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SUPPORT FOR MAYOR DE BLASIO'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SCHOOL RENEWAL PROGRAM

NEW YORK—Today, in a speech before hundreds of parents and community leaders, Mayor Bill de Blasio unveiled the School Renewal Program, a new strategy to turn around New York City's most challenged schools. The School Renewal Program will invest \$150 million to fundamentally change the direction of and accelerate progress in 94 struggling schools, in stark contrast with the old approach of simply closing or phasing out schools.

Learn more: nyc.gov/renewalschools

"Earlier this year, working with Mayor de Blasio, we were finally able to achieve my dream of fully funded statewide universal pre-K. And now, the Mayor has put forth yet another important plan to transform struggling schools and give all our children a chance to succeed. This is the kind of visionary thinking Assembly Democrats have been advocating for years in order to level the playing field by providing resources and support for families and children. I look forward to working with the Mayor and City officials, so that we can make our schools the best they can possibly be," said **Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver**.

"Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Fariña are to be commended for a plan to allow challenged schools to be renewed. It is important that schools be given the resources and the assistance to renew their commitment to students, parents, teachers, administrators and communities. This plan is a balanced attempt to do that. I look forward to working with NYC DOE on making sure that these opportunities are available and properly funded as this important program moves forward. Chancellor Fariña has the expertise and Mayor de Blasio the commitment to make this a success. Our children deserve the best help we can give them," said **Catherine Nolan, Chair of the State Assembly Education Committee** and the parent of a New York City public school student.

"Our students are the future of our city, and we must make sure we are educating and meeting the unique needs of all of them," said **City Council Education Committee Chairperson Daniel Dromm**. "The School Renewal Program reflects a commitment to students in all our schools, engaging school communities, educators, and experts and providing necessary supports to turn schools around. New York City schools must do whatever it takes, so that all students are learning in the classroom and thriving."

"For the past 12 years, New York City's 'answer' for struggling schools was simple: warehouse our neediest students, starve their schools of support, and then close their schools, if they didn't miraculously turn around. It was a political press release, not an educational solution. As a teacher, if you see a struggling student, it is your job to come up with a plan to help that child. You don't throw that student out of your class. It is refreshing that New York City is finally willing to clean up this mess and take responsibility to help schools instead of rushing to close them," said **Michael Mulgrew, President of the United Federation of Teachers**.

"Nurturing local schools through the School Renewal Program is like nurturing the heart and soul of the whole surrounding community," said **Ernest Logan, President of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators**. "It is just common sense to support and improve individual schools in ways that speak to their unique populations and situations and to enlist the greater school community to help with this enlightened effort. This initiative is consistent with the Chancellor's philosophy of collaboration over competition, and it reflects the deeply held values of most of our school leaders."

“Based on our experience with a pilot community learning project, we are encouraged that bringing support services into troubled schools will allow educators to dedicate more time and energy to teaching, while the social, emotional, and health care needs of students and their families are attended to by others,” said **Kathryn Wylde, President & CEO of the Partnership for New York City**. “This approach of engaging the whole community in helping struggling schools makes a lot of sense.”

“Mayor de Blasio’s School Renewal Program is a welcome effort to meet the needs of 94 schools citywide most in need of improvement—looking beyond just test scores. What’s especially significant to me is the inclusion of culturally appropriate mental health services, said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. “Together, with adding an extra hour a day to the school day, partnering with community-based organizations to offer 360-degree support, and ensuring accountability, this plan means we should see real progress after the SRP takes hold in each school.”

“I applaud Mayor de Blasio’s announcement of this important initiative that is proactively addressing the needs of our City’s students to help them succeed in their future. Investing in our kids is key to building a better community and economy, which will benefit our entire city and nation. I will continue to support the Mayor’s unparalleled commitment to improving education for every student in our great city,” said **Congressman Charles Rangel**.

“We can’t simply give up on schools when they fail to provide our students with the education they need. With this holistic and innovative program, Mayor de Blasio has chosen to take a different approach to improve education at our public’s schools that need it most, and I commend him for that. Thanks to this effort, we will be able to turn around 43 struggling schools in the Bronx, and improve the educational outcomes of thousands of students, all with the input and collaboration of the local community,” said **Congressman Serrano**.

