

# EDUCATION: A PATH FORWARD

OUR CITY. OUR HOME. OUR FUTURE.



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**“Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource.”**

**- President John F. Kennedy**

We Still Believe that in Our City, in our Home that we can realize Our Dreams, where every person — no matter your race, class, gender, income, sexual orientation or neighborhood — has the opportunity to succeed. We still believe in Jobs & Justice. We still believe in Homes and Health care. We still believe in the middle class, and finding solutions in the middle. We still believe in Public Safety, Public Education and Public Housing. We still believe in a strong Democracy and in our Diversity. Since we still believe in our city, our home, our dreams, let us press on to a brighter future together.

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Access to a quality education must be intrinsic to the mission and Charter of our city. As a product of New York City public schools, I know the importance education has on the person and on the home.

Our city's workforce, economy, cultural vibrancy, and ability to compete on the world stage rely on our children having equitable access to our brightest educators, resources, and commitment to prioritize every student and every family's education journey.



From P.S. 79 in The Bronx, where Jonathan Kozol spoke of our challenges in *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*, to my days at JHS 118, DeWitt Clinton High School and then Northwestern University, quality education has shaped my life and anchors of my Mayoral campaign vision of Tomorrow Begins Today. From creating New York's My Brother's Keeper program for Boys and Young Men of Color to advocating for equitable school funding through the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, my consistent track record on Education is helping our children to graduate and thrive. As Mayor, my commitment will continue to you is that every child, from our teenage girls to your youngest ones, should be able to realize their dreams.

My ***Our City. Our Home. Our Future: Education Plan*** is not a panacea to address all the challenges confronting students, educators, and families, but it is a comprehensive plan to move our students forward with holistic, forward-thinking educational tools and resources.

This plan will provide students, families and educators with the policies and tools necessary for our city to be competitive and forward thinking in the face of federal threats to the rule law.

Please join me on this journey as we chart a plan which gets our government working for the people and delivering results for our students.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Blake'.

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The **Our City. Our Home, Our Future Education Plan** focuses on Pre-K to 12 public school education.

**Addendum plans include:**

- NYC Universal Childcare
- CUNY & High Education Strategy



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

My plan is a cradle to career vision for New York City Education that will develop the next generation of global leaders. In the rapidly evolving landscape of the 21st century, preparing students for meaningful civic and economic participation is more critical than ever. As global and federal challenges become increasingly complex, discussions about education have shifted towards equipping students with competencies that extend beyond traditional academic knowledge. These competencies, which include digital literacy, civic engagement, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills, are seen as essential for students to navigate the interconnected world they will inhabit.

However, the question remains: How are these critical competencies reflected in our city's educational frameworks, and to what extent do these frameworks support the development of the skills students need to thrive in the modern era?

There is a critical need for equity-driven leadership in New York City's public education system, emphasizing the responsibility of the next mayoral administration to prioritize closing opportunity gaps and addressing systemic inequalities that have long impacted historically underserved populations. The **Our City. Our Home. Our Future.** Education Plan is Michael Blake's comprehensive strategy to ensure all New York City students have a fair chance to receive the highest quality of an education where their experiences pave the way to success and where all families have a voice, are seen and heard.

By examining the ways in which New York City's educational frameworks align with the needs of the future, this policy plan aims to contribute to the ongoing dialogue about how best to prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of a dynamic, globalized world.

# PRIMER: THE EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

As we know, COVID-19 exacerbated gaps in educational achievement that existed prior to the pandemic, especially among historically underserved students from low-income backgrounds, English language learners, students with disabilities and more broadly, students of color. The impact of COVID-19 on learning has been further complicated by an unstable federal government which threatens the rule of law and particularly targets support for public education throughout the country.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning is staggering, and the effort to "catch up" to pre-pandemic levels of achievement presents a monumental challenge for New York City. With schools losing valuable in-person instructional time, especially in 2020 and 2021 and limited connectivity and technology programs since then, the task of "making up" for the learning losses has been complex. In 2025, this is further complicated by the sunset of over \$190 billion in federal pandemic relief resources.

The challenge of making up for half a year of learning in math and a third in reading is daunting, particularly with staffing shortages and increased student absenteeism. Schools were expected to not only return to normal operations but increase learning productivity by 125% for consecutive years to make up for the lost ground. Given these circumstances, it's not surprising that the results of recovery efforts have been mixed, and data from the New York State Department of Education 2023 continues to reflect this.

While some states have made progress, particularly in English and math (Oster)?, the broader trend from assessments like NWEA and Curriculum Associates shows more modest results. According to National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data, national reading scores declined among fourth and eighth graders between 2022 and 2024. Our city offered a combination of strategies, from tutoring and extended learning programs to social and emotional support. While this was certainly represents an attempt at learning recovery, understanding whether those efforts have been sufficient or effective enough to reverse the learning setbacks is still uncertain.



More so concerning is the continuing gap between students who had access to supplemental support like tutoring, summer programs and extended day and those who didn't. The longer-term effects on student equity, as well as the mental health toll of disrupted learning, will likely persist for years to come. Additionally, considerations for innovation in teaching and learning to prepare students for a new economy have not been prioritized in the face of attempts at accelerating learning. Instead, schools and communities with fewer resources and lacking state of the art equipment are starting ten steps behind of their counterparts across the City.

The federal transition of power will undoubtedly have a significant impact on higher education, immigrant students of all ages, and the definition and enforcement of civil rights. Further the Supreme Court's Chevron reversal will be particularly impactful on our municipal systems and structure.

It will take significant, equity-driven investments to address the academic needs for all students, but especially students from communities that have been historically underserved by the education system and society at large. City leadership should provide a clear, actionable vision for New York City schools that directs resources and services to support schools as well as the communities that they serve.

The following policy proposals represent a holistic approach to addressing our City’s education crisis, one that brings together all stakeholders and reflects a broad vision to end corruption and increase transparency and government accountability, improve educational opportunities and outcomes, while also addressing the targeted needs of our education communities.

## **POLICY OVERVIEW**

The Our City. Our Home. Our Future. Education Plan is an organic policy proposal which seeks to implement policies and methods that strategically address challenges and chart a future of quality education for all students, setting them on a pathway to future of success.

- \* Increase Department of Education Funding by 25%**
  - Resource Restoration
- \* End Corruption & Increase Government Accountability**
- \* Safeguard Mayoral Control & Increase Funding Sources so NYC Public Schools are fully funded**
- \* Fund, Secure, & Implement High Quality Instructional Materials for All Schools**
- \* Educator Retention, Stability & Talent Pipeline**
- \* Racial Equity**
- \* Protect NYC Students from Federal Aggression**
  - \* Reaffirm NYC’s status as a sanctuary city with the protections necessary for our people**
  - \* Establish a NYCPS Newest New Yorkers Immigrant Family Communication System**
- \* Access to Quality Schools Follow the Students**
- \* Expanded Pre-K Enrollment & Bridge Programming from the Blake Universal Childcare Initiative**
- \* College & Apprenticeship Readiness for All**
- \* Increasing Special Education Classrooms for our youngest New Yorkers**
- \* School Meals & Food Policy**
- \* Connectivity & Technology for All**



# INCREASE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FUNDING BY 20% & RESTORE PROGRAM FUNDING

## HOW DO WE PAY FOR IT?

Our city government needs to authentically prioritize investment in the education of our young people. This investment will require an examination of our budget systems and city operations, partnering with New York State to secure federal resources, enhancing public and private partnerships, building back New York City's businesses and tax base, and harnessing and appropriately deploying new tax resources from cannabis and the gaming industry.

