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THE CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD SIX
211 EAST 43RD STREET, SUITE 1404
NEW YORK, NY 10017

VIA E-MAIL

April 22, 2019

Bill de Blasio
Mayor
City Hall, New York, NY 10007

Corey Johnson
Speaker, New York City Council
City Hall Office
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Mark Treyger
Chair, NYC Council Committee on Education
250 Broadway, Suite 1785
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Chair, NYC Council Committee on Finance
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New York, NY 10007

Richard Carranza
Chancellor
NYC Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Resolution in support of funding “Bridging the Gap” Social Workers in New York City Public Schools to support students in temporary housing (STH) as part of the Executive Budget of New York City

At the April 10, 2019 Full Board meeting of Manhattan Community Board Six, the Board adopted the following resolution:

WHEREAS, according to the latest research by NYU’s Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development, one out of every eight children in New York City experiences homelessness before the fifth grade;¹

¹ <https://www.nyu.edu/about/news-publications/news/2019/february/new-study-finds-that-1-in-8-nyc-elementary-students-experience-h.html>

WHEREAS, elementary schools across the entire city are seeing rises in homeless students, including in Chinatown, Midtown West and Midtown East, with some schools experiencing rates of STH students as high as 27%;²

WHEREAS, these schools include PS51, PS33, PS111, PS2 and PS 116, the latter being located in Manhattan Community District Six;

WHEREAS, the trauma of homelessness leaves many children unable to reach their full potential in relation to academic achievement and social engagement, compounded by high levels of absenteeism;

WHEREAS, New York City Department of Education “Bridging the Gap” social workers deliver valuable services to improve educational outcomes for students living in shelters by providing in-school counseling and academic support for these students and their families along with advice on practices to combat absenteeism;

WHEREAS, these services have also proven to be of great value to students and parents sheltered in commercial hotels or doubled-up, where no social workers are available;

WHEREAS, Bridging the Gap services extend to professional development and sensitivity training for teachers and school staff in collaboration with outside caseworkers, doctors and shelter liaisons;

WHEREAS, the benefits of Bridging the Gap services extend beyond STH families and school staff to the entire school community;

WHEREAS, thanks to New York City Council leadership and parental advocacy, School District 2, which includes Community District 6, now has two Bridging the Gap social workers dedicated to supporting the needs of homeless students in two elementary schools (PS33 and PS51) as part of the 2019 Executive Budget;

WHEREAS, the Principals and teachers at PS 33 and PS 51 have expressed their gratitude for this Bridging the Gap support and have requested that the social workers remain in their schools;

WHEREAS, the Mayor’s Preliminary Budget currently excludes the \$14,000,000 necessary to extend the Bridging the Gap program;³

WHEREAS, as a result, the resources for Bridging the Gap Social Workers, if they are to remain in the schools, must be reinstated as part of the 2020 Executive Budget;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Manhattan Community Board Six urges City Council leadership to work immediately to reinstate the budget for Bridging the Gap social workers for students in temporary housing as part of the 2020 Executive Budget;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that resources for Bridging the Gap social workers dedicated to students in temporary housing be expanded in the 2020 Executive Budget, in response to needs

² As reported by the Principal of PS111.

³ <https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2019/02/07/198885/>

to be identified in a collaboration among the Mayor, City Council leadership and school leadership, including the school districts and principals directly impacted by these resources;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a baseline for Bridging the Gap social workers, derived in collaboration among the Mayor, City Council leadership and school leadership, be made part of the Executive Budget of the City of New York for as long as required by the rising levels of students in temporary housing in New York City Public Schools.

VOTE: 36 in Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstention 0 Not Entitled

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jesús Pérez', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jesús Pérez
District Manager

Cc: Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Carlina Rivera, Council Member
Hon. Keith Powers, Council Member
Hon. Ben Kallos, Council Member
Erik Bottcher, Chief of Staff, NYC Council Speaker Corey Johnson
Matt Green, Deputy Chief of Staff, NYC Council Speaker Corey Johnson
Patrick Joseph, Senior Policy Analyst, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer
Leilani Irvin, Manhattan Borough Director, Department of Homeless Services
Sydney Renwick, NYC Department of Education
Elvy Barroso, Chair, CB6 Health & Education Committee
Carin van der Donk, Chair, CB6 Housing, Homeless & Human Rights Committee