



Advocates for Children of New York

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RISING ENROLLMENT, SHRINKING SUPPORT

The Urgent Need to Protect Programs for Immigrant Students Amidst Funding Threats

Since July 2022, New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) have enrolled more than 18,000 new students in temporary housing, most of whom are recently arrived immigrants. It is critical that schools have the resources they need to support newcomer students and their families, many of whom are seeking asylum in the United States. The Mayor's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024 not only fails to make the necessary investments, but would cut funding from key programs that are helping the newest New Yorkers navigate the public school system and access a quality education for their children.

IMMIGRANT FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

In 2021–22, approximately 42% of New York City Public Schools students spoke a language other than English at home.¹ Many of these families face significant barriers when it comes to accessing timely information about City schools, particularly now that most family-facing communication occurs online and via email. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) indicate that **of the more than 340,000 students who do not have a parent who speaks English fluently, an estimated 68,000 live in households without broadband internet access.**²

In both Fiscal Year 2022 and Fiscal Year 2023, the City allocated \$4 million in one-year funding for immigrant family communication and outreach—funding that has helped strengthen NYCPS's ability to communicate with parents who speak languages other than English, including those with varied levels of literacy and access to digital media. This initiative has, for example, reached families via phone calls and text messages, sent paper notices to students' homes, and collaborated with immigrant-facing community-based organizations to create and launch information campaigns. Though the recent increase in the number of newly arrived immigrant families has made such a multi-faceted approach to communication and outreach more critical than ever, **funding for this work will expire in June 2023 and was not included in the Mayor's Executive Budget.**

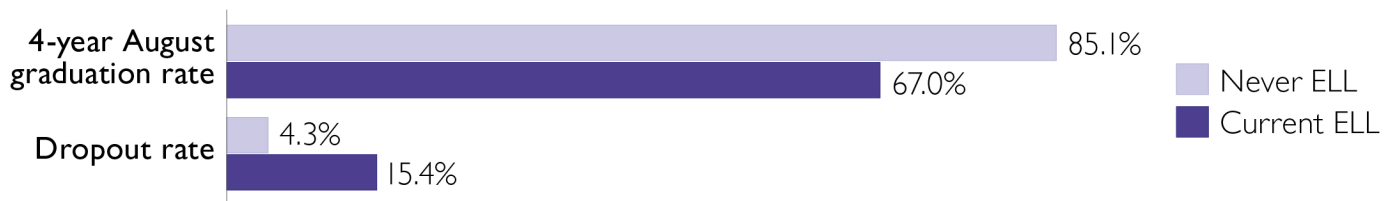
PROMISE NYC

Promise NYC is an initiative that provides children who are undocumented with access to subsidized childcare and early learning opportunities for which they would otherwise not be eligible due to immigration status. Just six months ago, City Hall celebrated the launch of Promise NYC—which helps prepare children for success in school while simultaneously enabling their parents to seek employment,

connect with resources, and establish greater stability in the U.S.—as “a promise kept” and key to the Mayor’s vision for “creating a fairer city for all New Yorkers.”³ The demand for Promise NYC, which is currently serving about 660 children,⁴ has been even greater than anticipated; according to news reports, at least 320 families are on wait lists to participate.⁵ Yet **rather than expand this successful initiative to reach more immigrant children and families, the Mayor’s proposed budget would slash funding for Promise NYC entirely.**

