



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

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Response to the Release of the Fiscal Year 2024 Executive Budget

April 26, 2023 (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 Fiscal Year 2024 Executive Budget:*

We are relieved that the Executive Budget released today restores \$3.3 million for shelter-based DOE Community Coordinators—staff who are playing a critical role in tackling chronic absenteeism and connecting students living in shelter with educational supports. Of the 100 Coordinators hired this year, 25 are supported with City funding that was scheduled to expire at the end of June. We are pleased that the Executive Budget extends funding for this program, particularly in light of the recent increase in the number of students who do not have permanent housing.

In other respects, however, this budget fails to make the investments our students need and threatens the success of several key education initiatives that are just getting off the ground. Slashing funding for programs and services that support our young people should be completely off the table at a time when New York City is receiving increased education funding from the State and has unspent COVID-19 relief.

We are concerned that the Mayor is proposing to cut hundreds of millions of dollars from our City's schools at a time when there are so many unmet needs. Last year, for example, 40% of students were chronically absent; more than one in seven English Language Learners dropped out of high school; and nearly 10,000 preschoolers with disabilities did not receive all their mandated special education services. To the extent that the NYC Public Schools can find savings in its current budget, that money should be reinvested to provide services for preschoolers with disabilities, bolster transfer school programs for ELLs, and expand restorative practices to keep students in school.

We are particularly dismayed that the Executive Budget would cut funding for three education initiatives that were launched with City funding set to expire just over two months from today. In March, over [60 organizations](#) called on the Mayor to extend funding for these programs, which are providing critical support to students and families:

- The Mental Health Continuum, an innovative cross-agency partnership to help students at 50 high-needs schools access expedited mental healthcare;

- Multi-faceted approaches to immigrant family communications and outreach that are helping ensure parents who speak languages other than English get the information they need about their children’s education; and
- Promise NYC, which is giving young children who are undocumented access to child care and early learning opportunities.

With the recent increase in the number of newly arrived immigrant families, as well as the ongoing youth mental health crisis, the need for these programs is greater than ever. If anything, the City should be *increasing* funding—not placing these programs on the chopping block. We appreciate that the City Council included the Mental Health Continuum, immigrant family communications, and Promise NYC in their response to the preliminary budget. In the coming months, we hope that Mayor Adams and the City Council will restore funding for these programs, reject proposed cuts, and [invest funding](#) to meet additional needs in our school communities.

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.