“As a former public school teacher, I know that investing in our public school system is the single greatest thing we can do to improve education in the city,” said **Congressman Eliot Engel**. “The School Renewal Program’s investment of \$150 million will fundamentally change the way 94 schools are able to educate students, by strengthening their resources and improving the overall learning environment. These schools need our help and support, and I applaud the mayor for this initiative and for having a clear vision of what we need to do to help ailing schools.”

“An investment in our children’s education is the most important kind of investment we can make,” said **Congressman Joe Crowley**. “The School Renewal Program represents the type of commitment that’s needed to lift up our low performance schools and ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive. I thank Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Fariña for their leadership in this transformative effort that will put our public schools first.”

“I am proud to partner with Mayor de Blasio and our community leaders to improve New York City schools. The School Renewal Program will create a framework and support system to ensure our students are receiving a high quality education,” said **Congressman Steve Israel**.

“Access to quality education at schools that provide the necessary tools for learning, development, and growth for our children is one of the most significant pillars of a productive community and nation. The Mayor’s new ‘School Renewal Program’ builds on this fundamental need by transforming struggling schools to provide new services that support families, mental health and physical well-being, along with providing extra instruction including after-school, weekend, and summer programs. I thank the Mayor for this important initiative, and I am eager to work in conjunction with his office on implementation in the Fifth District to ensure that our children are provided with equal opportunity for higher achievement and success,” said **Congressman Gregory Meeks**.

“Our communities have long been in need of a new approach to build and maintain the schools that our children deserve. As a member of the State Senate’s New York City Education Subcommittee, it is encouraging to see a plan that is tailor-made and invests the time and resources that our struggling schools require. I applaud Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Farina for launching the School Renewal Program,” said **Senator Tony Avella**.

“After years of shrinking educational budgets that deeply hurt the children in my district, I am overjoyed to see the NYS Department of Education, Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Farina taking these steps to help our students succeed,” said **Senator Velmanette Montgomery**. “The seven schools that will participate in my district deserve these resources, and I welcome the returned investment in our futures.”

“I am very excited about the Mayor’s School Renewal Program, because it will transform our neighborhoods by creating community schools. Community Schools have been a proven tool towards strengthening education in cities and strengthening family involvement,” said **Senator James Sanders, Jr.**

“I applaud Mayor Bill de Blasio’s plan to strengthen our public school system with the School Renewal Program. New York City will now be able to provide even more support for families and students who attend our most challenged schools. Through this new program, students will be equipped with new and innovative tools that will create a strong learning environment for schools most in need of additional support. Every student deserves an equal opportunity to receive a strong public school education,” said **Senator Jose M. Serrano.**

“It is our responsibility to provide our children with all the necessary resources they need to have a quality education and a bright future. Investing in low performing schools located in underserved communities by providing them with additional resources will play an essential role in helping us reduce the achievement gap that exists in our City. I commend Mayor de Blasio and the Department of Education for developing a plan that utilizes our strengths as a community to ensure all children in New York City receive the education they deserve,” said **Senator Gustavo Rivera.**

“For too many years, the City’s solution to poorly performing schools has been to close them, instead of giving them the support they need. As the court tells, every child is entitled to a sound basic education, and we must fulfill that mandate. As a former NYC public high school teacher, I have called for increased aid for struggling schools. I am glad to see Mayor de Blasio provide the resources and accountability the public school system needs,” said **Senator Toby Stavisky.**

“I applaud the DOE and the Mayor’s Office for the ambitious School Renewal Program,” said **Assemblyman David Weprin.** “By investing additional resources in low-performing schools, and encouraging the participation of community organizations, New York City is demonstrating its commitment to the education of every child. As a Member of Assembly, I will do everything possible to support this initiative and educate our children.”

“Representing East Harlem, a district with large numbers of English language learners—where most students qualify for free lunch—and a number of underperforming schools, we know how important community schools will be to provide the extra support needed to ensure the future success of our neediest kids. More instruction, after-school resources, and social services are the answer. I thank Mayor de Blasio for committing \$150 million to this effort, and not giving up on any of our kids,” said **Assemblyman Robert J. Rodriguez.**

“For far too long, students in Manhattan and throughout New York City have struggled to learn under difficult circumstances, and in many cases, without the support they need. We must do a better job of preparing the children of our community for their future. I have always fought to improve our schools, and I am happy that Mayor de Blasio is taking this bold step to help struggling schools do a better job for our children,” said **Assemblyman Herman D. Farrell, Jr.**