### Budget Assessment, Prioritization, and Reallocation of Resources

The proposed restoration of programs and increase in the Department of Education budget will require a deep dive into all New York City department budgets with particular attention to the police department overtime budget and strategic response unit resources, examination of agency staffing citywide bringing an end to "no show" positions, and a prioritization of education throughout the budget process. This process will also begin a new era of streamlining city government and bringing about enhanced government efficiencies.

### Growing the New York City Tax Base

Businesses and their employees are central to increasing the city's tax base, addressing commercial and real estate vacancies and building robust downtowns and open spaces. The Blake administration would move quickly to retain and attract new businesses in New York City. Our team would work to ensure city affordability and partner with the NYS government to implement long term incentives to recruit new businesses, while addressing quality of life issues that drove out many firms post- pandemic.

### Revenue Generation

This education plan will not raise taxes. The plan would identify new funding resource and focus on:

- Expanding public-private partnerships through the Mayor's Fund for the City of New York
- Earmark new revenue from the cannabis and gaming industries for education
- Securing state and federal resources
- Cap overtime and excessive spending in other agencies so that we focus on our students

### Program Safeguard & Resource Restoration

- Restore 3-K and Pre-K cuts (\$263M, estimated to be \$399M by IBO) & expand to full day and full year programs, invest in advertising and outreach, and reinvest towards Universal 3K
- Convert more school-day school-year seats to full-day full-year seats because that's what's in demand and needed by New York City parents
- Provide funding to safe guard programs under threat by the current administration
  - 100 shelter-based community coordinators (\$12.3M)
  - Preschool special education (\$96M)
  - Promise NYC (\$20M – ACS budget)
  - Multi-faceted immigrant family communication and outreach (\$4M)
  - Mental health continuum (\$5M – divided between H+H, DOE, DOHMH)
  - 450 school social workers (\$67M)
  - Restorative justice practices (\$21M; \$9M baselined in city funds and ensuring the \$12M funded by federal aid in the past); expand by \$75M for 500 high schools to hire school-based Restorative Justice Coordinators.
  - Bilingual staff (\$10M)
  - Translation and interpretation (\$7M)
  - Literacy and dyslexia programming (\$7M)
  - 60 school psychologists and 15 family workers (\$10M)
  - 3-K and Pre-K (\$263M)
  - Community schools (\$77M)
  - School nurses (\$65M)
  - Learning to Work programs (\$33M)
  - Sensory, Exploration, Education, and Discovery (SEED) program (\$22.5M)
  - Student Success Centers in 34 high schools (\$3.3M)
  - Secure \$50,000 investment in each of the 6 new English Language Learner programs at transfer high schools





# **END CORRUPTION & INCREASE GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY**

## **CODIFY ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION IN THE NEW YORK CITY CHARTER AS A RIGHT OF EVERY SCHOOL AGED CHILD.**

Chapter 20 of the New York City Charter addresses the methods and requirements for educational instruction in the city. It highlights a myriad of regulatory requirements and processes; however, it does not guarantee every child in New York City the right to a quality education. Further, the rule making process in the Department of Education has a Student Bill of Rights, yet there are no solidified protections of that right, nor is there a definition of quality with correlating budget context.

While the word quality may be arbitrary in nature, a Charter Revision Commission formed by a consensus government with balanced authority should be convened to codify this right for every school aged child in the City of New York. The Commission would work with the understanding that it is time to enshrine basic education rights in our City Charter so there is accountability in law and in budget.

This definition would impact New York city’s budget priorities and bring transparency and accountability to the financing of all education communities.

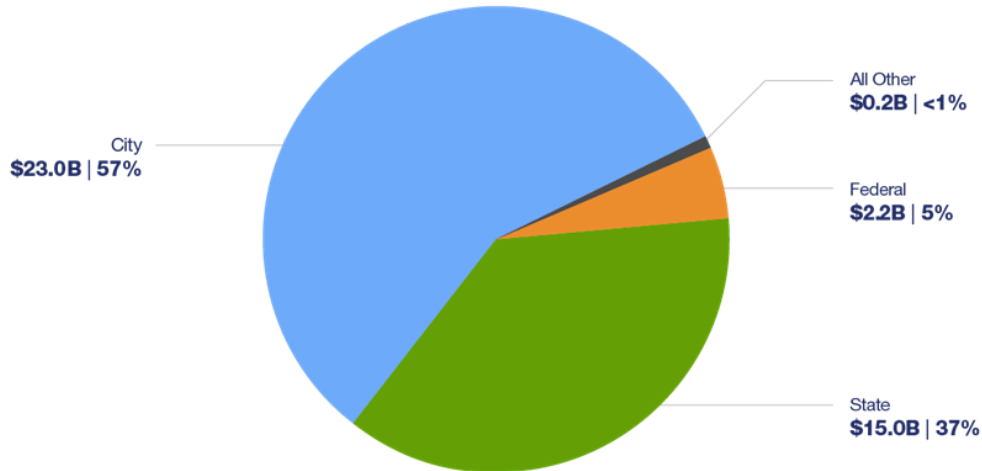
### **Increase Transparency & Educational Awareness of the Department of Education Budget**

The FY2025 total budget for New York City public schools is \$40 billion, yet everyday New Yorkers have no knowledge of how that funding is spent. Granted, the Department of Education publishes budgets on their websites, and they are publicly available through their “At a Glance School by School Overview;” however, that information rarely reaches parents and communities for evaluation and feedback.

## **Why?**

To codify is to be accountable to our children and families. The inclusion of the Right to a Quality Education in the NYC Charter will prioritize education during budget negotiations and prevent unfunded mandates.

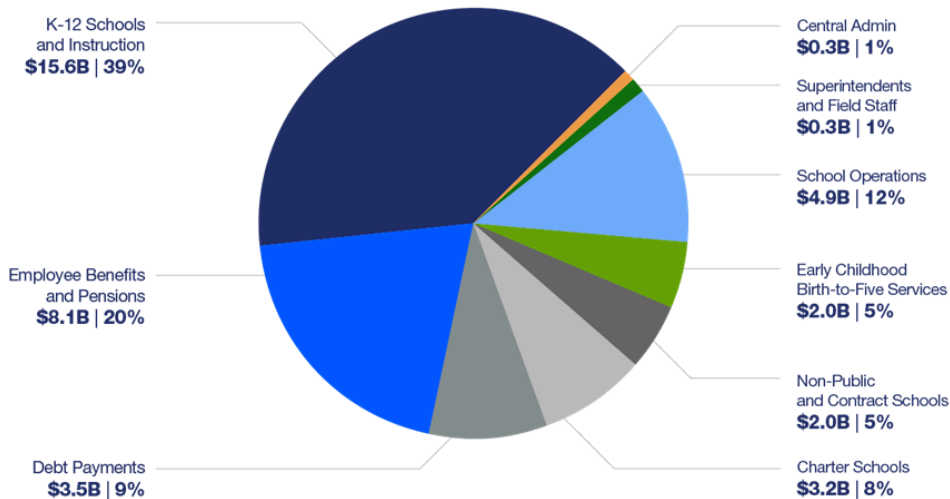
# NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REVENUE



## FUNDING SOURCES FOR NYC PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- 57% comes from New York City (\$23B)
- 37% comes from the New York State (\$15B)
- 5% comes from Federal funding (\$2.2B)
- The remainder (under 1%, or approximately \$0.2B) comes from private or other sources

# NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION EXPENSES



In year 1, the Blake administration would implement technology for the good for each parent to have online access to school budgets and spending projections translated in various languages to ensure clear communication. Just like businesses reconcile expenses monthly, parents should be able to see where funds are being deployed in their child's school.

