



February 17, 2011  
For Immediate Release  
Contact: Ari Gershman

## **MARK WEPRIN CRITICIZES DOE'S LATEST ACTION "NOW THEY ARE TAKING AWAY MONEY FROM SCHOOL BUDGETS"**

Council Member Mark S. Weprin sent a letter to Chancellor Cathleen P. Black, New York City Department of Education (DOE), in opposition to the recent directive to school principals indicating that, according to the Deferred Program Planning Initiative, they can retain only fifty percent of the funds that remain at the end of the school year. In years past, principals were able to roll over one hundred percent of residual monies from one year to the next.

"This policy is misguided," said Council Member Mark S. Weprin. "It punishes school children for the fiscal responsibility of their principals."

Council Member Weprin noted that allowing principals to roll over remaining funds rewards careful budgeting, leading to a small cushion in many schools' budgets. When the inevitable budget cuts arrive, the savvy planners' preparedness helps them to better weather the storm. This year in particular, many principals, fully aware of the severe budgetary challenges facing our City and State, saved money that they intended to transfer for use during the next school year. Withdrawing those funds is an affront to the principals' prudent efforts as well as to the students they have tried to protect.

In addition, Council Member Weprin indicated that removing unspent funds perversely incentivizes principals to spend every last dime, which is exactly the opposite of what DOE should be doing in the current environment.

"The DOE has often said that principals are the CEOs of their schools, but it's true in rhetoric only," said Council Member Mark S. Weprin. "Removing half of unspent monies seriously undermines the concept."

(letter attached)

**DISTRICT OFFICE**  
73-03 BELL BOULEVARD  
OAKLAND GARDENS, NY 11364  
**TEL:** (718) 468-0137  
**FAX:** (718) 468-0178

**CITY HALL OFFICE**  
250 BROADWAY, SUITE 1807  
NEW YORK, NY 10007  
**TEL:** (212) 788-6984  
**FAX:** (718) 608-6382

THE COUNCIL OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

**MARK S. WEPRIN**

COUNCIL MEMBER, 23<sup>RD</sup> DISTRICT, QUEENS

**CHAIR**  
ZONING AND FRANCHISES SUBCOMMITTEE

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**COMMITTEES**  
LAND USE  
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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS  
TECHNOLOGY

February 17, 2011

Chancellor Cathleen P. Black  
New York City Department of Education  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Chancellor Black:

I am writing to you regarding the Department of Education's recent communiqué to school principals indicating that, according to the Deferred Program Planning Initiative, they can retain only fifty percent of the funds that remain at the end of the school year. I believe the policy is misguided and I urge you to reconsider.

I understand that in years past, principals were able to roll over one hundred percent of residual monies from one school year to the next. In this way, DOE rewarded careful budgeting, allowing principals whose prudence yielded surplus funds to establish a small cushion. When the inevitable budget cuts arrived, the savvy planners' preparedness helped them to better weather the storm. In the natural budget fluctuations, there were ups and downs. Retaining funds from year to year allowed principals to smooth out the bumps, avoiding drastic spending changes.

This year, fully aware of the severe budgetary challenges facing our City and State, many principals were appropriately parsimonious, with the aim of transferring funds to the next school year. They acted to preserve staffing and programming for their students next year despite the bleak fiscal climate. To withdraw half of the money they worked so hard to save is an affront to their efforts and to the students they are trying to protect.

In addition, removing unspent funds from schools' budgets at the end of each school year perversely incentivizes principals to spend every last dime, which is exactly the opposite of what DOE should be doing in the current environment. DOE leadership has often said that principals are like corporate CEOs, responsible for their schools and the fiscal management thereof. Removing fifty percent of unspent monies will seriously undermine that concept.

In the interest of fairness, consistency, and fiscal responsibility, I urge you to reconsider the regulation in question. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



MARK S. WEPRIN  
Council Member

MSW: ag

CC: Deputy Chancellor Kathleen Grimm, NYC DOE  
Nnennaya Okezie, City Legislative Affairs Director, NYC DOE  
Anita Saunders, District Superintendent, CSD 26