



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

News Release

For immediate release

Contact: Isabella Rieke, *Senior Communications Manager* • 646-871-6739 • irieke@afcnyc.org

Response to the New York City FY 2027 Budget Agreement

June 30, 2026 (NEW YORK CITY) — *Maria Odom, Executive Director of Advocates for Children of New York (AFC), issued the following statement in response to the announcement of the Fiscal Year 2027 city budget agreement.*

We are pleased that the budget agreement announced today includes a commitment to continue for the coming year several impactful education programs that had been supported by funds set to expire later this week: the Sensory Exploration, Education, and Discovery (SEED) Program, restorative justice, the Mental Health Continuum, immigrant family communications and outreach, and Student Success Centers. These programs are currently benefitting thousands of students and families—helping students access mental health services at school, providing immigrant parents with important information about their child's education, and allowing students with intensive sensory needs to obtain support previously available only to families who could afford private sensory gyms. We thank Mayor Mamdani, the City Council, and the many advocates, parents, and students who joined with us in fighting for these essential programs to continue.

We are particularly grateful that the budget includes the increased investment in preschool special education announced by Mayor Mamdani last month. For years, AFC has raised the alarm about the thousands of preschoolers going without their *legally mandated* special education classes and services, even as the City claims to have made pre-K “universal.” We thank the Administration for not only continuing and baselining the \$70 million originally added in last year's budget through one-time funding but nearly doubling this allocation—investing an additional \$67.5 million. This funding will help ensure more young children get the support they need to learn and grow, saving the City money in the long run.

Even as we celebrate the increased investment in preschool special education, we know that the City must go further to, as Mayor Mamdani put it in his Executive Budget address, ensure families of students with disabilities “can get the support they need inside the public school system.” Every day, we hear from parents of students at all grade levels who have been unable to access high-quality special education programs, timely services, and appropriate academic and social-emotional supports. In our experience, those who resort to suing for private school tuition or tutoring do so not because they *want* to—the process is tremendously frustrating and time-consuming—but because they have exhausted all other options. We look forward to working with the

Administration and the City Council to strengthen special education across grade levels and address chronic shortages in the system.

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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.