Similarly, budget roadshows would be convened by DOE administrators in each school for parents to learn about the broader DOE budget and how those funds are spent in their school and on projected capital projects and technology integration. A **parent-led budget review taskforce** would be formed in every public school to provide feedback and guidance to the administration before the executive budget is presented. Our students and their families will be at the center of the conversation when developing budget priorities.



## **ENHANCE VETTING PRACTICES OF DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CONTRACT PROCUREMENT AND MAKE FINANCIAL INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO EDUCATORS AND PARENTS**

It is time for parents and educators to know exactly where resources are allocated, and which vendors receive contracts and for what purpose. This open information approach is a game-changer for school transparency and accountability. By making school expenses more accessible and understandable for parents and educators, the DOE will demystify how resources are allocated. Transparency can build trust and allow families and communities to feel more connected to and invested in their schools.

The Blake administration would bridge the communication barriers that exist between the Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS) and the general public. The idea of breaking down complex procurement systems like *PassPort* and the *City Checkbook* program into something parents can actually navigate will eliminate barriers and increase engagement. Parents and educators shouldn't have to be experts in city contract systems to understand how resources are spent on their kids' education. Simplifying the process and providing culturally competent and language appropriate integration will impact engagement, accountability, and empower family voice and participate in local decision-making.

The Blake Administration would mandate school by school annual reports that include not only student outcomes and educator retention, but also a clear breakdown of how funds are spent and to which vendors — on food services, transportation, school safety agents, technology, and other essentials. This is a step toward holding government accountable for how it utilizes taxpayer dollars. This will also assist in highlighting areas where funding might be more effectively allocated.

For instance, if a school has high vendor spending but lower student achievement or teacher retention, it might spark a discussion on how to better balance resources.

This transparency will positively affect the local procurement process. When families and educators know how vendors are chosen and how funds are distributed, it will lead to better-informed discussions about the quality and impact of those services. Plus, the focus on aligning expenses with academic goals encourages schools to link budgeting directly to student outcomes and targeted needs.

In the long term, these steps could set a new standard for how school budgets are managed, making it harder for inefficiencies to go unnoticed.



## **SAFEGUARD MAYORAL CONTROL & INCREASE FUNDING SOURCES TO ENSURE NYC PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE FULLY FUNDED**

### **ADDRESSING MAYOR CONTROL OVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS & THE PANEL FOR EDUCATION POLICY (PEP)**

Mayoral control over the New York City education system is only effective if the mayor has integrity and a system of accountability for the leaders, he/she/they appoint. Without this basic premise there is a lack of trust with the NYS Legislature and the Governor as well as the educators, students and families the system serves.

In the spirit of accountability and transparency, the Blake administration would open robust and regular dialogue with State partners in government and present a comprehensive plan which prioritizes student learning and system accountability and governance. During the administration's first term, the mayor would request a two-year extension of Mayoral Control to prove itself to the NYS Legislature and address structural concerns with the Panel for Education Policy (PEP) and upon executing an impactful strategy request four-year extensions thereafter.

The Blake administration with partners in NYS government, would address the extent of mayoral control over the decisions of the Panel for Education Policy (PEP), the current de facto city school board, by building on its consensus government priority of checks and balances within the government.

#### **Panel for Education Policy Background**

Currently, the mayor appoints eight of the PEP's fifteen members, the borough presidents appoint five (one each), and the Community Education Councils select a parent representative. The Chancellor serves ex officio as the panel's 15th member. The Blake administration would address this fundamental structural problem. The PEP is the successor to the New York City School Board, which governed the city's schools since Brooklyn was annexed in 1898 as the final borough to be incorporated into municipal New York City.

State education law requires that all the state's school districts, including New York City, be governed by an appointed or elected school board composed of the district's residents. Under state law, these local school boards are responsible for selecting a school district's superintendent or in New York City, the Schools Chancellor, approving the school district's budget, and overseeing the district's schools.

When the state legislature decentralized the New York City school system in 1970, it created 32 community school districts, which became responsible for administering all the city's elementary and middle schools. The community school districts were governed by elected nine-member community school boards, which appointed their district superintendents and school principals.



The citywide school board, formally the New York City Board of Education, became responsible for appointing the city Schools Chancellor, formulating the citywide school system's budget and all fiscal expenditure, approving all new schools, maintaining the school system's physical plant as well as running the city's high schools, special education system and many other administrative functions.

Under decentralization (1970-2002), the citywide school board was composed of two mayoral appointees and five appointees by the five borough presidents.

To ensure approval of all citywide educational policies, the city's mayors had to secure at least two votes from the majority of the borough presidents' appointees. Under both Democratic and Republican mayors, resolving contentious or thorny education issues often generated complex and occasionally bizarre alliances whose attention to the needs of the city's students were often difficult to discern. This environment opened the door to the trading of political favors and resources.

Michael Bloomberg was elected New York City's mayor in 2001 and persuaded the state legislature to end the NYC school system's decentralization, terminate the role of the community school boards, and eliminate the major powers of the school superintendents formerly appointed by those elected boards. Because the role of the city school board was enshrined in law, the state legislature could not eliminate it.

Instead, the legislature changed the board's name to the **Panel for Educational Policy (PEP)**, changed the board's composition by giving the mayor seven appointees to the borough presidents' five, and transformed the city school system into the Department of Education, a citywide division under the mayor's authority. In 2019, the state legislature added a parent representative to the PEP, to be selected by a vote of the members of the school system's Community Education Councils.

The major function of both the Board of Education and the Panel for Education Policy was and is to approve the fiscal, administrative and policy decisions that govern the city school system. Because state law requires a public approval process, the old citywide Board of Education and the current Panel for Education Policy have often been misperceived as decision-making forums.

Opponents of critical fiscal and policy proposals awaiting a citywide Board of Education or PEP approval vote often demanded accountability to the city's students and their families, rather than to the appointed board members. On one occasion in December 1966, parent activists and community leaders—they went by the People's Board of Education—who denounced segregated schooling and demanded fundamental improvements to the education of the city's Black and Latinx students, occupied the old citywide Board of Education auditorium and took over the proceedings.

Yet, both the citywide Board of Education and the PEP are not decision-making forums. They are public stages to ratify decisions that the city school administration has already made. The open public nature of those meetings **fulfills state legal requirements but does not enable or support stakeholder participatory policymaking**. The intensity of protests against whatever education policy or fiscal expenditure the mayor and the Chancellor were submitting to the school board or PEP often disguised the essentially formal nature of the public spectacle.

The core problem is that state education law does not require that school district governance to include democratic processes that mandate the participation of users and stakeholders--students, their families, teachers and school administrators--in decisions about key schooling issues. Instead, state law requires only that an elected or appointed citizen panel approve critical education decisions in a public setting.

## PEP REFORM



Reforms to the governance structure of New York City’s school system are a bold and necessary step toward making educational decision-making more transparent and genuinely participatory. The historical context and shift from decentralization to the current PEP system underscores the deep structural issues that continue to limit meaningful involvement from those who are directly impacted by education policies — the students, families, teachers, and school staff.

