



CITY OF NEW YORK
**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD
FOUR**

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February 28, 2024

Hon. Eric Adams
Mayor
City of New York
City Hall, New York 10007

Re: Proposed Department of Education Budget Cuts

Dear Hon. Mayor Adams,

At Manhattan Community Board 4's (MCB4) regularly scheduled meeting on February 7, 2024, the Board voted 34 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 2 present but not eligible to vote, to strongly urge you, as Mayor, for the comprehensive funding and protection of vital educational programs and services for schools within Community Board 4.

We also want to express our gratitude for the active participation of New York City Council Member Gale Brewer during our regularly scheduled Arts, Culture, Education, and Schools (ACES) committee meeting on January 8, 2024. Her valuable input on this issue underscores the collaborative efforts needed at the City and State levels to address our educational system's current challenges.

Background:

Last November, Mayor Eric Adams proposed a 5% budget reduction across all City agencies. We write to you with deep concern about the far-reaching implications these cuts would have for the Department of Education (DOE) and youth programming. While we welcome the recent news that the administration reversed some of the most draconian budget cuts for community schools and the Summer Rising program, we remain concerned that the proposed \$100 million cut to our public schools in the next fiscal year jeopardizes a wide array of programs which is crucial for the well-being and development of our students.

The proposed budget cuts to the DOE would impact various programs, ranging from \$50 million for the city's prekindergarten and 3-K programs to \$20 million for the popular

Summer Rising program and the elimination of programming hours and days for some middle schools. Without sufficient aid from the State, the looming prospect of further cuts in the Mayor's preliminary budget in April adds to the uncertainty and challenges faced by our public schools.

Moreover, a hiring freeze and vacancy reduction at the DOE's central office are currently in effect, raising concerns about the potential elimination of vital roles. The long-lasting effects of this freeze on hiring, especially its impact on teaching positions, remain unclear. With an estimated total of \$2.1 billion in cuts, the DOE's overall budget of approximately \$37.5 billion for this school year hangs in the balance.

Committee Discussion:

During our ACES committee discussion, we highlighted our concerns regarding the city's hiring and budget freeze and its adverse effects on services for vulnerable children. Of particular concern is the potential for these budgetary measures to result in egregious violations of the rights of students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and those in temporary housing.

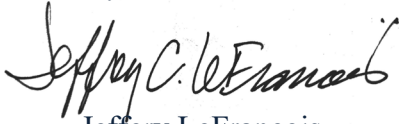
Therefore, we implore you to safeguard the following crucial programming from any additional cuts:

1. **After-school Programming:** In MCB4, the Department of Youth & Community Development provides after-school programming support to three middle schools and one combined middle school/high school, namely City Knoll, Quest to Learn, LAB, and PPAS.
2. **Pre-K and 3K Seats:** In MCB4, our schools at PS 11, PS 33, PS 51, PS 111, and PS 212 collectively offer approximately 250-350 3K/PreK seats. Currently, these seats are nearly at full capacity, with a substantial waitlist, particularly for 3K and Pre-K Extended Day programs.
3. **Social Service Workers:** MCB4 has been instrumental in advocating for and successfully securing social workers at PS33, PS 51 & PS 111. However, there is a persistently high demand for additional support, encompassing after-school programming in all MCB4 elementary schools, shelter tutoring, and trauma-informed training for school and shelter staff.

Furthermore, we are alarmed by the possibility that, with such significant budget cuts, schools may struggle to comply with the newly enacted State law limiting the number of students per class. Adequate State funding is imperative to ensure the successful implementation of this law.

We appreciate your attention to these pressing issues affecting New York City schools. Protecting our educational programs is paramount to our students' well-being and future success. We trust that, with your leadership, we can find sustainable solutions to mitigate the impact of these proposed budget cuts.

Sincerely,



Jeffery LeFrancois
Chair
Community Board 4



Matt Green
Co-Chair
ACES Committee



Josephine Ishmon
Co-Chair
ACES Committee

CC: NYC Department of Education, Chancellor David C. Banks
New York City Council Member Erik Bottcher
New York City Council Member Gale A. Brewer
New York City Council Member Rita Joseph, Chair, Education Committee