



Testimony of

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Before the
New York City Council
Finance and Education Committees

Regarding the
New York City
Fiscal Year 2017 Preliminary Budget

March 16, 2016

Good afternoon. My name is Ariel Savransky and I am the Policy Associate for Food and Economic Security at Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc. (CCC). CCC is a 72-year-old, privately supported, independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring every New York child is healthy, housed, educated and safe. I would like to thank Chairs Ferreras-Copeland and Dromm, as well as the members of the City Council Committees on Finance and Education for holding today's hearing regarding the City's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2017 and Education.

The Preliminary Budget funds a number of previously announced initiatives for children and families, related to education, behavioral health and addressing homelessness. Unfortunately, however, the Preliminary Budget failed to include a number of critical programs and initiatives that are important to addressing income inequality and ensuring the well-being of New York City's children and youth. Notably, as it relates to education, the Preliminary Budget fails to expand Universal free lunch to elementary and high school students and cuts summer programming for nearly 31,000 middle school students.

The New York City Public School System serves over 1 million students from prekindergarten through high school in over 1,800 schools with over 75,000 teachers. Unfortunately, only 30.4% of students in grades 3-8 passed English Language Arts Common Core in School Year 2015¹ and only 35.2% of students in grades 3-8 passed the Math Common Core test in School Year 2015.² And while there has been improvement, still only 64.2% of students graduated high school within 4 years in 2014.³

We appreciate the City Council focusing on the Education issues in the Preliminary Budget. We look forward to working together with you to urge the Administration to include the resources needed in the Executive Budget, to ensure every New York City child receives the high quality education that they need and deserve.

Preliminary Budget Proposals to Improve Educational Outcomes for Children

CCC appreciates Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Farina's commitment to improving academic outcomes while also promoting children's mental health and physical well-being. Specifically, the de Blasio Administration has worked to promote programs that have the potential to be life-altering for countless NYC children including: expanding prekindergarten to every 4-year old, expanding after-school programs to over 100,000 middle school students, creating 130 new community schools and working to improve school climates.

The Preliminary Budget includes the funding for a number of initiatives that the Mayor had previously announced related to his Equity and Excellence Agenda and the Mental Health Roadmap, Thrive NYC.

¹ Citizens' Committee for Children. Keeping Track Online (accessed March 10, 2016). <http://data.cccnewyork.org/data/map/153/reading-test-scores-common-core-3rd-through-8th-grades#153/a/2/243/21/a>

² Citizens' Committee for Children. Keeping Track Online (accessed March 10, 2016). <http://data.cccnewyork.org/data/map/158/math-test-scores-common-core-3rd-through-8th-grades#158/a/2/276/21/a>

³ Citizens' Committee for Children. Keeping Track (accessed March 10, 2016). <http://data.cccnewyork.org/data/map/121/graduation-rate#121/a/2/205/20/a>

The Equity and Excellence Agenda includes many critical foundational components for children to succeed in school, but they will not be fully implemented until 2026. While the Preliminary Budget is the first step towards their implementation, we do hope that some of these initiatives can be implemented more expeditiously.

That said, CCC supports the investments made in the Preliminary Budget aimed at improving educational outcomes for children including:

- \$16.41 million for literacy coaches for 2nd graders. By FY2019, all second graders will have access to a reading specialist.
- \$20.75 million for Algebra for All. By FY2022, all 8th grade students will have access to algebra and all students will complete algebra no later than 9th grade.
- \$12.55 million for AP for All. By FY2022, the students at all 400 NYC high schools will have access to Advanced Placement (AP) classes.
- \$8.79 million for College Visits and Access. By FY2018, all middle school students will have the opportunity to visit a college campus and high school students will have tailored supports to help them pursue college.
- \$15.198 million for Single Shepherd. In FY2016, every student in Grades 6-12 from Districts 7 in the Bronx and 23 in Brooklyn will be paired with a single person to help guide them through high school and provide them with academic, social and emotional supports.
- \$2.97 million for District-Charter Collaboration. By FY 2018, up to 50 partnerships between district and charter schools will be formally created. Teams of “Mentor” and “Learner” schools will be paired to share best practices on English Language Learners or restorative justice. Additional co-located schools will focus on building a campus community.

Notably, absent is funding to implement Computer Science for All, which will provide computer science education for every student in elementary, middle and high school by FY2026.