“Many of the schools in southern Queens and Rockaway have been handicapped by the struggle to recover from Superstorm Sandy. I thank Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Farina for providing these schools with a second chance under the School Renewal Program. I pledge to work closely with the city and community-based organizations to ensure that our students receive the resources they need and the quality education they deserve,” said **Assemblyman Phil Goldfeder.**

“I commend Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Farina for implementing a bold strategy that has proven to be successful in other parts of the country. One of the most effective ways to bring about significant, fundamental change for struggling schools is through holistic efforts. For far too long, we have narrowed the educational process to when the school bell rings at beginning of day until it rings at the end of the day, disregarding the students’ full life and circumstances. This plan to consider the various services students’ need, particularly in areas with high concentrations of poverty, is great beginning to creating an environment where all students receive a high level of education,” said **Assemblyman Karim Camara.**

“Finally, a school renewal program which doesn’t blame parents, students and staff but promises to provide the additional resources unsuccessful schools need. Instead of closing schools a workable 3-year program will allow individuals schools the time, resources and attention necessary to achieve successful outcomes,” said **Assemblywoman Joan Millman.**

“I commend and thank Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Fariña for their commitment to strengthening the New York City public school system through the new School Renewal Program initiative. Every child deserves the best possible education. Under Speaker Sheldon Silver’s leadership, my colleagues in the Assembly and I will continue to work with the Mayor on this and other school-related projects so that all students have the opportunity to succeed,” said **Assemblyman Michael G. DenDekker**.

“The Mayor’s School Renewal Program is the right way to improve our public schools: extending hours of instruction, engaging families, adding professional training for teachers, and more,” said **Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz**. “This program will give a much-needed boost to dozens of schools in the Bronx and across New York City. I applaud Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Fariña for having the vision to invest in New York City’s most precious resource: our young people.”

“I applaud and thank the Mayor for helping our struggling schools. Our students are the future, and there is nothing more important than providing them with quality education that helps them succeed. The formula is simple. To make any school successful, it needs more resources. There is no magic pill or miracle cure. It takes money, time and effort. The School Renewal Program is infusing all three into the most underserved schools, and it is a step in the right direction. I look forward to collaborating with the DOE, the community, our mayor, and other elected officials to continue working on making our education system better,” said **Assemblyman Ron Kim**.

“I am pleased that the Mayor will be providing additional resources to many of the schools in New York City that are in most need. It is important that all students receive as well rounded an education as the City and State can provide them. The new School Renewal Program seeks to offer additional instruction and training to both students and teachers. I support the Mayor in this effort and look forward to working with him to make this initiative a success,” said **Assemblywoman Annette M. Robinson**.

“At last, assistance for students and schools in need. The Mayor has kept his word as we struggled last year in Albany the Mayor promised to provide to schools in need the necessary resources. Thanks, Mr. Mayor,” said **Assemblyman Jeffrion L. Aubry**.

“I applaud the administration for their commitment to helping—and not closing—struggling schools. This significant investment in the new School Renewal Program is a major step towards ensuring that every child in our city has the same opportunity to succeed. I look forward to working with Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Farina to improve our public schools across Queens,” said **Council Member Elizabeth Crowley**.

“I am thrilled we have begun a conversation with the School Renewal Program on how we can improve educational opportunities for all of our children and increase parental involvement. This is a welcome step from Mayor de Blasio and Schools Chancellor Fariña to invest in our children’s future, and I am thankful for their leadership,” said **Council Member Andy King**.

“It is our duty to find innovative ways of investing City dollars to bridge the gaps and improve the lives of the most underprivileged. Community schools are a responsible, transformational and long-term commitment to our education system, and our children, those thought leaders who will keep New York great in the future,” said **Council Member Julissa Ferreras**.

“I applaud Mayor Bill de Blasio and Chancellor Farina for creating a plan that allows struggling schools a chance to transform and improve the academic achievement of their students. These students are the future of our city, and the School Renewal Program demonstrates our commitment to providing them with an education that ensures their future,” said **Council Member Andrew Cohen**.

“The Mayor’s School Renewal Program recognizes the simple truth: To fix our struggling schools, we must invest in them. Community learning schools that offer more programming and holistic services will help put us on a path to improve our most vulnerable institutions. Every child deserves a fair shot through high-quality public education, and I congratulate Mayor de Blasio on his plan to make that happen,” said **Council Member Ben Kallos**.