The current model, with its complex layers of appointed officials and the public ratification process, often leaves little room for true stakeholder input. Although PEP meetings are technically public, they’ve become more of a formality than a genuine platform for collaborative decision-making. The sense that critical decisions are made behind the scenes, only to be ratified in public meetings, is a major flaw in how the system functions today.

The Blake administration would democratize the process by actively integrating users and stakeholders — students, families, teachers, and administrators — into the decision-making process addresses this core problem. We would establish a district-wide dashboard system to support the sharing of information on school progress and available programs to support this effort. The move to ensure that parents, educators, and others who are directly involved in the day-to-day workings of schools have a meaningful voice in shaping policy will make the system more responsive to the real needs and challenges within individual schools and communities.

To align with our principles of ending corruption and increasing transparency and reform, the administration would provide:

- **Clear and Transparent Communication:** By providing clear guidance and ensuring the process is easy to understand, you’re giving stakeholders more control over understanding where decisions are coming from and how they are made. This not only helps with transparency but also empowers parents and educators to engage meaningfully in the process.
- **Stakeholder Participation in Decision-Making:** Moving beyond the formality of public meetings to create actual participatory spaces for students, families, and educators will ensure that the policies being enacted are directly aligned with the needs of those affected. This could lead to more innovative and locally tailored solutions.
- **Balancing Quick Action with Quality Control:** In a system as large and complex as NYC’s, it’s crucial to maintain efficiency, but not at the expense of thoughtful and democratic decision-making. Your focus on both expediency and quality control helps ensure that the reforms are not only fast but effective in meeting the needs of students and educators.
- **Reevaluating the Role of the PEP:** If the PEP is meant to serve as a public oversight body, its role could be reevaluated to ensure it’s truly providing oversight and not just placing a rubber stamp on pre-made decisions. You could consider empowering this body with more active decision-making authority, ensuring that the individuals appointed to the PEP represent a broader range of perspectives, and including mechanisms to hold the mayor and chancellor accountable to the communities they serve.

This shift toward democratic, participatory governance would set a new precedent and create a model for deeper community engagement and more effective education policies.

The Blake administration would work to democratize the process and ensure there is both clarity in process and guidance balanced with quality control evaluation and expediency. 14

## NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS MUST BE FULLY FUNDED

Full funding for our schools includes resources for all students including gifted and talented, English language learners, students with disabilities and those in specialized schools. In addition to the current funding sources, the Blake administration would activate the Mayor's Fund for the City of New York through philanthropy to close the funding gap which exists in our system and ensure resources are deployed to high-need school districts in our city.

Further, the Blake administration would issue a quarterly economic snapshot on the True Cost of Education in the City of New York and its correlation to student success and educator retention.



The Blake administration would ensure all schools have access to high quality instructional materials and opportunities to be engaged in development around universal design for learning (UDL) with enhanced methods of inclusivity and effectiveness in delivery of instruction. Schools and educators often feel constricted and unable to afford students with disabilities flexible classroom settings both when class sizes are too large, resources are limited and their needs are better served with educators trained in working with diverse learners.

What we know from research on UDL, is that many students benefit from practices that promote students being treated equitably with access to learning in a variety of strategies, such as: active learning, culturally responsive teaching and differentiated instruction allow for students to become independent thinkers and learners. No more a one size fits all approach

## CLASS SIZES

Caps on class sizes are important and must be coupled with adequate resources for our schools, including having **the appropriate number of schools to serve our City** and being forward thinking enough to evaluate birth rates and population trends to support smaller class sizes that would benefit our children and teachers alike. Students would receive much needed individualized learning support and teachers would be able to provide students with individualized attention, as well as plan and collaborate with their colleagues. A smaller class size would allow students to engage in braided integrative learning and **mentorship opportunities**, as well as a deep dive into **apprenticeship** where formal education, experiential learning, cultural knowledge and technology meet.



## FUND, SECURE, AND IMPLEMENT HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR ALL SCHOOLS

Investing in HQIM for literacy and math is an investment in a more equitable, effective educational system would be a core mechanism for increasing and improving literacy. It focuses and builds on:

- **Solid Foundation in Core Subjects:**
  - Literacy and math are foundational to nearly all other areas of learning. When instructional materials are of high quality, and culturally relevant they are designed to systematically build students' skills, ensuring that they grasp the foundational concepts before moving on to more complex ones. This reduces gaps in learning, which often lead to long-term struggles for students.
- **Teacher Support with HQIM:**
  - When teachers are provided with high-quality instructional materials, they have a clear, reliable framework for teaching. This allows them to focus on what matters most — facilitating student learning — without spending excessive time creating materials or figuring out what works. This alignment also ensures that the resources used are research-based, meaning they are more likely to result in positive student outcomes. The support would include professional development to enhance foundational instructional practices beyond teaching a provided curriculum.
- **Addressing Educational Disparities:**
  - High-quality instructional materials are a powerful tool in closing the achievement gap. They provide a uniform, rigorous standard of education across classrooms, giving all students, regardless of their background or language, access to culturally relevant, high-quality content. This is especially important for students in under-resourced areas, where teachers may not always have access to the best materials or training. When all students have access to these materials, they are more likely to experience success.
- **Structured Literacy and Phonics:**
  - Literacy instruction rooted in structured approaches, including science of reading, is crucial for early reading success in all learners. HQIM in literacy ensures that phonics instruction is integrated in a way that supports students' decoding and comprehension skills including our linguistically diverse learner. This systematic approach provides a foundation where students develop reading skills that lead to a love of learning. Learning to read, and reading to learn opens doors.
- **Data-Informed Math Practices:**
  - In math, HQIM that is grounded in research allows teachers to employ data-driven approaches. For example, teachers can use formative assessments to understand which concepts students have mastered and which ones need more attention. This creates an ongoing cycle of feedback and adjustment to better meet students' needs.



However, the resources need to be identified to ensure stability in funding and quality. The administration would look to increased government efficiencies, prioritization of HQIM in the executive budget, and enhanced activation of the Mayor's Fund for the City of New York to assist in improving connectivity to our schools and ensure that all students and parents have the tools necessary to succeed. Furthermore, the administration would create an education focused public private partnership within the Mayor's Fund of NYC to ensure that resources received through COVID-19 funding were replaced with stable funding and be equitably distributed throughout our school ecosystem.

## PROTECT NYC STUDENTS FROM FEDERAL AGGRESSION

New York City must be protected from federal aggressions which undermine the rule of law and threaten the lives, livelihoods, and educational pursuits of our newest New Yorkers. New York must value the lives of all New Yorkers, regardless of their immigration status, New Yorkers must feel and be safe living here.

New York City's sanctuary city laws impose certain limitations on the City's ability to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement. However, New York City's sanctuary laws do not stop deportation from happening in New York City.

On day 1, the Blake administration would, with our partners in the New York City Council, affirm our city's status as a sanctuary city and implement appropriate protections to prevent federal interference in our city's schools, houses of worship, and city funded programs and organizations.

