

Call to Action to Sustain Education Programs Funded with Expiring Federal COVID-19 Relief

SEPTEMBER 2023

We call on our elected leaders to take immediate action to sustain critical education programs currently supported by temporary federal COVID-19 stimulus funding set to run dry in June 2024.

Over the last few years, New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) benefitted from more than \$7 billion in federal stimulus funding. NYCPS used this influx of funding not only to help address temporary pandemic-related challenges, but also to launch and expand a range of essential programs to meet needs that existed long before the pandemic—but had gone unmet or under-funded—and that will remain long after the federal COVID-19 relief funds expire. Notable examples of this year's investments include:

- **\$456 million for 3-K**, allowing the City to guarantee a seat for every three-year-old in 12 of the City's 32 community school districts and doubling the number of children participating in this early learning program from 17,500 in 2019-20 to 35,700 in 2022-23.
- **\$96 million for preschool special education**, helping the City address the significant shortage of legally required preschool special education classes, helping programs recruit and retain certified special education teachers, and adding service providers and staff to help with the development of service plans.
- **\$67 million to hire 450 school social workers**, allowing nearly 194,000 students to gain access to a social worker; even with this investment, there is only one school social worker for every 435 students enrolled in NYCPS schools and more than 240,000 students do not have access to a full-time social worker.
- **\$65 million for school nurses**, enabling every school building to have a nurse; prior to the pandemic, at least 137 schools serving a combined 70,000 students did not have a school nurse.
- **\$55 million to expand community schools**, increasing the number of schools that provide students and their families with wrap-around supports from 266 in 2020-21 to more than 400.
- **\$22.5 million to launch the Sensory Exploration, Education, and Discovery (SEED) program**, which provides students with intensive sensory needs with small group support from occupational and physical therapists so they are better able to function in the classroom.

- **\$12 million for restorative justice practices**, allowing more schools to use alternatives to exclusionary discipline that keep students in the classroom while helping them build and repair relationships; this federal funding represents the majority of the City's investment in restorative justice.
- **\$10 million to hire 60 school psychologists and 15 family workers** to address delays in the evaluation process for students with disabilities.
- **\$10 million to hire bilingual staff to support the education of English Language Learners**, only 46% of whom graduated from high school in four years even before the pandemic.
- **\$9 million for shelter-based coordinators** to help children who are homeless get to school every day and access needed educational support.
- **\$7 million for literacy instruction and dyslexia programming**, helping to support screening, new specialized programs for students with dyslexia, and targeted reading interventions in dozens of schools.
- **\$7 million for translation and interpretation services**, which are particularly vital at a time when more than 40% of students speak a language other than English at home and when the need has grown.
- **\$3.3 million for Student Success Centers in 34 high schools**, where trained youth leaders build a culture of college-going in their schools and help their peers with the college admissions process.

The impending expiration of federal COVID-19 funds not only threatens the continuation of these newly-launched and expanded programs; temporary federal funds have also been used to stave off more drastic budget cuts at schools that have seen enrollment declines (\$160M in FY 24) and to maintain longstanding initiatives jeopardized by pandemic-related fiscal challenges. As just one example, NYCPS is using:

- **\$33M in federal COVID-19 funding for Learning to Work**—which provides support to over-age, under-credited students to help them earn a high school diploma and develop a post-secondary plan—representing more than 70% of the program's total budget.

This summary does not reflect every investment NYCPS has made using temporary federal stimulus dollars, but underscores the enormously high stakes for students—especially those whose needs have too often been overlooked—as well as the urgent need for elected leaders to act before this funding runs dry. In total, we estimate that NYCPS is investing more than \$1 billion in programs and supports to meet needs that will persist far beyond the funding's expiration date.

We are at a critical juncture. Our elected leaders must choose between allowing these programs to end on their watch—dealing a massive setback to public education—or taking action to identify new funding sources so students can continue receiving critical supports and services. We are counting on our elected leaders to sustain essential education programs and build on the progress made, leaving a lasting impact on the lives of students for years to come.