“The City needs to do everything in its power to provide support to struggling schools and to give every child the opportunity to succeed. I applaud the Mayor and the Chancellor for their dedicated efforts,” said **Council Member Karen Koslowitz**.

“The School Renewal Plan will help make sure we meet the needs of all students—the future of our City. The extra instruction, community engagement, and family support services will transform our schools. This will help boost the academic improvement that is already in-progress at schools including Long Island City High School. I applaud Mayor de Blasio and Schools Chancellor Fariña for their leadership on this important issue,” said **Council Member Costa Constantinides**.

“Every child has a fundamental right to a quality public education,” said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. “In one of the nation’s largest public school systems, assuring this access for every public school student is quite challenging. After years of well-intentioned but largely unsuccessful attempts to revamp underperforming schools, the School Renewal Program is a promising alternative. Working in conjunction with educators, parents, students and other support staff, this initiative takes a comprehensive approach to evaluating what contributes to an effective learning environment. I look forward to working with the administration to improve all of our schools and closing the achievement gap for those most vulnerable.”

“The Mayor’s plan focuses much needed resources combined with the latest and most innovative approach on education policy in schools where it is most desperately needed,” said **Council Member Mark Levine**. “This is an ambitious plan that is going to require leaders at all levels of government to work together to make it successful, including ensuring the initiative is fully funded. This program has the ability to transform the New York City public school system and to make all of our schools better. ”

“The School Renewal Program is a continuation of Mayor Bill de Blasio’s commitment to all of our public schools in New York City. As a City Council Member, I have always believed that it is essential that every school is provided with the resources necessary to ensure that our children receive a sound education. This program will provide greatly needed support to 94 challenged schools throughout the City, making it possible for more children than ever before to achieve academic success,” said **Council Member Mathieu Eugene**.

“These initiatives invest resources in our city’s future, with clearly defined goals and accountability measures. I applaud Mayor Bill de Blasio’s and Chancellor Carmen Farina’s smart plan to renew rather than close failing schools. This new way of thinking, extending a successful community school model to nearly 100 schools in the city, is a win-win, not just for the children and the neighborhoods in which these schools are located, but also for the long-term success and well-being of our city,” said **Council Member Debi Rose**.

“The announcement of the ‘School Renewal Program’ affirms Mayor de Blasio’s commitment to improving the educational outcomes for all New York City’s children,” said **Council Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer**. “This administration believes in the importance of engaging and supporting the families and communities that surround each local school. Through this program, we can and will make progress toward strengthening neighborhood schools that have faced challenges in the past by providing them with the essential support networks necessary to ensure all of New York City’s children are given the right academic environment they need to succeed.”

“The announcement of the School Renewal Program is extremely encouraging. Mayor de Blasio’s commitment of \$150 million to support and undergird the so-called ‘challenged’ schools is an informed initiative based on sound educational research. As the CFE (Campaign for Fiscal Equity) settlement highlighted, New York City Schools have been underfunded by New York State for more than 20 years and City students have not received their fair share of funding to ensure a sound, basic education. Shame on the State, but kudos to the Mayor for providing funding and presenting a model that provides for daily extended instruction; expansion of support services; structured, systematic professional development and the designation of the school as a center for community resource dissemination. This plan recognizes that there is no ‘quick-fix’ to solve a problem that has been decades in the making. I expect that the support that schools receive will result in robust learning environments, that respect and value students, their abilities, their families and their cultures. This collaborative approach to support students will lead to greater academic achievement and improved social interactions,” said **Council Member Inez Barron**.

“Our city refuses to leave any school behind. In announcing today's program it is clear that mayor understands that our struggling schools need more attention and resources not closures. Every child deserves quality instruction, and this program will ensure that with increased resources all of our children receive a quality education,” said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez**.

“I am very hopeful about what this corrective change in policy will bode for our City’s public school children. The School Renewal Program dares to incorporate proven practices conducive to robust academic instruction and classroom learning,” said **Council Member Ruben Wills**.

“For too long, the solution for struggling schools has been consumed by a disgraceful Wall Street backed privatization movement to shut down public schools. New York has had 12 long years of school closings and teacher blaming,” said **Jonathan Westin, Executive Director of New York Communities for Change**. “But today, there is hope. We applaud Mayor de Blasio for moving towards solutions that work for all children. Our communities are thankful that the Mayor has chosen to transform struggling schools into Community Schools that will work hand-in-hand with the community to address the needs of all students.”