Furthermore, the Blake administration would:

- **Enhance Support for MOIA Immigration Legal Support Centers**
  - The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs has Immigration Legal Support Centers in immigrant neighborhoods that offers New Yorkers free, safe immigration legal help. These centers are housed in community sites, public health facilities, public schools, and libraries. Services are provided in your language.
- Allocate \$6 million to **expand the successful Linking Immigrant Families to Early Childhood Education (LIFE) Project** citywide
- Allocate \$75M to hire **additional social workers at competitive rates to support the needs of newcomer asylum seekers** and achieve a ratio of 1:150 across schools and 1:50 for high-need schools.
- **Invest \$7M to establish a NYCPS Immigrant Family Communications System** that supports the Office of Language Access and Marketing and Communications at the DOE to take into account families' varying levels of literacy and access to digital media;
- **Change the NYCPS's register audit process** to allow individual schools to appeal their enrollment numbers on a monthly basis, beyond the October 31st audited register, to ensure there is adequate per pupil funding to meet the needs of the existing students, any asylum-seekers who have already enrolled and those who will enroll in the future.
- Encourage the Panel for Educational Policy to provide guidance for schools to **not consent to granting non-local law enforcement**, including ICE, access to school facilities, students or student records for immigration purposes without a warrant, court order or subpoenas
- **Expanding Promise NYC Support for Undocumented Children**
  - Support undocumented children and their families who are not eligible for state- and federally subsidized child care due to their immigration status by expanding Promise NYC.





## OUR TEACHERS: EDUCATOR RETENTION, STABILITY & GROWING THE TALENT PIPELINE

The Blake administration supports the Department of Education's investment in existing programs and to establish additional research-based initiatives to recruit and retain teachers from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds to reflect the student population and provide ongoing training in culturally responsive pedagogy, restorative practices, and differentiated instruction.

This would include grow-your-own programs supporting school aides and high school students identifying their pathway into the teaching profession. The administration would work closely with UFT to improve working conditions by enhancing teacher support, decreasing the adult to student ratio in schools, and offer competitive salaries to attract and retain top talent.

Additionally, my administration would instruct the Office of Talent and Workforce development to work closely with the Department of Education to create a clear path for students to enter the workforce and earn incomes and wages which exceed the true cost of living in NYC.

Looking ahead to 2026, the administration in collaboration with PEP would appoint a dynamic and culturally representative Chancellor of Education and a team of excellent education and efficiency leaders to implement robust policies that guide students toward credentials of value and equip them with skills relevant to today's job market. Likewise, this team would be charged with identifying complementary programs across the City as well as any opportunity deserts where students and families don't have access to library and community-based programming to enhance their learning. The administration will also end unfunded and under resourced mandates and work to ensure our educators, administrators and parents have the resources they need to ensure student success.

### RENEWED FOCUS ON EDUCATOR RETENTION & TALENT PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT

Given the ongoing teacher shortages and the need for a diverse, qualified educator pool, innovative strategies would make a meaningful difference. The Blake administration would ensure all union contracts are on time for their members and their families.

#### Teacher Pathways:

- *City-Sponsored Teaching Apprenticeships:*
  - Building off of and scaling the NYC Teaching Fellows program, this initiative is particularly effective because it provides aspiring teachers with both practical experience and mentorship. Aspiring educators can benefit from learning in the field under the guidance of experienced professionals, and this hands-on approach helps bridge the gap between theory and practice. It also allows for greater diversity in the teaching workforce by opening the door to individuals from a variety of backgrounds who might not have otherwise considered teaching. I would further develop a 0-net impact policy to afford education professional tuition forgiveness and tax credits to encourage the growth of the education workforce.

## RENEWED FOCUS ON EDUCATOR RETENTION & TALENT PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT

Given the ongoing teacher shortages and the need for a diverse, qualified educator pool, innovative strategies would make a meaningful difference.

### Teacher Pathways:

- *Alternative Certification Options:*
  - Expanding these options is vital, especially as career changers and professionals with different skill sets look to transition into teaching. This approach not only brings fresh perspectives to the classroom but also capitalizes on the talents of individuals who may have valuable real-world experience that can enrich students' learning. By allowing more flexible entry points into the profession, you're ensuring that a wider range of people can contribute to education. This would be coupled with a minimum of a one year residency and robust training to master the art of skilled teaching, which cannot be supplanted simply by having content knowledge.
- *Grow Your Own:*
  - Skilled trade program for school-based aides, paras, substitutes and high school students interested in teacher certification and a permanent career in the classroom versus as a stepping stone to other opportunities. Returning to an era where students strive to be career educators and teach in the communities where they live, worship and have extended family will not only strengthen our schools, but our communities as well.
- *National Board Certification for Educators:*
  - Investing in teachers' professional development by supporting National Board Certification is a smart way to improve teaching quality, with proven benefits in student outcomes.

### Incentives to Retain and Attract Teachers:

- *Family Leave and Support:*
  - Offering enhanced family leave policies and competitive compensation packages that address the needs of union members, and the general education ecosystem is a crucial step in making teaching a more sustainable career, particularly for those balancing family and work. Education has long been a field where teachers, especially women, face challenges in maintaining work-life balance. Policies like these can make a big difference in retaining teachers and ensuring that they can stay in the profession long-term without sacrificing personal responsibilities.
- *Quality affordable housing:* As with other programs to provide affordable housing to civil servants, the Blake administration would seek and incentivize public-private partnerships to expand quality affordable housing options for NYC educators.
- *Teaching community housing:* The Blake administration would build and provide long term support to build housing for teaching communities with both shared spaces and private units for families.
- *Tuition forgiveness and tax credit programs* for education professionals and individuals committed to public service.
- *Educator retirement communities:* Many educators struggle to make ends meet upon retirement. This plan would provide education focused housing communities for retired educators and partnerships with organizations like SCORE to provide older adults with programs that harness their professional backgrounds and experiences, with support services focused on navigating retirement and aging.

### Advancing Careers and Recognition:

- *Instructional Coaches and Mentorship Roles:* For high-performing teachers, providing opportunities to take on leadership roles such as instructional coaches or mentors is a great way to retain talent. These roles allow experienced teachers to stay in the classroom while also having a broader impact on their schools. Additionally, these positions help foster a collaborative and supportive teaching environment where teachers learn from each other and share best practices. This not only supports teacher development but also strengthens the overall school culture.
- *Celebrating educators:* Ensuring educators having deep impact and building the quality relationships needed with our families and students would be prioritized not only through ceremonies, but use of media outlets and City channels to help educate the public about what they could and should expect from the educators in their schools and local districts.

## Diversity and Reflection of Community Needs:

Ensuring that existing teachers develop core skills in successfully teaching in multicultural classrooms, and that teachers reflect the diversity of their students is critical to creating an inclusive and relatable learning environment. By building diverse pipelines of high quality educators and offering targeted recruitment strategies, these policies support a teaching workforce that can understand and address the unique challenges of the communities they serve. Students benefit when their teachers bring a variety of perspectives, and this can also promote better student outcomes, particularly for historically underserved groups.

These proposals not only help bring more people into the profession but also create a supportive environment that encourages teachers to stay and grow in their careers. This holistic approach is important for long-term sustainability in education, ensuring that every student has access to high-quality instruction from educators who are well-prepared, motivated, and supported.

By implementing these strategies, the city can ensure that every student has the knowledge, resources, and support they need to not only envision a future that includes college but to actively pursue and achieve it. Early exposure to apprenticeships, trades, college, personalized assistance, and family engagement will make the transition from elementary school to high school to higher education a more accessible and achievable goal for all students, regardless of background.



## RACIAL EQUITY

Addressing the profound racial segregation and disparities in access to equitable and quality public education within the New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) system is critical to ensuring that all students, regardless of race, background, or neighborhood, have the opportunity to succeed. These inequities are deeply rooted in the history of segregation, class disparities, and structural racism, and they manifest in unequal access to resources, high-quality teachers, and opportunities for advancement.