We also support the investments from Thrive NYC related to education, which aim to better meet the behavioral health needs of children, particularly while they are at school. Specifically, we support the following investments:

- \$8.11 million for Social Emotional Learning for UPK, professional development for social workers in prekindergarten programs
- \$6.2 million for Mental Health Services for 100 High Need High Schools
- \$80,000 for Mental Health Trainings (FY 17 only)
- \$5.38 million for the “Safe and Supportive Opportunity Program” (restorative justice programs)
- \$862,000 for Restorative Practices training for District 18 and Warning Card School.

Finally, the Preliminary Budget did include some additional proposals related to the Mayor’s community schools, special education services and helping homeless children attend their schools of origin. We support all of these proposals:

- \$5.58 million for Transition Coordination Centers to support special education students with career/college planning services

- \$1.08 million for doctors in Renewal Schools
- \$1.57 million for Professional Development in Renewal Schools
- \$378,000 for data tracking and sharing for Renewal Schools
- \$2.26 million for Translation and Interpretation
- \$84,000 for transportation coordination for students in temporary housing

Additional Investments in Education Needed in the Executive Budget

While we have seen improvements in educational outcomes, there remains much more work to be done. We hope to see additional investments in the Executive Budget that are aimed at improving the educational environment, including investments in special education services, reducing class size, increasing access to guidance counselors and restorative justice programs, making lunch universally free, and increasing access to physical education.

a) Universal Lunch

In addition, we are strongly urging the Administration to finally complete Mayor de Blasio’s campaign promise to implement universal free lunch for all public school students.

Unfortunately, too many children who could benefit from school meal programs do not participate. For example, more than 400,000 New York City public school children – over half of whom are income-eligible for free or reduced-price meals – do not participate in school lunch. A number of these children choose not to eat school meals because they do not want others to label them “poor.” To help destigmatize school meals and ultimately improve participation, universal school lunch should be implemented citywide.

As a result of the implementation of universal school lunch in stand-alone middle schools, an average of 7500 additional students eat lunch each day – an increase of 1,322,000 additional meals served throughout the 2014-2015 school year.⁴ This shows that poverty and the poverty stigma contribute to the low levels of participation. According to data from the Robin Hood Foundation, parents would save an average of \$900 per year per child if school lunches were free for all students. The Robin Hood Foundation estimates that a healthy lunch prepared by a parent would cost about \$5⁵, translating into \$900 per year with 180 school days.

A universal school lunch program would also make the program less burdensome to administer. Each year, most parents must fill out an application that requires the disclosure of personal financial information, while in most schools staff must, each day, determine which students do and do not have to pay for their meals. Making lunch universal would eliminate these tasks.

The Mayor has the authority to stop charging school fees for school lunches, as was done with the school breakfast program in 2003. A universal lunch program will improve school lunch participation by almost 9 percent in elementary schools – or an additional 30,000 additional children eating each day – and an estimated 20 percent in high schools – or an additional 17,000

⁴ Community Food Advocates. Campaign Key Points, 2015.

http://media.wix.com/ugd/fce5d8_9de71cd941824627bcd773be3912e2b9.pdf

⁵ Robin Hood Foundation. Metric Equations, 2014. https://www.robinhood.org/sites/default/files/user-uploaded-images/Robin%20Hood%20Metrics%20Equations_BETA_Sept-2014.pdf

children eating each day.⁶ This increase in participation will, in turn, increase federal and state reimbursement - by a projected \$59 million - for school meals and create more jobs. In addition to ensuring children eat healthy lunches, these funds would be reinvested into the local economy.

Finally, we are incredibly grateful to the City Council and Public Advocate Tish James for their relentless advocacy on this issue.

b) Physical Education

Children who engage in physical activity are more likely to have increased concentration, persist in learning and exhibit other positive classroom behaviors.⁷ Students also develop other critical skills like teamwork and leadership through physical education classes. Increased physical activity can also help combat the epidemic levels of obesity in New York City. Quality physical education during the school day not only provides a number of health benefits to children but also improves a child's academic achievement, socio-emotional skills and overall well-being.

It is critical that New York City's public schools meet the minimum physical education requirements related to time, frequency, personnel and space, set by the State Board of Education.

