



February 18th, 2016

Hon. Bill de Blasio
Office of the Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio,

As parent leaders and representatives of thousands of families of New York City public school students citywide, we are calling on you to keep your promise to bring universal free school lunch to New York City public school students. In your campaign policy book, *One New York, Rising Together*, you promised to:

Support Universal School Meals in Schools

“Bill de Blasio will make free school lunch available to all public school children at most city schools by taking advantage of the new Community Eligibility Option (CEO) for low-income school districts. This program would take advantage of the federal Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which the DOE has failed to do. This allows schools to replace the current inefficient, application-based system for school lunches with a paperless data-driven system that allows students to eat free of charge and free of stigma.”

We ask you to make good on that promise and expand universal free school lunch to all New York City public school students in your Fiscal Year 2017 Executive Budget. We urge you to address hunger in our schools by ensuring that children have equal and universal access to healthy school meals, regardless of family income or immigration status.

Students must be well-nourished to learn. Hundreds of thousands of income-eligible students in New York City public schools do not participate in the school lunch program due to the poverty stigma associated with traditional, fee-based school lunch. Many of these students—as well as others whose parents are not income-eligible for free lunch yet cannot afford to pay school lunch fees—struggle through lessons on an empty stomach. In addition, despite urgent need, many immigrant parents are reluctant to fill out the school lunch forms for fear of government reprisal, and the pursuit of lunch fees from parents who cannot afford it both put principals in the uncomfortable role of bill collector and directly undermines your efforts to increase parent engagement.

Offering universal free and healthy school meals without identifying students by income is fundamental to eliminating stigma, increasing participation, and addressing inequities in New York City public schools.

We applaud you, Chancellor Fariña, the City Council, and the Public Advocate for instituting universal free school lunch in stand-alone middle schools. However, the majority of our City’s children are still unnecessarily subjected to the inequities and stigma encountered in the income-based school lunch system. The City cannot afford to ignore the direct health and educational benefits to our children and the financial relief to families of free, accessible school lunch.

The Lunch 4 Learning campaign’s Parent Caucus would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss this issue. Please contact Liz Accles, Executive Director of Community Food Advocates, at 917-751-8721, laccles@foodadvocates.org. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Chancellor’s Parent Advisory Council (CPAC)

Nancy Northrop, Co-Chair, on behalf of CPAC

Yvette Small, Co-Chair, on behalf of CPAC

Education Council Consortium (ECC)

David Goldsmith, Co-Chair, on behalf of the ECC

Melanie Mendonca, Co-Chair, on behalf of the ECC

Citywide Council on High Schools (CCHS)

Constance Asiedu, President and Bronx Representative, on behalf of CCHS

Citywide Council on Special Education (CCSE)

Pamela Stewart, Co-President, on behalf of the CCSE

Citywide Council on English Language Learners (CCELL)

Teresa Arboleda, President, on behalf of the CCELL

Brooklyn High School Presidents’ Council Members

Aquila Jordan, President*

Monique Lindsay, Chair, Alumni Association Committee*

Manhattan High School Presidents’ Council

Sonia Martinez-Quinones, President, on behalf of the Council

Queens High School Presidents’ Council

Nancy Northrop, President, on behalf of the Council

Staten Island Federation of Parent Teacher Associations

Miguel Rodriguez, President, on behalf of SIFPTA

CEC 1: Arnette Scott, President, on behalf of the Council

Manhattan: Lower East Side and East Village

CEC 2: Shino Tanikawa, President, on behalf of the Council

Manhattan: East Side south of 97th Street; West Side south of 59th Street

CEC 3: Joseph Fiordaliso, President, on behalf of the Council

Noah Gotbaum, Member & ECC Steering Committee Member

Theresa Hammonds, Member

Nan Mead, First Vice President

Vincent Orgera, Member

Kimberly Watkins, Treasurer

- Manhattan: West Side (59th Street to 122nd Street)*
- CEC 4:** Douga Ba, Member*
 Laura Lugo, Member*
- Manhattan: East Harlem South and East Harlem North*
- CEC 7:** Carmen Figueroa, Member*
South Bronx: Mott Haven-Port Morris, Melrose South- Mott Haven North
- CEC 8:** Eduardo Hernandez, President, on behalf of the Council
Southeast Bronx: Hunts Point, Longwood, Soundview, Throgsneck
- CEC 9:** Josephine Ofili, Bronx Borough President Appointee*
 Carlton Curry, Member*
 Jose Gutierrez Salgado, 2nd Vice President*
South Bronx: Grand Concourse, Morrisania, Tremont
- District 9 Presidents' Council:** Kellyann Perer, Co-President*
 Rosa Huerta, Secretary*
- District 10 Presidents' Council:** Ray Wilson, Co-President*
Northwest Bronx: Riverdale, Wave Hill, Fordham, Kingsbridge, Belmont
- CEC 11:** Steve Miller, President, on behalf of the Council
Northeast Bronx: Pelham Parkway, Eastchester, Woodlawn, Co-Op City, City Island
- CEC 12:** Ilka Rios, President, on behalf of the Council
 Durpatie (Shanta) Budhram, Bronx Borough President Appointee & 1st Vice President
Central Bronx: Longwood, Crotona Park East, East Tremont
- CEC 13:** David Goldsmith, President, on behalf of the Council
Brooklyn Heights, Downtown Brooklyn, DUMBO, Fort Green, Clinton Hill, Bedford Stuyvesant
- District 13 Presidents' Council:** Vascilla Caldeira, President, on behalf of the Council
- CEC 15:** Naila Rosario, President, on behalf of the Council
Carroll Gardens, Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, Boerum Hill, Fort Green, Red Hook, Sunset Park
- CEC 17:** Nicole Job, President, on behalf of the Council
 Natasha Welsh, Brooklyn Borough President Appointee
Prospect Heights, Propect-Lefferts Garden, East Flatbush, Crown Heights
- District 17 Presidents' Council:** Joan Trellis, President, on behalf of the Council
- District 18 Presidents' Council:** Rhonda Joseph, President & 1st Vice President, CEC 18*
Flatbush, Canarsie
- CEC 20:** Laurie Windsor, President, on behalf of the Council
Borough Park, Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Sunset Park
- District 20 High School Student Council**
- CEC 21:** Heather Fiorica, President, on behalf of the Council
Coney Island, Brighton Beach, Bensonhurst
- CEC 22:** Sandra Mejia, ELL Member*
Ditmas Park, Mill Basin, Midwood, Madison, Flatlands, Flatbush, Gerritsen Beach
- CEC 23:** Melanie Mendonca, President*
Ocean Hill, Brownsville, East New York
- CEC26:** Alan Ong, President, on behalf of the Council
Bayside, Fresh Meadows, Floral Park, Bellerose, Jamaica Estates, Hillcrest, Glen Oaks, Little Neck