The Blake administration would tackle these issues with a multifaceted, long-term approach, while rethinking the current model of Mayoral Control in a way that better serves the needs of all New York City students, families, and educators.

Additionally, the administration would focus on evidenced based programs which seek to provide resources and fully develop the talent pipeline for people of color.

## EQUITY IN SCHOOL PROGRAMS & AN ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

**Explore adjusting school district boundaries**, in partnership with the New York City Council, PEP, and our partners in NYS government, to ensure more equitable distribution of resources and a more diverse student population.

**Specialized High School Admissions:** Automatically admitting the top 5% of 8th-grade students to specialized high schools could make these institutions more accessible to talented students, potentially reducing barriers like the high-stakes admissions process and test prep regime.

**Enhanced programming** and budget lines in civic engagement, financial literacy, STEAM and other areas that are increasing student outcomes and expand upon them.

- **Civic Engagement and Financial Literacy:** Adding these courses to the curriculum in middle and high school ensures that students are better prepared to participate actively in society and manage their finances responsibly. These are essential life skills.

**Explore providing nimble additional funding to schools with high needs**, ensuring that they have resources and accountability to hire skilled teachers, maintain smaller class sizes, and offer extracurricular programs in athletics, the arts, and community service.



**Appropriately fund community school strategies,** which offer wraparound services such as after-school programs, mental health counseling, and family support, in areas where traditional schools may be struggling and need assistance.

- School-Based Mental Health Services: Expanding access to mental health services within schools acknowledges the growing importance of student well-being, especially as mental health challenges increase among young people.
- End the school-to-prison pipeline by implementing trauma-informed approaches that help address underlying issues contributing to behavioral challenges.
- Support for two generation strategies that provide caring adults with access to career training, literacy, English language learning, and legal advice and estate planning, among others.

## EXPANSION OF THE YOUNG MEN'S INITIATIVE & MY SISTER'S KEEPER PROGRAMS

The My Brother's Keeper program's (now the Young Men's Initiative) principles unleash the power of communities working together to solve problems for boys and young men of color, at a level to improve real life outcomes. Communities are the unit of change to realize improved life outcomes for boys and young men of color.

Research shows that collective work of community leaders, members, and public and private agencies pursuing the same goals for boys and young men of color can lead to sustainable, place-based change. We believe that cross-sector collaborative action is central to how communities will achieve improved outcomes for boys and young men of color.

Similarly, the Blake Administration would build on recent movements to empower young women of color and the establishment of the My Sister's Keeper strategy to enhance existing opportunities and introducing innovations for both young men and women through the deep integration of braided learning and early mentorship opportunities with a pipeline to college and career coaching for long term sustainability.

## ACCESS TO QUALITY SCHOOLS FOLLOW THE STUDENTS

The first charter school in New York City was the Sisulu-Walker school which enriched the lives of many children. The Blake campaign is clear, responsibility to support all public-school students rests with the Mayor and Chancellor regardless of the type of school students attend. The administration will collaborate with all school leaders and communities to ensure students are meeting with success and have access to opportunities to thrive whether those students are attending traditional or existing charter schools. Increasing the cap for opening new charter schools is not a priority for the Blake administration while there are "zombie" charters in existence that are not of service to students and families. We also need to embrace learning from innovative schools, including increased management review for charters, which can elevate bright spots.

## EXPAND PRE-K ENROLLMENT & THE UNIVERSAL CHILDCARE PIPELINE

Ensuring all families who want to enroll their children in Pre-K and Pre-K 3 have access to a seat is critical for early childhood education. Universal access can help close gaps in readiness for later schooling. On a parallel path, universal childcare would be a feeder program to Pre-K 3 and Pre-K enrollment and work closely with our HeadStart and afterschool care providers to ensure a continuum of learning.



**\$4M**

to expand the successful Linking Immigrant Families to Early Childhood Education



**\$320M**

to restore 3-K and Pre-K



**\$7M**

Support for childcare bridge programs

Ensuring all families who want to enroll their children in Pre-K and Pre-K 3 have access to a seat is critical for early childhood education. Universal access can help close gaps in readiness for later schooling. On a parallel path, universal childcare would be a feeder program to Pre-K 3 and Pre-K enrollment and work closely with our Head Start and afterschool care providers to ensure a continuum of learning.

Technology for the good would be implemented to track authentic student progress and assist with early diagnosis of potential learning challenges, while providing family supports to manage those challenges.

The Blake administration is committed to ensuring all children who applied for 3-K for the 2026-2027 school year will have access to a high-quality early childhood education seat and has delivered on that commitment. To accomplish this goal, the administration will add \$30 million in the FY27 Executive Budget to immediately meet the needs of families.

Additionally, the administration would:

- Expand to full day and full year programs
- Invest in advertising and recruitment outreach
- Build a framework to bridge Universal Childcare Programs to Pre-K 3 programs.

## LINKAGE TO UNIVERSAL CHILDCARE PROGRAMS

With assistance from partners in NYS government, New York City will be the largest municipality to implement Universal Childcare for all income levels. Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine published an excellent plan for expanding childcare options in New York City. The Blake administration would expand upon Borough President Levine program and convene policy experts and member of the Office of Management and Budget to create a financial path forward for our city's families.

Universal childcare is not just a compassionate solution — it's an economic necessity. The statistics you've provided paint a stark picture of the strain many families are facing. When 80% of families find childcare costs to be unreasonably high, and a significant portion of their income goes toward paying for it, it becomes clear that the current system is unsustainable. High-quality early education is proven to be crucial for child development, but the reality is that far too many families can't access it due to cost barriers.

Universal childcare could provide a path forward. By making childcare affordable for all families, regardless of income, we would:

- **Support Early Childhood Development:** Access to affordable, high-quality childcare enables young children to reach critical developmental milestones. These years are essential for cognitive, social, and emotional growth, and providing a consistent, safe, and nurturing environment can set the foundation for lifelong success.
- **Empower Parents:** With affordable childcare, parents—especially those in single-parent households or with essential jobs—would have the ability to participate more fully in the workforce without sacrificing their children's well-being. This can help increase overall workforce participation and reduce economic inequality.
- **Stabilize Families:** Reducing the financial burden of childcare costs would provide more stability for families. It would also allow parents to focus on their careers and other aspects of their lives, knowing that their children are receiving the care and education they need.
- **Stimulate the Economy:** The economic benefits of universal childcare are significant. By allowing more parents to stay in the workforce or enter it, the city can boost its economy, particularly by supporting lower-income and essential workers. It could also help reduce the number of families leaving the city in search of more affordable living options, thus keeping families and talent in New York City.
- **Tackle Inequality:** The disproportionate effects on single-parent families and low-income families are undeniable. Universal childcare would help level the playing field by making quality childcare accessible to everyone, regardless of their income, reducing the barriers that currently exist for marginalized groups.

By expanding the existing universal Pre-K and 3-K programs to include children under three, our city will address one of the most crucial gaps in the current system. The early years are vital for cognitive, emotional, and social development, and research consistently shows that the earlier children have access to high-quality early education and care, the better their outcomes in school and life.