The administration took a very important first step last year by investing \$6.6 million, which led to the creation of PE Works, an innovative program piloted in 50 city schools in 8 school districts this year. PE Works worked with the individual schools to develop an individualized plan to meet state requirements. We urge the administration to invest an additional \$18 million to expand this program to all 32 school districts.

Finally, we are also calling on the administration to make a significant investment in the capital budget. Given that that FY16 budget funded a system-wide analysis of PE barriers and needs, we urge the administration to include capital funding in the FY17 budget to begin to address the capital needs identified in the analysis.

c) Summer Programs

CCC is very disappointed that the Preliminary Budget failed to include \$20.35 million to enable nearly 31,000 middle school students to attend summer programs this year. Summer programs prevent summer learning loss, while enabling parents to work knowing their children are somewhere safe. While we appreciate DOE's investment in summer school programs for high school students, middle school students must also be positively engaged in July and August. We hope the City Council will partner with CCC and the Campaign for Children to strongly urge the administration to include this funding in the Executive Budget—the adopted budget is too late.

Attached to this testimony are maps showing the cuts to summer programs by community district and Council District.

⁶ Community Food Advocates. Benefits of Expanding Universal Free School Lunch To High School and Elementary Schools Under Community Eligibility Provision(CEP), December 2015.

<http://www.lunch4learningnyc.org/>

⁷ Florence MD, Asbridge M, Veugelers PJ. *Diet quality and academic performance*. Journal of School Health. 2008 Apr; 78(4):209-15.

d) Educational Stability for foster children:

For many years, educational stability for foster children has been both the federal and state law—meaning that when children enter foster care or change placements, the district is supposed to ensure that foster children remain in their school of origin unless it is contrary to their best interests. Child welfare agencies often faced barriers because this was only in child welfare law. To resolve this issue, when the federal government reauthorized the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), educational stability for foster children was included.

This is a very important issue for New York City to resolve. Before any child is placed in a foster home, the City should be assessing whether the child should be remaining in their school of origin and making plans accordingly. CCC urges the administration to a) require DOE and ACS to make a joint plan; b) fund transportation costs; and c) fund any additional administrative or social work costs to finally implementing educational stability requirements.

e) Restore \$2.4 million and add \$2.6 million for restorative justice programs

In Fiscal Year 2016, the City Council added \$2.4 million to pilot a restorative justice program in 15 schools with high suspension rates. We urge the administration to restore and baseline the City Council funds so that the programs can remain in these 15 schools and then add \$2.6 million so that more schools can participate.

f) Add 100 MSWs to Help Homeless Children

The thousands of homeless children throughout New York City face a myriad of needs, as they valiantly try to focus in school while going “home” to a shelter each evening. Adding these professionals would go a long way towards helping to address these needs including arranging transportation, finding a quiet place for homework, receiving services such as tutoring, and ensuring IEP plans are being implemented.

g) Restore and Baseline City Council Initiatives

CCC appreciates the City Council’s long-standing commitment to investing critical resources into the Department of Education to strengthen the programming available to public school children. We will be urging the Administration to restore and baseline the initiatives supported by the City Council in Fiscal Year 2016 and we hope the City Council will do so as well.

Specifically, these are:

- \$125,000 for C.H.A.M.P.S. fitness program in 200 middle schools
- \$400,000 for Chess in the Schools, Inc.
- \$250,000 for Child Mind Institute
- \$475,000 for community schools
- \$1.6 million for the Dropout Prevention and Intervention initiative
- \$1.55 million for Middle School Expanded Learning Time
- \$1 million for Small Schools Athletic League
- \$9.69 million total for Teacher’s Choice (school supplies)
- \$3.5 million total for Urban Advantage
- \$245,000 for the Jill Chaifetz Helpline operated by Advocates for Children
- \$200,000 for an LGBT Students’ Liaison and professional development for public school teachers

- \$275,000 for Making Opportunities for Upgrading Schools and Education (MOUSE) to provide technology, digital media and computer science training for middle and high school students
- \$130,000 for NASA GLOBE Program (NASA's Global Learning Observations to Benefit the Environment Program) in 22 schools
- \$250,000 for STEM Teacher's College (a pilot program in 10 schools to better incorporate technology in the classroom for low-income students)

Conclusion

In conclusion, we appreciate all of the efforts both the Administration and the City Council are making to strengthen the NYC Public School System for the over 1.1 million children we educate each year. We look forward to continuing to partner with the City Council and our colleagues at the DOE.

