

New York State Citizen Review Panels

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February 25, 2010

Honorable Michael Bloomberg
Office of the Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007


Dear Mayor Bloomberg:

The New York City Citizen's Review Panel for Child Protective Services (CPS) strongly opposes the MTA's announced budget cuts of discounted transportation for students in New York City. With this fare increase, thousands of our NYC students will be unable to attend school on a regular basis due to financial constraints. This change in policy is likely to increase school absences and increase the number of families reported to the State Central Register (SCR) for education neglect simply because they lack the financial resources to pay for transportation.

The proposed change will hurt our children's education opportunities. As absences increase, more and more children will become truants and their futures will be compromised. In addition, families who are reported to the SCR will endure an intrusive investigation by the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) to determine whether or not a family member bears responsibility for not making efforts to have their child attend school. At a time when poverty is increasing, so many of our families are struggling to provide the basics: clothing, food, and shelter. These families cannot absorb these increased costs. Also, the number of increased education neglect reports will place a burden on the child welfare workforce as they struggle to meet the added demand for investigations, taking valuable time away from those cases where there is a serious concern regarding child safety.

We believe the safety of the children of New York City should be of the highest priority. Their needs and well-being must be at the top of the list to be protected from the MTA budget cuts, or at best there will be many more serious and expensive consequences waiting for New York City down the road. Saving dollars today by asking families to pay for student transportation will cost the city much more in the long term. We ask that you reconsider this proposal.

Sincerely,



David Lansner
Co-Chair
NYC panel



Elba Montalvo
Co-Chair
NYC Panel

cc: PV Anantharam, City Council Speaker Quinn, Councilmember Vacca, Councilmember Jackson