



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn since 1971

Testimony to be submitted to the New York City Council Committee on General Welfare

Re: Intro 1829-2019

October 25, 2021

Advocates for Children of New York appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Intro 1829-2019, which would preclude the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) from requiring parents to bring their children to the intake center (PATH) when a family applies for shelter.

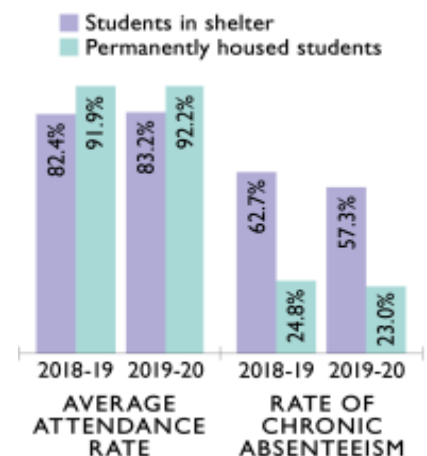
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For 50 years, Advocates for Children has worked to ensure a high-quality education for New York students who face barriers to academic success, focusing on students from low-income backgrounds. We assist and advocate for students whose needs are often overlooked, including students who are homeless.

We strongly support Intro 1829, precluding DHS from requiring a child's presence at PATH when a family applies for shelter. During the pandemic, DHS temporarily stopped requiring children from attending shelter intake appointments. As a result of this change in practice, children did not have to miss school on days when their families applied or reapplied for shelter. This change should be codified and made permanent.

In the two years prior to the pandemic, when DHS required that parents bring their children to PATH, the rate of chronic absenteeism for students in shelter was 2.5 times that of their permanently housed peers. The City should be doing all it can to ensure students experiencing homelessness can get to school every day and ending practices and policies that contribute to chronic absenteeism. **Students should not have to miss school when their families apply for shelter.** Intro 1829 would remove a significant barrier to school attendance and help prevent children, many of whom are already experiencing trauma, from being exposed to the stressful shelter intake process. We urge the Council to move forward with this bill as quickly as possible.





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We appreciate the City Council's consideration of this important issue. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. Please do not hesitate to contact Randi Levine at rlevine@afcnyc.org if you have any questions.