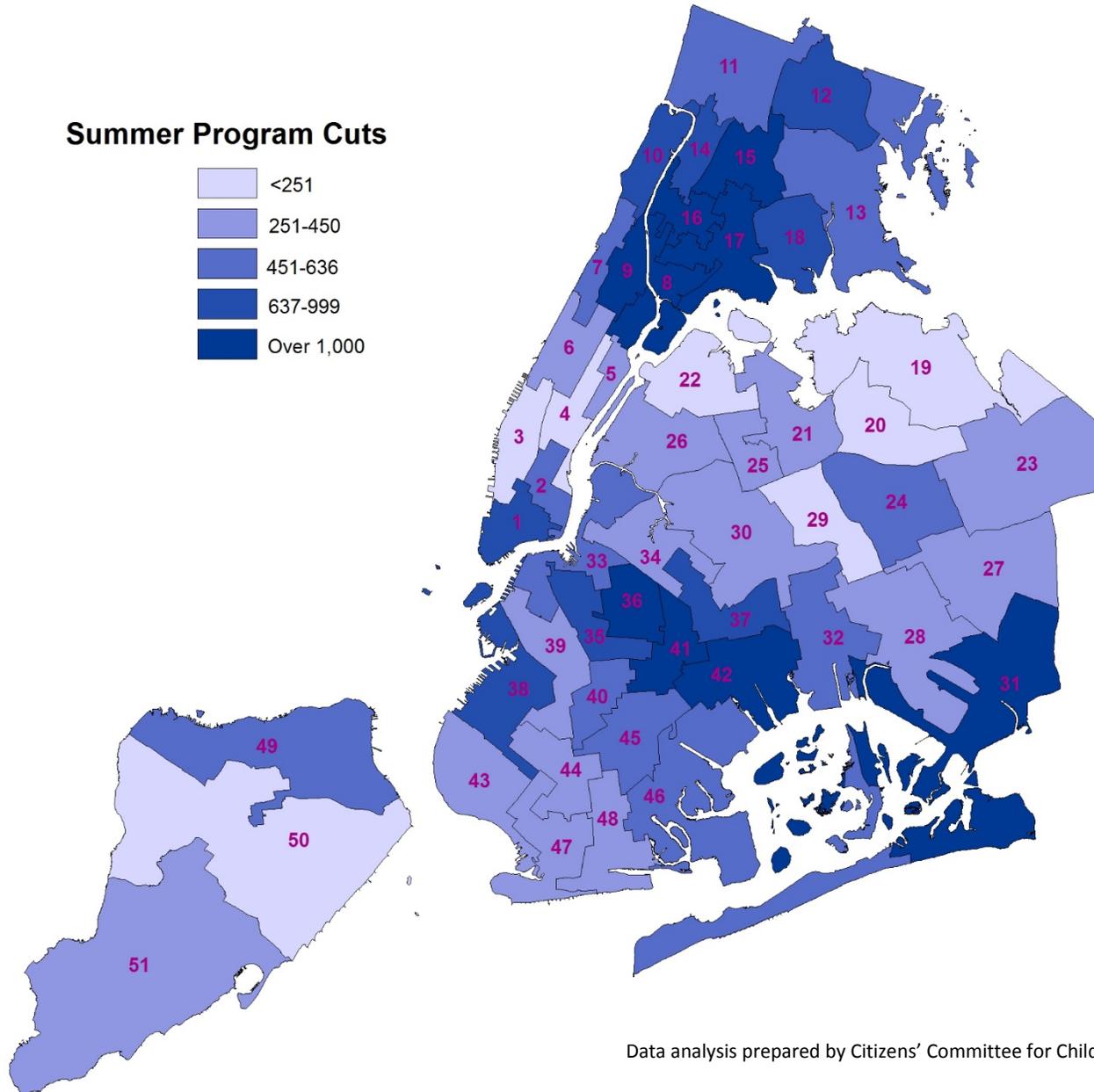
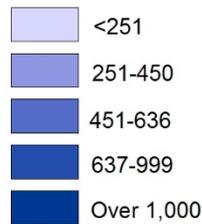
Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The City FY 2017 Budget Proposes to Cut Summer Programming for 31,000 Middle School Children throughout New York City



Cuts by City Council District - FY 2017

Summer Program Cuts



Data analysis prepared by Citizens' Committee for Children.