## COLLEGE AND APPRENTICESHIP READINESS FOR ALL

This initiative will ensure that **every student** has access to the **resources and supports** necessary to pursue a path to college or an apprenticeship; a critical step toward leveling the playing field for all students, especially those from historically underserved communities. By providing individualized assistance and fostering early exposure to college, this approach not only empowers students but also breaks down barriers that might otherwise prevent them from envisioning higher education as a tangible goal.



### KEY COMPONENTS & METHODS

#### • High School Supports for College & Apprenticeship Readiness

- Every high school student will have access to personalized resources that will help them navigate the often-overwhelming college application process and prepare for post-secondary education. Some of the specific supports include:
  - **College Campus Visits:** Providing students with the opportunity to visit college campuses will give them first-hand exposure to the environment and experience what it might be like to attend. This exposure will also help students become familiar with college campuses and alleviate the fear or uncertainty they might feel about the transition.
  - **Application Assistance:** Many students, especially those from lower-income families, may struggle with completing college applications due to a lack of resources or guidance. Schools will provide access to staff or outside organizations that can assist students with filling out applications, understanding deadlines, and navigating the often-complicated requirements.
  - **Free CUNY Attendance for Top Students:** Offering free tuition for the top 35% of students in their high school class at CUNY schools is a powerful way to promote college access and alleviate the financial burden for students who demonstrate academic excellence. Within three years of launching this strategy, the Blake administration would offer all HS graduates and GED earners free enrollment in CUNY schools.
  - **College Mentorship:** Pairing students with current college students as mentors will provide valuable insights and advice, as well as help build a supportive connection that students can rely on for encouragement, guidance, and practical tips.
  - **College Affordability Planning:** Affording college is one of the biggest obstacles for many students. By offering support in setting up a strategy with their families, including exploring scholarships, financial aid options, and budgeting, students can better understand the financial aspects of attending college and create a concrete plan for funding their education.
  - **College Bearing Courses and Credit Accumulation:** Providing all students with the opportunity for rigorous studies leading to college readiness. According to the study by the National Student Clearinghouse, students who engage in advanced placement course, or college-level coursework are more likely to graduate from college, will benefit from reduced college costs and complete their studies in a shorter amount of time.
  - **College Prep Courses:** Offering elective courses or after-school programs that focus on the skills needed to succeed in college, such as critical thinking, essay writing, research skills, and time management.



- **Partnerships with Colleges:** Schools can partner with nearby colleges to offer dual-enrollment opportunities, college-credit-bearing courses, or other academic enrichment programs for high school students. These partnerships allow students to experience college-level work while still in high school, giving them a head start on their education.
- **Enhanced support for dual enrollment strategies:** Strategies such as P-Tech and Bard Early College High School have proven to launch students into successful collegiate careers. The Blake administration would identify existing strategies and innovations for potential expansion into traditional schools to expand access.

### **Middle School Exposure to College & Apprenticeships**

- Starting the conversation about trades, apprenticeships, and higher education early in a student's academic journey is key to sparking interest and fostering ambition. Middle school is an ideal time to introduce these concepts, and providing students with the opportunity to visit college campuses at this stage can:
  - **Demystify College:** For many middle school students, college can feel distant or out of reach. College visits will help normalize the idea of college and allow students to see themselves as potential college-bound students.
  - **Start Goal-Setting Early:** Early exposure to college can prompt students to set goals for their academic progress and begin considering the pathways that will help them reach those goals. This can drive motivation and academic success.
  - **Inspire Curiosity:** Exposure to different types of colleges and universities can also help students understand the wide variety of options available, from large public universities to smaller liberal arts colleges, community colleges, and vocational schools.

### **Family Engagement**

- The involvement of families in the college preparation process is crucial for ensuring that students have the support they need at home. Some specific ways families can be included are:
  - **Workshops for Families:** Schools can offer workshops or informational sessions for families, supported by free childcare, that walk them through the college application process, financial aid options, and how to support their child through the transition. These workshops can also address common concerns families may have, such as the emotional and logistical aspects of sending a child to college.
  - **Strategy Building for College Affordability:** Families can be guided in developing a strategy for how they will afford college. This might include financial literacy education, help with applying for financial aid and scholarships, and understanding how to manage student loans if necessary.
  - **Multi-language Engagement:** In our City of diverse families and cultures, having sessions in families' primary languages can enhance access for students who would otherwise face barriers accessing resources as first generation college students.

### **Partner with Unions & Apprenticeship Programs**

- Building intentional citywide opportunities for our students exploring alternate pathways to family sustaining careers will be critical for New York City. As a new economy unfolds and industry shifts into green labor jobs and use of artificial intelligence at our ports, in the automotive and construction sectors, and with entry-level roles in a range of other industries – we need to build the infrastructure and relationships to position our students for long-term world class success.

## BRAIDED LEARNING TO SCALE

### Middle School Braided Learning Integration System-wide:

- Based on the successful implementation of braided learning by **Here to Here**, a policy and community change organization in The Bronx, the Blake administration would bring braided learning to scale in New York City with wide scale implementation of braided pathways community of practice
- The Community of Practice as defined by Here to Here, is a shared learning opportunity targeted to NYC-based high schools, CUNY institutions and their partner organization to build and enhance efforts to braid work and learning, using the **Key Distinguishers** as a framework.
- Together, members raise issues schools and programs are wrestling with and/or are preventing work from reaching more students or particular subsets of students; build relationships with and learn from peers in like and differing settings; and receive coaching from expert DOE staff, experienced CoP members and other experts in the field.

### Additionally, they will **support the Youth Talent Development Field** by:

- Building a shared language and framework for braiding high-quality work-based learning experiences into traditional academic pathways based on the Key Distinguishers
- Elevating exemplar practices that can be lifted up across the youth talent development field and drive community-wide change.
- Applying small “p” policy to design solutions to shared challenges, advocate for what’s possible, and create as many winners as possible in the youth talent development system.
- Goals of Braided Learning Community of Practice
  - The goals of the Community of Practice are to:
    - Help participants develop a deep understanding of the Key Distinguishers, in concept and practice;
    - Expand best practice and improve the quality of the work;
    - Identify policy and structural barriers to making best practice common practice; and
    - Contribute to the five factors that drive systems-change:
      - An understanding of what should be;
      - A strengthened, shared vision for youth talent development in the 21st century;
      - Documentation of what’s possible through strong examples of braided work-based learning;
      - Strong relationships
      - Identification of critical gaps and mobilization to advocate for broad change.

Additionally, a comprehensive support program for apprenticeships and the trades would dovetail this integration to ensure a workforce for the market gaps in New York City’s career pathways.

## COMPLEMENTARY INITIATIVES

- Explore adding a Deputy Chancellor who oversees each borough
- Fully fund adult literacy programs:
  - To continue serving the 11,000 to 16,000 students DYCD reports, the City needs to invest between \$29.7 million and \$43.2 million for Adult Literacy at a rate of \$2700 per student.
  - As part of this investment vision, baseline the \$21,720,000 for DYCD Adult Literacy that appears in the Mayor’s Preliminary Budget for FY25.
  - Ensure that the \$21.7M is included in DYCD’s Adult Literacy RFP for the next 3 years.
  - Ensure that the DYCD RFP is structured in ways that still award existing high quality/high performing programs as well as new applicants, and make awards at funding rates that actually cover program costs.
- Restore \$6.9 million to preserve afterschool programming for 3,538 students, particularly the COMPASS Explore Program.
- Baseline funding for NYC Youth Build Programs
- Restore \$19.6 million to ensure a full day and week of programming for Summer Rising middle school students.
- Continue to expand the SYEP program with integration into year-round professional development, paid internships and college readiness initiatives

## INCREASING SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS FOR OUR YOUNGEST NEW YORKERS

The Blake administration will increase preschool special education classrooms to ensure early childhood education across New York City is inclusive of all children. Michael Blake believes this strategy will prepare our youngest students to be included into the least restrictive settings available in their K-12 classrooms. This investment will include a historic commitment of \$130 million. The administration would further seek to base \$100 million for preschool contract enhancements for community-based organizations and the addition of \$60 million in new city funds for New York City Public Schools to expand preschool special education seats across district schools.