“Mayor de Blasio has laid out a plan to overhaul struggling schools that is a dramatic departure from the failures of Bloomberg. This is a bold vision for transforming public education based on strategies with a proven record of success. At long last, parents and educators are being treated as part of the solutions, instead of part of the problem. For this plan to work, the state must provide real resources to ensure the best teaching in every school. One hundred and fifty million dollars is a big step, but students in these schools deserve even more. As he did on universal pre-K, the Mayor will have to lead the way to get Albany to deliver for public schools,” said **Zakiyah Ansari, Advocacy Director of the Alliance for Quality Education**.

“Mayor de Blasio’s plan for turning around failing schools is a welcome change for our children and communities,” said **Jose Calderon, President of the Hispanic Federation**. “For far too long, the City would just give up on poorly performing schools—promising superficial reforms without any real resources or funded mandate. Investing \$150 million in targeted aid to struggling schools and fostering the development of dozens of community schools with community-based organizations as partners signals a new day for our city and children.”

“Good day. I was overwhelmed with joy to hear that the Mayor is developing community-based schools. I loved the notion that parents will and should be more involved in the school system. I also related to the point that many of our students are faced with issues such as hunger and temporary housing. I firmly believe that hunger and poverty play a huge role in our children’s development and decision making process. With all of the distractions our youth face on a day to day basis, hunger, housing and poverty should not be a part of that equation. I am a proud New Yorker and a parent of a child who attends the public school system. Today, a heavy load was lifted off of my chest. The Mayor and his administration are committed to ensuring our children get a fair chance at life. In closing, it was motivational and inspiring. New Yorkers don’t care about the shameless headlines that are meant to grab attention, we care about our children and a fair chance to prosper in this great city!” said **Daryl Foriest: Director of Food Distribution for Food Bank For NYC**.

“As an alliance that includes all of the schools in the Hunts Point neighborhood, we are excited that the Mayor’s new plan will engage community voices in improving academic success for all New York City students,” said **Krystal S. Reyes, Executive Director, The Hunts Point Alliance for Children**.

“The work of the de Blasio administration is inspiring. The concept of community schools is an exciting path to move education in NYC from the schools into the entire community. I look forward to seeing the action plan and supports that the de Blasio administration and Farina’s office will provide to all public schools to make this concept a reality. Through that action plan, we will see real potential of educational change in NYC,” said **Emilee Christopher, Director of Human Resources, Public Preparatory Network**.

“I am encouraged by these initiatives for success, for they are 21st Century solutions for today’s problems. I interact with students from schools near my home. Some of these students come to school early, not properly dressed or prepared, because their home life is not the best. This new initiative would help these students, who, despite their home circumstances, are trying to learn, but don’t have the home support. Community schooling is community support—a fantastic idea!” said **JoLinda Ruth Cogen**.

“Sistas and Brothas United feels very hopeful about the future of the public school system after hearing Mayor de Blasio school improvement plans. It was powerful to hear Mayor de Blasio speak about how public schools have been failed by being underfunded and labeled as good and bad for years because we need to realize what has been done to move forward. We are very happy with the community school model, because all stakeholders of the education community will be part of working together, public schools are assets that can give resources to the whole community, and that’s crucial, because a village raises a child, as the Mayor said, and schools will be at the center of the village! SBU has for years been providing resources to students that schools have lacked like emotional support, tutoring and college readiness, and we want to be partners with community schools to give students all the resources they need. SBU has been fighting for years for resources for public schools, so that they can support the whole child. Students don’t just need academic support, but also emotional and mental support. It was great to hear de Blasio use words that we have said many times at meetings with the DOE. We need to look at the root causes of why children behave the way they do, and address them, and it’s exciting that the Mayor’s community schools model will address issues this way. As a youth led organization, it is great to hear the Mayor say that it is the schools who failed students by not providing them the support they need. For years, we have been battling public narratives of students being bad and lazy and not working hard enough to succeed, when we know they have not gotten all the resources they needed to succeed, and giving struggling schools the support they need will allow them to get the tools they need to be successful. We hope the administration will work closely with community members to implement these changes,” said **Idalmi Acosta, Youth Organizer, Sistas and Brothas United**.

“Mayor Bill de Blasio is allowing NYC to reimagine and redefine education to be inclusive, while enhancing the villages that will ensure success for several generations to come,” said **Christina Brantley, Hot97, Community Relations Director**.