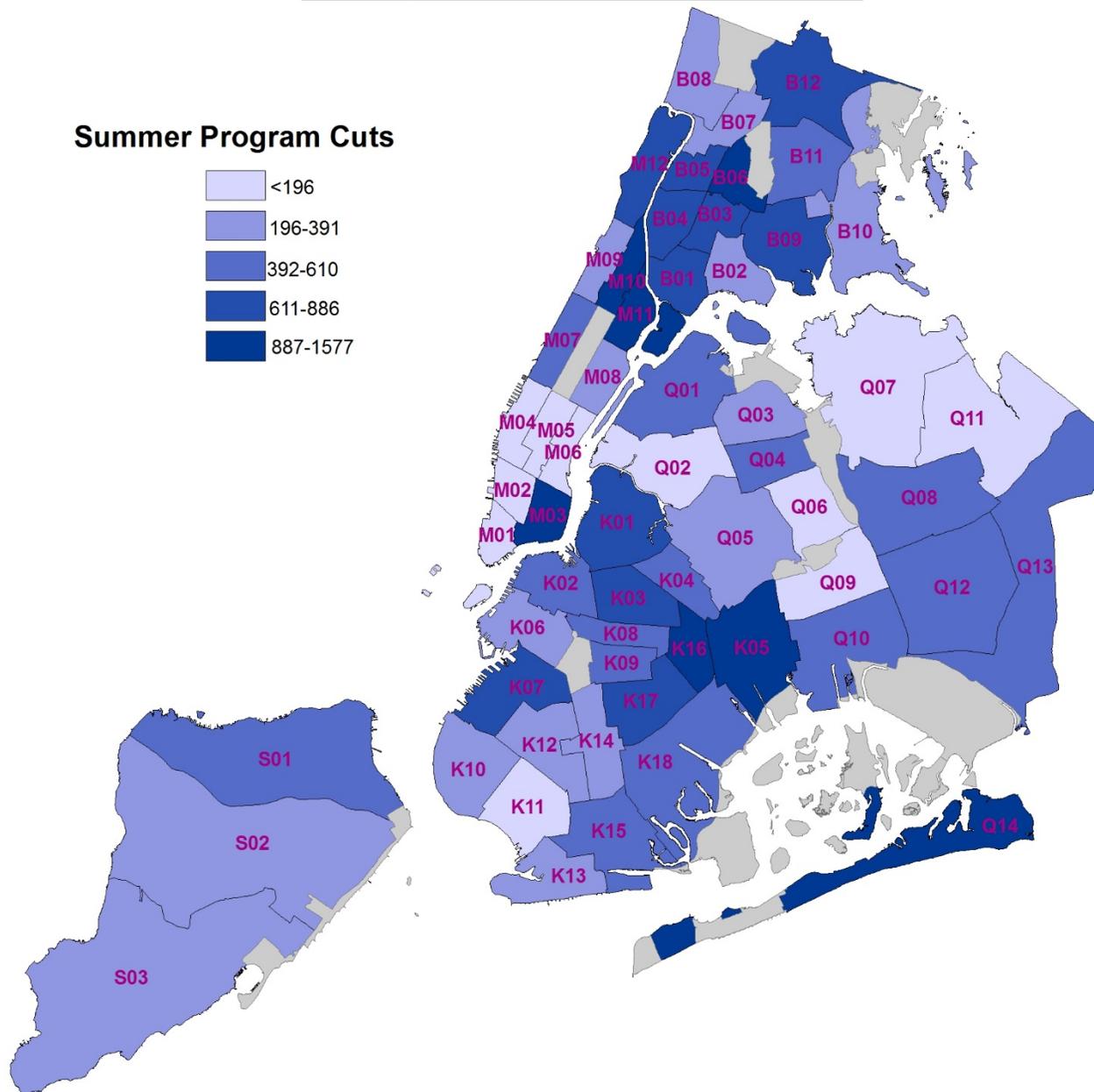
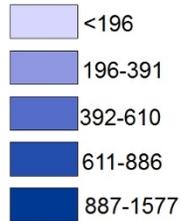
Council Member	# of Summer Slots Due to Be Cut
Margaret Chin (1)	721
Rosie Mendez (2)	590
Corey Johnson (3)	190
Daniel Garodnick (4)	0
Ben Kallos (5)	295
Helen Rosenthal (6)	305
Mark Levine (7)	576
Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito (8)	1,631
Inez Dickens (9)	1,157
Ydanis Rodriguez (10)	758
Andrew Cohen (11)	490
Andy King (12)	885
James Vacca (13)	625
Fernando Cabrera (14)	726
Ritchie Torres (15)	1,107
Vanessa Gibson (16)	1,246
Rafael Salamanca Jr. (17)	1,245
Annabel Palma (18)	886
Paul Vallone (19)	150
Peter Koo (20)	140
Julissa Ferreras (21)	282
Costa Constantinides (22)	220
Barry Grodenchik (23)	275
Rory Lancman (24)	605
Daniel Dromm (25)	435
Jimmy Van Bramer (26)	395
I. Daneek Miller (27)	315
Ruben Wills (28)	410
Karen Koslowitz (29)	195
Elizabeth Crowley (30)	305
Donovan Richards (31)	1,231
Eric Ulrich (32)	597
Stephen Levin (33)	636
Antonio Reynoso (34)	450
Laurie Cumbo (35)	720
Robert Cornegy (36)	1,060
Rafael Espinal (37)	948
Carlos Menchaca (38)	711
Brad Lander (39)	347
Mathieu Eugene (40)	500
Darlene Mealy (41)	1,533
Inez Barron (42)	1,482
Vincent Gentile (43)	281
David Greenfield (44)	410
Jumanne Williams (45)	470
Alan Maisel (46)	537
Mark Treyger (47)	260
Chaim Deutsch (48)	366
Deborah Rose (49)	560
Steven Matteo (50)	250
Joe Borrelli (51)	410
TOTAL	30,919

