

KEEP THE PROMISES!

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Last year the mayor and the City Council matched the historic commitment that the state made to reverse the chronic, multi-generational under-funding of the New York City public schools by agreeing to a \$2.2 billion increase over four years. Today the city broke that promise to kids. The city on May 1 reversed the approximately \$450 million it had promised in the 2008 adopted budget.

The governor and state legislature — despite facing daunting budget deficits actually increased their commitment to kids when the state appropriated \$600 million in new funds for NYC public schools. Compare that to the city's reduction of promised funds in the wake of the substantial multi-billion dollar surplus.

In response, a coalition of parents, educators, and elected officials from across the city gathered this afternoon in opposition to the \$450 million in cuts to education funding that would reduce or eliminate services and programs in many Bronx schools and in schools throughout the city. The Coalition will also announce an advertising campaign urging New York City residents to ask the Mayor to keep his promise and fund the city's public schools.

A Coalition of Bronx elected officials, representatives of the "Keep the Promises" Coalition of organizations fighting to restore budget cuts proposed for New York City public schools including UFT President Randi Weingarten; Campaign for Fiscal Equity; Alliance for Quality Education; ACORN; New York City Coalition for Education Justice, along with parents, teachers and students will come together to denounce an executive budget that demonstrates the wrong choices and priorities for the city, and makes it harder for our children to thrive.

The Coalition will also announce an advertising campaign aimed at holding the City accountable to its promise to help New York City kids succeed. Radio, TV, and print advertisements highlight that while New York State is keeping its investment promise to help students get the education they need, the city has not fulfilled its word and asks New York City residents to tell the Mayor and the City Council to keep their pledge and fund public schools.

"We're asking our kids to meet higher standards at school, but the budget announced today takes away money that could be used to ensure smaller class sizes, safer schools, access to pre-K, and quality educators. The Mayor's proposed \$450 million cut to next year's education budget is not belt-tightening; it is a matter of priorities. The Mayor rightly understood it was important to keep his \$400 promise to homeowners and to roll some of the surplus as a cushion. He should have given the same consideration to the importance of the 4-year promise the city made to our children. He has broken that promise, and we have five weeks to work with him and the City Council to reverse it," said Weingarten.

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Ernest Logan, president of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators, added: “We are extremely disappointed that New York City has chosen not to uphold its financial commitment to our children. School leaders have already dealt with \$180 million in cuts, which caused students to lose out on vital programs. They should not be forced to prepare for what millions more will cause. New York State understands the importance of education, especially in tough fiscal times, and now it’s the city’s responsibility to ensure education remains a priority. Our children deserve no less.”

“New York City is going back on its word and wants to take away funding that would reduce or eliminate services and programs in many Bronx schools, especially high-needs schools and/or those that are struggling academically. Albany met its commitment of \$600 million more for New York City’s public schools, but the city’s budget illustrates a broken promise to public schools in the Bronx and throughout New York City,” said Jaime Estades, director of advocacy at the Alliance for Quality Education.

Bronx elected officials attending the event include: Borough President Adolfo Carrion; Assembly members Michael Benedetto, Aurelia Greene, Peter M. Rivera, Jose Rivera; City Council members Carmen Arroyo, Oliver Kopell, Annabel Palma, Joel Rivera, Larry Seabrook.

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Members of the Keep The Promises Coalition include Campaign for Fiscal Equity; Alliance for Quality Education; Council of School Supervisors & Administrators; United Federation of Teachers; Hispanic Federation; New York City Central Labor Council; NY ACORN; Education Voters of New York; NYC Coalition for Educational Justice; New York Immigration Coalition; UNITE HERE; SEIU Local 32-BJ; NAACP Metropolitan Council; El Centro de la Hospitalidad; Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund; Coalition for Asian American Children; representatives of the Chancellor’s Parent Advisory Council; Advocates for Children; The Center for Arts Education; Coalition for Educational Excellence for English Language Learners; Make the Road New York; New Settlement Parent Action Committee; Crotona Committee to Stop the Violence; Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition; South Brooklyn Youth Consortium Inc.; Coalition for Asian American Children and Families; Highbridge Community Life Center; National Center for Schools and Communities, Cypress Hills Advocates for Education; Working Families Party; Citizen Action of New York; Coalition for After School Funding; Time Out From Testing; Class Size Matters.