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

Abundant Waters After-School
Adaptive Design Association, Inc.
Advocates for Children of New York
AHRC NYC
All My Children Daycare Inc.
All Our Kin
Alliance for Quality Education
The Arc New York
Astor Services
B'Above Worldwide Institute Family Child
Care Network
Barrier Free Living
Birch Family Services
Block Institute Pre-K
Bloom Creative Arts and Preschool
Bronx Developmental Disabilities Council
Brooklyn Developmental Disabilities Council
CAMBA
CASA-NYC
Catholic Guardian Services
Center for Independence of the Disabled, New
York (CIDNY)
Child Care Solutions Inc.
The Child Center of NY
Child Study Center of New York
Children's Aid
Children's Defense Fund-New York
Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc.
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
City Year New York
Coalition for Asian American Children and
Families
The Coalition for Community Schools
Excellence
Committee for Hispanic Children and Families
Commonpoint Queens

The Community-Based Education Movement
Community Resources Staten Island
Cooke School and Institute
Council of Family and Child Care Agencies
(COFCCA)
Counseling In Schools, Inc.
Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation
Day Care Council of New York
Dignity in Schools Campaign-New York (DSC-
NY)
DreamYard
DRUM – Desis Rising Up and Moving
ECE On the Move
The Education Trust-New York
Educators For Excellence - NY
El Puente
exalt
Expanded Schools
Faith in New York
Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project
Four Freedoms Democratic Club
FPWA
Girls for Gender Equity
Global Kids
Goddard Riverside
Good Shepherd Services
Graham Windham
Grand St. Settlement
The Guild for Exceptional Children, Inc.
Harlem Dowling-West Side Center
HeartShare St.Vincent's Services
Hispanic Federation
Homeless Services United
Hudson Guild
ICCD
INCLUDEnyc

IntegrateNYC
InterAgency Council of Developmental
Disabilities Agencies, Inc.
Jackson Developmental Center
JCCA
Jeremiah Program
Jewish Community Center of Staten Island, Inc.
Just Kids Early Childhood Learning Center
KAVI (Kings Against Violence Initiative)
Kennedy Children's Center
Keshet Learning Center
Kingsbridge Heights Community Center
Latino U College Access (LUCA)
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
LEAP
LERU Multi Service Agency
Lexington School for the Deaf
Literacy Academy Collective
Little Meadows Early Childhood Center
Lutheran Social Services of NY
Make the Road New York
Manhattan Developmental Disabilities Council
Manhattan Mothers & Others
Marie Pense Center
Metropolitan Parent Center, Sinergia Inc.
Millennium Development
Mobilization for Justice, Inc.
Moms United for Black Lives NYC
Mosholu Montefiore Community Center
Mouse
NAACP New York State Conference of
Branches
NASW-NYC
New Alternatives for Children
New Settlement
New Settlement Parent Action Committee
New York Appleseed

New York Association of School Psychologists
(NYASP)
New York Center for Child Development
New York Charter Schools Association
New York City Bar Association
The New York City Coalition for Children with
Special Needs (Birth to Five), Inc.
New York Edge
New York Immigration Coalition
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, Inc.
(NYLPI)
New York Legal Assistance Group
New York State Alliance for Children with
Special Needs
New York State Network for Youth Success
New York State Society for Clinical Social
Work (NYSSCSW)
New York Urban League
NIA Community Services Network
Nido De Esperanza NYC
North Brooklyn Development Corporation
NY Coalition for Educational Justice
NYC Arts in Education Roundtable
NYC Coalition for Educating Families Together
NYU School of Law Education Advocacy Clinic
OmniLearn
Operation Exodus Inner City
The Opportunity Network
Parents for Inclusive Education
Parents Supporting Parents NY
Partners for Dignity & Rights
Partnership with Children
Phipps Neighborhoods
PROSPECT KIDS LLC
Providence House, Inc.
QCDD (Queens Council on Developmental
Disabilities)
QSAC, Inc.
Queens Centers for Progress

Queens Community House Beacon
Community Center @ PS149
Queens Community House-Childcare
Network
Restorative Justice Initiative
Rivendell School
Rose F. Kennedy University Center for
Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
Sanctuary for Families
Sauti Yetu Center for African Women, Inc.
Seamen's Society for Children and Families
Small Wonder Preschool, Inc.
South Asian Youth Action (SAYA)
Southeast Bronx Neighborhood Centers, Inc.
Special Education Law and Advocacy Clinic,
Cardozo Law
Special Support Services
St. Dominic's Torch and Annex
St. Mary's Hospital for Children

Stanley M Isaacs Neighborhood Center
SteppingStone Day School
Teachers Unite
Team First, Inc
Therapy and Learning Center
uAspire
UFT/UNECE
UJA-Federation of New York
United for Brownsville
United Neighborhood Houses
United We Stand of New York
University Settlement Society of New York
Urban Youth Collaborative
Volunteers of America-Greater New York
Wediko, NY at The Home for Little Wanderers
Wiggle Room
YMCA of Greater New York
Zone 126

Updated January 12, 2024