The City FY 2017 Budget Proposes to Cut Summer Programming for 31,000 Middle School Children throughout New York City



Cuts by Community District - FY 2017

Summer Program Cuts



Data analysis prepared by Citizens' Committee for Children.

Community District	# of Summer Slots Due to Be Cut
Bronx – Total Cuts 7,680	
Mott Haven (B01)	870
Hunts Point (B02)	350
Morrisania (B03)	715
Concourse/Highbridge (B04)	816
University Heights (B05)	646
East Tremont (B06)	1097
Bedford Park (B07)	300
Riverdale (B08)	390
Unionport/Soundview (B09)	886
Throgs Neck (B10)	375
Pelham Parkway (B11)	500
Williamsbridge (B12)	735
Brooklyn- Total Cuts 10,711	
Williamsburg/Greenpoint (K01)	671
Fort Greene/Brooklyn Hts (K02)	505
Bedford Stuyvesant (K03)	845
Bushwick (K04)	541
East New York (K05)	1319
Park Slope (K06)	391
Sunset Park (K07)	727
Crown Heights North (K08)	595
Crown Heights South (K09)	435
Bay Ridge (K10)	281
Bensonhurst (K11)	195
Borough Park (K12)	330
Coney Island (K13)	260
Flatbush/Midwood (K14)	335
Sheepshead Bay (K15)	442
Brownsville (K16)	1577
East Flatbush (K17)	671
Canarsie (K18)	591
Manhattan – Total Cuts 5,753	
Battery Park/Tribeca (M01)	131
Lower East Side (M03)	1030
Chelsea/Clinton (M04)	190
Midtown Business District (M05)	100
Murray Hill/Stuyvesant (M06)	50
Upper West Side (M07)	526
Upper East Side (M08)	295
Manhattanville (M09)	265
Central Harlem (M10)	1087
East Harlem (M11)	1281
Washington Heights (M12)	798
Queens – Total Cuts 5,555	
Astoria (Q01)	470
Sunnyside/Woodside (Q02)	145
Jackson Heights (Q03)	242
Elmhurst/Corona (Q04)	475
Ridgewood/Glendale (Q05)	305
Rego Park/Forest Hills (Q06)	195
Flushing (Q07)	185
Fresh Meadows/Briarwood (Q08)	555
Woodhaven (Q09)	80
Howard Beach (Q10)	491
Bayside (Q11)	105
Jamaica/St. Albans (Q12)	610
Queens Village (Q13)	560
The Rockaways (Q14)	1137
Staten Island – Total Cuts 1,220	
St. George (S01)	510
South Beach (S02)	390
Tottenville (S03)	320
CITYWIDE TOTAL	30,919