



Advocates for Children of New York  
Protecting every child's right to learn since 1971

## News Release

### For Immediate Release

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## New Brief Calls for Increased Support for the Growing Number of Immigrant Students in NYC

*Final Budget Must Restore Funding for Key Programs on the Chopping Block and Ensure Schools Have Sufficient Resources to Serve Older Newcomer Youth*

**June 20, 2023 (NEW YORK CITY)** — Today, Advocates for Children of New York (AFC) released a new brief, [\*Rising Enrollment, Shrinking Support: The Urgent Need to Protect Programs for Immigrant Students Amidst Funding Threats\*](#). The brief shows the urgent need to reject proposed cuts and provide targeted investments to support immigrant students and families, including the more than 18,000 new students in temporary housing—most of whom are recently arrived immigrants—who have enrolled in New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) in the past year.

*Rising Enrollment, Shrinking Support* highlights key data points illustrating how NYCPS struggles to effectively educate English Language Learners (ELLs) and communicate with immigrant families, making such investments long overdue. For example:

- The parents of an estimated 68,000 students do not speak English fluently and do not have broadband internet access at home, meaning they face significant barriers to accessing timely information about their children's schools, especially given that most NYCPS communication for families occurs online and via email.
- In 2022, ELLs dropped out of high school at more than three times the rate of their peers who entered the school system as fluent English speakers, while only 67% graduated in four years.
- Even *before* the recent increase in immigration to New York City, the five boroughs were home to an estimated 3,015 newcomer immigrant youth who were high school age, did not yet have a diploma, and were not enrolled in school.

This year, in an attempt to create options for these older youth, the City launched new programs for recently arrived immigrant ELLs at six existing transfer schools in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn. Transfer schools are designed to serve high school students who have fallen behind on credits, but previously only five of them—four of which are in lower Manhattan—focused on working with immigrant youth, making the new programs in the outer boroughs much needed. Unfortunately, however, these six schools have not received sufficient resources to provide the intensive academic and social-emotional support that newcomer youth typically need—such as bilingual social workers, training for school staff, and wrap-around supports from community-based organizations. And while

there are more newcomer youth than ever who could potentially benefit from such programs, the Mayor's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024 takes *no* steps to fill the gap.

Moreover, the Mayor's proposed budget would *eliminate* funding for two programs that are helping the newest New Yorkers navigate the public school system and access a quality education for their children: the immigrant family communications and outreach initiative, which is using multi-faceted approaches to help ensure parents who speak languages other than English can access timely information about their children's schools, and Promise NYC, which is providing hundreds of children who are undocumented with access to subsidized childcare and early learning opportunities for which they would otherwise be ineligible due to immigration status.

"Investments in immigrant students and families are investments in the future of New York City, and right now, the need is greater than ever," said Rita Rodriguez-Engberg, Director of AFC's Immigrant Students' Rights Project. "This year's budget must restore funding for programs that are on the chopping block and ensure schools have the resources they need to support older newcomer youth."

As Mayor Adams and the City Council negotiate the final Fiscal Year 2024 budget, the brief calls for:

- Restoration of funding for immigrant family communications and outreach so families can get key information about their children's schools (\$4M);
- Extension of funding for Promise NYC (\$20M to continuing serving the same number of children for a full year); and
- A \$3M investment to bring the six new ELL programs at transfer schools in line with best practices for educating older newcomer youth.

*Rising Enrollment, Shrinking Support* is available at

[https://www.advocatesforchildren.org/sites/default/files/library/rising\\_enrollment\\_shrinking\\_support.pdf](https://www.advocatesforchildren.org/sites/default/files/library/rising_enrollment_shrinking_support.pdf).

### **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.*