District 26 Presidents' Council: Kim D'Angelo, President, on behalf of the Council
CEC 28: Maria Kaufer, 2nd Vice President*
Rego Park, Forest Hills, Kew Gardens, South Jamaica

CEC 30: Deborah Alexander, President, on behalf of the Council
Astoria, Ditmars, East Elmhurst, Hunters Point, Jackson Heights, Long Island City, Woodside, Sunnyside

CEC 31: Michael Reilly, President, on behalf of the Council
Staten Island (entire borough)

Manhattan Community Board 2, Jeannine Kiely, Chair, Schools and Education Committee
Greenwich Village, Little Italy, SoHo, NoHo, Hudson Square, Chinatown

PS 35 Franz Siegel, Nancy Medina, PTA President*
 Monica Martinez, PTA Vice President*
 Ernest Suarez, PTA Treasurer*

PS 42 Claremont, Choyce Perkins, PTA President*
 Crystal Scaman, PTA Vice President*

Community School 55, Ebony White, PA President*
 Kayon Broderick, PA Treasurer*
 Amy Turner, Title 1 Rep*

PS 70 Max Schoenfeld, Ericka Lee, PA President*

PS 109 Sedgwick, Tamika Collins, PA President*
 Rachel Ewell, PA Treasurer*

IS 117 Joseph H. Wade, Lillian Gonzalez, PTA President*

PS 126 Dr Marjorie H Dunbar, Diana Cranston, PTA President*

PS 144 Michelangelo, Rosa Huerta, PA President*

MS 145 Arturo Toscanini, Hellenna Williams, PTA Treasurer*

PS 199 The Shakespeare School, Lillian Orellana, PTA Secretary*

IS 313 School of Leadership and Development, Vickie Thompson, PA President*

MS 328 New Millennium Business Academy, Gloria Alfinez, PA President*

MS 327, Abeha Roman, SLT Member/PA President*
 Rodolfo Roman, SLT Member*

PS 443 Family School, Irma Ortiz, PTA President*

Grant Avenue Elementary, Cynthia Pendleton, PTA President*

PS 454 Mott Hall, Mamounata Badala, PTA President*

Mount Eden Children's Academy, Carmen Lopez, PA President*
 Sylvia Skiepkio, PA Vice President*

Bronx Leadership Academy High School, Carmen Ramos, PA Treasurer*

PS 8 Robert Fulton School, Melis Bromberg, Co-President, on behalf of the PTA Executive Board

PS 9 Teunis G. Bergen School, Jesse Hendrich, PTO Co-President on behalf of the PTO

PS 20 The Clinton School, Vascilla Caldeira, PTA President, on behalf of the PTA

PS 164, Dianey Sánchez, PTA President, on behalf of the PTA

PS 251 Paerdegat, Rhonda Watson-Greene, PTA Vice President*

IS 259, Laurie Windsor, PTA President, on behalf of the PTA

Bedford Academy High School, Earline Mensah, PTA President, on behalf of the PTA

Park Slope Collegiate, Katie Mosher-Smith, PTA Co-President, on behalf of the PTA

Guy Mompremier, SLT Co-Chair
District 5, Danielle Sullivan, Title 1 Rep*
Baccalaureate School for Global Education, Cecilia Cheng, PTA Co-President*
Academy of American Studies, Leah Guarino-Ramirez, PTA President*
PS/IS 266Q, Erica Lobosco, PTA Co-corresponding Secretary, on behalf of the PTA

Alliance for Quality Education, Zakiyah Ansari, Advocacy Director, on behalf of the Alliance
Education Committee for African American Clergy & Elected Officials (AACEO),

Dr. Jackie Cody, Chair*

The Lazarus Project; 4 In the Family, Andre Peterson, Founder and Director*

New York City Coalition of Educational Justice, Natasha Capers, Coordinator and Parent
Leader, on behalf of the Coalition

Make the Road New York, Placida Rodriguez, Parents Committee Organizer, on behalf of the
Committee

Cc:

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor, NYC Department of Education

Elizabeth Rose, Deputy Chancellor, NYC Department of Education Division of Operations

Anthony Shorris, First Deputy Mayor

Herminia Palacio, Deputy Mayor, Health and Human Services