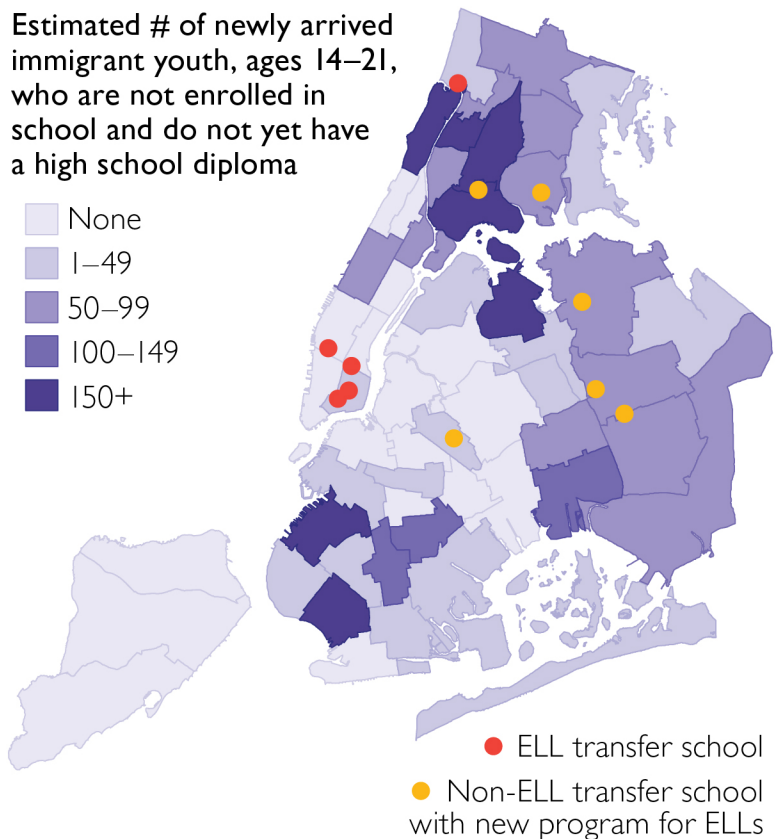
TRANSFER SCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR ELLS

New York City has long struggled to meet the needs of its English Language Learners (ELLs). For example, only 67% of ELLs who started ninth grade in 2018 graduated by August 2022, while **15.4% dropped out of high school—more than triple the dropout rate for students who were never ELLs.**⁶



There is a particular lack of school programs able to serve ELLs who arrive in the U.S. as teenagers. **Even before the recent increase in the number of newly arrived immigrant families, NYC was home to an estimated 3,015 immigrant youth who were high school age, did not yet have a diploma, and were not enrolled in school.**⁷

New York City’s “ELL transfer schools” provide a supportive learning environment for older immigrant students, including intensive English as a New Language (ENL) instruction, bilingual social workers, and partnerships with community-based organizations to provide wrap-around supports. However, there are only five such schools, four of which are in lower Manhattan—while recently arrived immigrant youth live primarily in the Bronx, Queens, parts of southern Brooklyn, and the northern tip of Manhattan. There are an additional 40 transfer schools designed for older youth who have dropped out or fallen behind on credits, but these schools do not focus on ELLs and are not equipped to meet their unique academic and



Shaded areas indicate U.S. Census Bureau Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs), which roughly correspond to the City’s community districts; PUMA-level counts were estimated using data from the American Community Survey (2017–2021 5-year sample) and do not reflect the recent increase in new arrivals. Staten Island not shown to scale.

social-emotional needs. In fall 2022, NYCPS began to address this geographic mismatch by launching new programs for recently arrived immigrant ELLs at six existing non-ELL transfer schools in the outer boroughs. However, **these new ELL programs have not received sufficient resources to provide the intensive support that newcomer youth typically need.** This year, each of the six schools was allocated just \$50,000—not even enough to hire one bilingual staff member.⁸

While the proportion of the 18,000 newly-enrolled students who are high school age is not publicly available, the number of youth ages 14–17 living in shelters run by the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) was 76.5% higher in March 2023 than in March 2022, suggesting that the need for programs that can serve older immigrant ELLs has grown substantially more urgent.⁹ **Yet the Mayor’s proposed budget for the coming year takes no steps to fill the gap, leaving non-ELL transfer schools that want to serve new arrivals without the resources they need to effectively educate such students, who often have significant needs.**



The recent increase in the number of immigrants arriving in New York City highlights the need to bolster education opportunities that integrate newcomers from around the world into our communities. The Fiscal Year 2024 budget must:

- 1. Restore and baseline NYCPS funding for immigrant family communications and outreach (\$4 million).** It is essential that families who speak languages other than English—including the thousands of newly arrived asylum-seekers—have the information they need to navigate the nation’s largest school system and meaningfully participate in their children’s education.
- 2. Extend Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) funding for Promise NYC (\$20 million to continue serving the same number of children for a full year).** It would be unconscionable to pull the rug out from under the hundreds of immigrant families who are currently benefitting from this program; if anything, the City should be *increasing* funding to meet the demand.
- 3. Add comprehensive services at the new ELL programs at existing transfer schools to bring them in line with best practices for educating older newcomer youth (\$3 million).** ELLs have long had one of the lowest high school graduation rates—and highest dropout rates—of any student group, and the recent increase in the number of immigrants arriving in New York City has only increased the need for programs that can provide the robust supports these students need.

NOTES

¹ Does not include students attending 3-K and pre-K programs, charter schools, or high school equivalency programs. NYC Public Schools Division of Multilingual Learners, *SY 2021–22 ELL Demographics At-a-Glance* (December 2022), <https://infohub.nyced.org/reports/academics/ELL-demographic-report>.

² Estimates were tabulated using the 2017–2021 ACS 5-year sample and include all children and youth between the ages of 4 and 21 who were either attending public school (inclusive of charter schools) at the time of survey completion or who were not enrolled in any educational program but did not have a high school diploma or equivalent (e.g., 4-year-olds not attending pre-K and teenagers who left school without graduating). Only parents living in the same household as the student are included; for the approximately 4.5% of children and youth who were not living with either parent at the time of survey completion (e.g., those living with grandparents or other relatives), the “head of household” was used as a proxy for a parent figure. In line with Census Bureau definitions, parents are considered limited English proficient if they reported speaking English “not at all,” “not well,” or “well” on their survey questionnaire; fluency is defined as speaking English “very well” or speaking only English. Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Danika Brockman, Grace Cooper, Stephanie Richards, and Megan Schouweiler, *IPUMS USA: Version 13.0 [2017–2021, ACS 5-year sample]*, Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V13.0>.

³ NYC Office of the Mayor, “Mayor Adams Rolls out ‘Promise NYC’ to Provide Childcare Assistance to Low-Income Families with Undocumented Children for First Time Ever” (December 14, 2022), <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/909-22/mayor-adams-rolls-out-promise-nyc-provide-childcare-assistance-low-income-families-with>.

⁴ Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) testimony, New York City Council Committee on Immigration and Committee on Women and Gender Equity Oversight Hearing – PromiseNYC and Access to Child Care for Immigrants (June 13, 2023).

⁵ Reema Amin, “600 children would lose child care with end of free NYC program for undocumented families,” *Chalkbeat New York* (May 18, 2023), <https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2023/5/18/23729179/promise-nyc-undocumented-immigrants-child-care-toddlers-preschool>.

⁶ NYC Public Schools, *City Graduation Results for Cohorts 2012 to 2018 (Classes of 2016 to 2022)*, available at <https://infohub.nyced.org/reports/academics/graduation-results>.

⁷ Estimated using data from the American Community Survey (2017–2021 5-year sample). “Newly arrived immigrant youth” are defined as young people between the ages of 14 and 21 who were foreign-born, did not have a high school diploma or equivalent, and had lived in the U.S. for 0–3 years at the time of the survey. IPUMS USA, *supra* note 2.

⁸ NYC Public Schools Division of Finance, School Allocation Memorandum No. 86, FY 2023 (February 7, 2023), https://www.nycenet.edu/offices/finance_schools/budget/DSBPO/allocationmemo/fy22_23/fy23_docs/fy2023_sam086.htm.

⁹ NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) Data Dashboard Tables (FYTD 2023 and FY 2022), available at <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dhs/about/stats-and-reports.page>. March 2023 is the most recent month for which data are publicly available.