



## THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

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### **PROTECTING NYC CLASSROOMS, SPEAKER QUINN IDENTIFIES ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CUTS AND PRESENTS IDEAS TO STRENGTHEN MAYORAL CONTROL**

**New York, May 20th, 2008** – In remarks delivered at a Crain’s Business Breakfast Forum, Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn identified approximately \$160 million in alternative cuts to New York City schools and discussed several proposals to strengthen and improve Mayoral control over the City’s public schools.

#### **ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CUTS**

Responding to the Administration’s \$191 million in proposed cuts to New York City’s classrooms, Speaker Quinn identified several alternative areas for potential cuts to the City’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 budget. Many of these proposed alternative cuts are contained by the Department of Education’s (DOE) budget, but in areas with less of a direct impact on students and essential resources such as new books and after school programs. In total, these proposed cuts would put approximately \$160 million back into New York City classrooms.

**Speaker Quinn stated**, “Our schools face cuts of \$191 million in City funding next year. I want to be clear – I believe that these cuts to the classroom are totally unacceptable. Even during lean times our budget should reflect shared priorities and embrace who we are as a City. Because whether a child is considered gifted or has a learning disability, whether they live in a homeless shelter or on Central Park West we have the exact same obligation to carry them to their full educational potential. It’s the most important thing we’ll ever do.”

Specifically, the City Council’s alternative education cuts center around reducing the DOE’s budget for education contracts. Although Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein took steps to reduce all areas of education spending, the \$3 billion budget for education contracts increased by over \$250 million – an approximate nine percent increase. The City Council is proposing an across-the-board, four percent reduction in the FY 2009 DOE contracts budget.

In addition, the Council recently announced it would forgo adding new programs to this year’s budget. This will allow Council Members to focus on restoring crucial city services like education funding. The Council’s own budget reductions will provide at least \$2 million in savings. Speaker Quinn also identified alternative cuts to other agencies, such as \$17 million from the Human Resources Administration.

#### **IMPROVING MAYORAL CONTROL**

With legislation sanctioning Mayoral control over the City’s public schools up for reauthorization in 2009, Speaker Quinn outlined several proposals to strengthen the scope and impact of Mayoral responsibility for the future authorization.

“I strongly support the reauthorization of Mayoral control,” said **Speaker Quinn**. “There are some people who want to get rid of it altogether, or create new layers of bureaucracy – ones that would undermine its effectiveness. For the sake of our school children, we can’t allow that to happen.”

Specifically, the Speaker Quinn’s proposals to improve Mayoral control include:

- ***Strengthening the role of Parent Coordinators***. Serving in a greater capacity as parent advocates and organizers, Parent Coordinators would be held accountable to both parents and principals for increased parental involvement.
- ***Impartial collection of school performance data and achievement measures***. The Independent Budget Office would be responsible for collecting, analyzing, and publicly reporting education data, giving parents comprehensive and impartial performance information about individual schools.
- ***Widening local legislative authority over City schools***. Currently, the City Council is habitually preempted by the State from taking legislative action to improve the health and safety of New York City students.

“We’re lawmakers, not education experts. But we need to be the ones who get involved when parents have problems. Mayoral Control should bring with it municipal authority, so that the decisions that affect New York City school children get made by both sides of City Hall – not in the State Capitol,” said **Speaker Quinn**.

The City Council’s Working Group on Mayoral Control and School Governance, chaired by Council Members James Vacca, David Yassky and Robert Jackson, will be releasing its recommendations for the reauthorization of Mayoral control in the upcoming month.

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