The COVID pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on our student with disabilities. The Our City. Our Home. Our Future. Education Plan will make every resource available to better support students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). It extends from the DOE's youngest learners to students preparing for graduation by investing \$250 million:

- Launching afterschool and Saturday programs for students with IEPs to receive additional instruction and related services.
- Adding 1,500 preschool special education seats by fall 2027.
- Expanding Committees on Preschool Special Education to expedite evaluations and IEP meetings.
- Providing eligible students ages 21+ with continued instruction toward receiving their diploma or other exit credential, or to receive consultation to facilitate post-secondary plans for college and career readiness.
- Expanding family workshops and information sessions through our Beyond Access Series, which supports families of students with disabilities.

## SCHOOL MEALS & FOOD WASTE

The Blake administration would commit \$55 million in additional resources to increase meal quality and regularity throughout the school system. Furthermore, meal times would be adjusted and in-school space managed to ensure students receive meals at appropriate meal times throughout the day and have access to a universal fresh food program.

Additionally, the administration would:

- Restore \$60M to Department of Education's Office of Food and Nutrition Services
- Enhancing our city's upstate and downstate connections the city would seek to end food waste of produce and proteins and ensure food is appropriately sourced from farms, and food centers to our school communities.
- Enhance food service contract vetting and quality control measures in our schools
- Adjust school meal times to appropriately integrate student success and nutrition
- Partner with Hunts Point Food Distribution Center and organizations like Sharing Excess, City Harvest, and the Food Bank for New York to eliminate food waste and ensure students and families have appropriate school meals and resources for meals at home.
- Expand the Health Bucks Initiative with in school farmers' markets

## CONNECTIVITY & TECHNOLOGY FOR ALL



By early March 2020, the impact of COVID-19 changed the way New Yorkers navigated the bustling city with such speed that the ever-changing narrative and safety precautions caused anxiety, distrust, and finger pointing among public officials. Our City's vast school system, which serves more than 1.1 million students, became a focus of concern for parents, teachers, and the general public as more districts across the nation moved to remote learning platforms or ended the school year early.

New York City children have been situated in classrooms where their families' economic resources and social capital dictate their access to a sound education in a racially and ethnically diverse setting.

More than 400,000 New York City children live in households below the federal poverty guidelines, many in single-parent households, and most concentrated in certain Bronx and Brooklyn neighborhoods. The pandemic underscore non-existent and inadequate investment in our city's technology infrastructure, in our public schools and in the vast NYCHA housing system. During COVID-19 the distribution of devices and access to broadband has been spotty and, in some instances, non-existent — especially for students living in temporary housing or in need of special education services.

To prevent this from occurring again, the Blake administration would create education stock piles and integrate technology readiness by:

- Every student will not only receive computer science, coding and technology education in elementary, middle, and high school within the next 10 years, but technology integration and connectivity will be mandated throughout every community in New York City. Our city will learn from the lessons of COVID-19 and ensure that our students and our city are prepared with the in-house, in-apartment technology and services required to receive a quality education.
- Through this commitment, every student will learn the fundamentals of computer science, like coding, robotics and web design. This promotes critical skills like thinking creatively, working as a team, and interacting with technology, as well as technical skills that will power the 21st century economy.
  - Cost: \$265 million commitment over 10 years.
- The pandemic led to an unprecedented investment in technology, with over 800,000 devices purchased by the NYCDOE and schools. The Connectivity & Technology for All Initiative builds on this technological advancement by guaranteeing all students have access to a digital device and ensuring all students become fully fluent digital member of NYC with the ability to fully participate in our economy and growing market sectors.

As part of this commitment, the DOE will:

- Guarantee a device available for every Pre-K-12 student
- End cell-phone use in school
- Expand access to the City's rigorous Computer Science 4 All initiative to all middle and high school students in the system
- Train a cadre of educators in advanced computer science.
  - Cost: \$130 million commitment over 10 years.

Additionally, New York City would deeply invest in protecting our existing digital infrastructure and communication systems and expand these systems to equitably reach the entire city.

## CLOSING

The **Out City. Our Home. Our Future. Education Plan** addresses many, but not all, challenges facing our public education system. The plan is not a panacea; however, it is an achievable plan which invests New York tax dollars in education and builds the bench of New Yorkers that will integrate into our local economies and strengthen our City.

The plan, focused predominantly on PreK-12 education programs has supplemental strategies for Universal Childcare, and solutions for public and private higher education institutions.

Our city government needs to authentically prioritize investment in the education of our young people. This investment will require an examination of our budget systems and city operations, partnering with New York State to secure federal resources, enhancing public and private partnerships, building back New York City's businesses and tax base, and harnessing and appropriately deploying new tax resources from cannabis and the gaming industry.

The plan and the 20% increased investment in our city's education system will position our children for success and ensure that New York City is a leader in education that values the child and understands that success is directly linked to the stability of our neighborhoods and economic strength of our city.

As Mayor, Michael Blake would leverage his reputation of respect and integrity in Albany and his ability to build consensus among law makers, ensuring that the Mayoralty does not function in a vacuum and respect that the government consists of branches that work together to deliver for our city.



**MICHAEL  
BLAKE**  
NYC MAYOR   
*Tomorrow Begins Today.*

## ABOUT MICHAEL BLAKE



**Michael Blake is a son of The Bronx and Jamaican Immigrants, a child of God and New York City public schools and a lifelong New Yorker who cares about the people.**

**As New Yorkers, we pay too much, get back too little and we deserve Better.**

**Michael is running for Mayor because we need a Manager with a plan to address Cost of Living, Affordability and Public Services by implementing Universal Child Care, ensuring Civics, Financial Literacy and Mental Health for all students, restore Public Safety while improving Public Transportation and demanding working and middle class housing and funding programs. Michael believes that we can help New Yorkers make and keep more money in their pocket while we get more New Yorkers to come back home. We can provide economic incentives for Businesses to succeed while also lowering taxes. We can End Homelessness and Poverty, while also reimbursing our Nonprofits faster.**

**Michael, a son of a manufacturing mother, a 1199SEIU father and a Brother of an US Army Veteran, is a Small Business owner as the Founder & CEO of Atlas Strategy Group and the KAIROS DEMOCRACY PROJECT and the President of Next Level Sports and Entertainment.**

**Blake served as a New York Assembly Member for 6 years including as the Chair of the Mitchell-Lama subcommittee. Moreover, Michael's Bipartisan Prompt Pay bill led to businesses contracting with New York state government to be paid in 15 days instead of 30, while he also led the creation of the only statewide My Brother's Keeper program in the country, co-led the Diversity In Medicine scholarships and regularly was a male voice in support of Women and Families.**

**Rev. Blake is also a Brother of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., the Prince Hall Masons and the 100 Black Men.**

**You can learn more at: [www.blakefornyc.com](http://www.blakefornyc.com)**



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