant families in their language about their children's education (\$4M)
- Shelter-based coordinators to support students experiencing homelessness (\$3.3M)
- Early childhood education and care for children who are undocumented (\$10M)

The City launched these programs with city funding that is set to expire in June. With the pandemic having exacerbated the need for mental health support for students and with the increase in newly arrived immigrant families, thousands of whom are living in our City's shelters, the need for these programs has only grown. We strongly urge you to include, if not increase, funding for these initiatives in your Executive Budget.

- 1. Mental Health Continuum (\$5M):** This innovative model, recently highlighted in your [Mental Health Plan](#), is the first-ever cross-agency partnership (DOE, H+H, DOHMH) to help students with significant mental health needs access expedited mental healthcare in person and via video. It supports students at 50 high-needs schools through school partnerships with H+H mental health clinics, dedicated staff to provide students with timely access to mental health services, NYC Well hotline to advise school staff with mental health inquiries, Children's Mobile Crisis Teams to respond to students in crisis, school-based mental health managers, Collaborative Problem Solving training to build school staff capacity to better address student behavioral and mental health needs, and culturally-responsive family engagement. At a time when we have a youth mental health crisis, this model is urgently needed.
- 2. Multi-faceted immigrant family communication and outreach (\$4M):** This initiative strengthens the DOE's communication with immigrant families, many of whom would otherwise be left without important information, by using local ethnic media to share school-related updates, sending paper notices to families' homes, reaching families via phone calls and text messages, and collaborating with immigrant-facing community-based organizations to create and launch information campaigns. Given that more than 329,000 public school students do not have a parent who speaks English fluently and more than 61,000 children of Limited English Proficient parents live in households without broadband internet access, it is critical for this initiative to continue, especially given the recent increase in the number of newly arrived immigrant families in New York City.
- 3. Shelter-based community coordinators (\$3.3M):** Twenty-five of the 100 shelter-based community coordinators the DOE hired this year are funded with city dollars. With more

than 60% of students in shelter chronically absent, these coordinators—who are only just beginning their work—can play an important role in helping students in shelter get to school every day and access needed educational support. At a time when the number of students living in shelter has grown—since July, 13,000 new students living in temporary housing have enrolled in DOE schools, many of whom recently arrived in the U.S. and are living in City shelters—and low attendance is a top concern, it is important to ensure the continuity of this new program.

- 4. Early childhood education and care for children who are undocumented (Promise NYC) (\$10M):** No child should be turned away from an early childhood education program due to their immigration status. The City should continue to be a leader in providing early learning opportunities to children, including those who are undocumented, by extending ACS funding for [Promise NYC](#).

We want to be celebrating the success of these programs and partnering to make them as impactful as possible; instead, we are concerned that they are on the chopping block with no commitment to funding beyond June. These programs are too important to be subject to a “budget dance” with families and staff waiting until the final budget in late June to find out if children will still have access to needed support. Families need to know if their children will be able to stay in their child care program in July, if their children will still have access to needed mental health support, if there will be DOE staff in the shelters over the summer to ensure students have bus service and school placements for September, and if they will continue to get information about their children’s education in a language and mode they can access.

Including and baselining funding in your Executive Budget would show your commitment to the continuation of these important programs and help ensure their stability and success. We strongly urge you to extend and baseline, if not increase, funding for these programs in your Executive Budget.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Children of New York
All Our Kin
Alliance for Quality Education
Association to Benefit Children
Barrier Free Living
CACF - Coalition for Asian American Children and Families
CAMBA, Inc.
CASES (Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Solutions)
Children’s Defense Fund-New York
Chinese American Planning Council, Inc.
Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York
Committee for Hispanic Children and Families
Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)
Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, Inc.
Day Care Council of New York
Dignity in Schools - New York

DRUM - Desis Rising Up and Moving
ECE on the Move
The Education Trust-NY
El Puente
Eskolta School Research and Design
Exodus Transitional Community
Family Homelessness Coalition
Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project
FPWA
Global Kids
Good Shepherd Services
Henry Street Settlement
Hispanic Federation
Homeless Services United
ImmSchools
Jewish Community Center of Staten Island, Inc.
Jumpstart for Young Children
Kennedy Children's Center
Kingsbridge Heights Community Center
La Colmena
LIFT-New York
Lutheran Social Services of New York
Metropolitan Parent Center, Sinergia Inc
New Settlement
New York Foundling
New York Immigration Coalition
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, Inc. (NYLPI)
New York Zero to Three Network
Nido De Esperanza
NYC Coalition for Educational Justice
NYU Education Advocacy Clinic
ParentChild+
Prevent Child Abuse New York
Providence House, Inc.
Safe Horizon
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corporation
SteppingStone Day School
Teachers Unite
The Business Council of New York State, Inc.
Therapy and Learning Center
United for Brownsville
United Neighborhood Houses of New York
United We Stand of New York
Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDco)
YMCA of Greater New York