“The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) commends Mayor de Blasio for his School Renewal Initiative and his commitment to strengthening the quality of New York City public education through a more holistic approach. We are committed to ensuring that resources reach all vulnerable communities, including the improvement of language access for parents, additional supports for English Language Learners, hiring of culturally competent school staff, and increasing school and community-based organization partnerships. We look forward to working with all of our City and state leaders so that New York State will continue the expansion of this reform to ensure that all families in New York City that have children enrolled in public schools have access to quality education in safe environments for all children to grow academically and socially,” said **Jessica S. Lee, Interim Executive Director, The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families**.

“New Settlement looks forward to working closely with the recently appointed district 9 Supt. to support the welcomed initiatives announced today by the Mayor under his and the Chancellor’s school renewal initiative. We are pleased by the priority placed on parent engagement, expansion of the community school model and the commitment to greater support for frontline educators,” said **Jack Doyle, Executive Director, New Settlement**.

“The vision outlined today through the Mayor’s School Renewal Program is exactly what New York City’s students have been waiting for,” said **Jennifer March, Executive Director of Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York**. “By providing a comprehensive school environment to better meet the full range of students’ needs, from academic supports, to after-school services, to health and mental health services, these schools will not only be better equipped to link struggling students with much-needed academic assistance, but they will also deepen social-emotional support for children and engagement of parents. Through investments like these, we are no doubt setting children up for long-term success in school and beyond.”

“United Neighborhood Houses applauds Mayor de Blasio’s announcement of efforts to strengthen struggling schools through expanding community schools. Community-based organizations have worked closely with schools for years to build successful schools, but have not had as strong a commitment from the City to intentionally foster community schools. Community-based organizations, including settlement houses who are members of UNH, look forward to working with the City to ensure that every school, every student and every community can succeed,” said **Nancy Wackstein, Executive Director, United Neighborhood Houses**.

“We applaud Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Fariña for recognizing that after-school learning is a key component of building strong schools, strong students, and strong families. As the Mayor noted, it truly takes a village of committed community partners to ensure children have the resources they need to succeed—and as community-based providers and

advocates for children, we look forward to working with the administration on advancing this crucial goal,” said **Gregory Brender, Deputy Director for NYC Policy & Advocacy at United Neighborhood Houses, on behalf of Campaign for Children.**

“The Asian American Federation applauds Mayor de Blasio’s vision to strengthen our public schools. We hope his plans include actively working with the social service agencies already providing culturally appropriate programs to Asian American children and their families. We look forward to connecting our member agencies with the administration,” said **Jo-Ann Yoo; Executive Director; Asian American Federation.**

“Good Shepherd Services applauds the leadership of the Mayor and Chancellor in laying out a renewal plan for struggling schools that will transform them into Community Schools, investing new resources and bringing the full assets of strong partnerships with parents, non-profit organizations, and community stakeholders to bear in order to ensure the success of all students. Good Shepherd Services stands ready to work with the Administration as a full partner in this transformative effort,” said **Sr. Paulette LoMonaco, Executive Director, Good Shepherd Services.**

“This is an exciting new era for our public schools, in which parents will finally be given the choice for their children that they want most: an excellent school in their own neighborhood. For too long, the power of parents and communities in improving schools has been neglected. This strategy taps the potential of community schools, School Leadership Teams, and parent engagement to rebuild schools as the heart and soul of their community. As parents, we are pleased it will also infuse a strong curriculum, expert teachers, and experienced school leadership, where needed. For years, CEJ has pushed for an educational vision that addresses the whole child, whole school, and whole community, and we are proud to stand with this administration in finally making that a reality,” said **Natasha Capers, Brownsville, BK parent leader and Coordinator for the NYC Coalition for Educational Justice.**

“I was encouraged today by the Mayor’s speech on education. Mayor de Blasio’s plan to transform 94 struggling schools through the School Renewal Program demonstrates his commitment to build strong schools for ALL the children of New York City,” said **Reverend Michael Walrond, First Corinthian Baptist Church.**

“Reform of our schools must be predicated on the belief that every child has worth and every school has value, and we must be 100 percent committed to investing what is required in both. Mayor Bill de Blasio has a clear vision and unshakable commitment to our children and our schools, and his plan for educational innovation and community schools is transformational. Mayor de Blasio’s whole child, whole school and whole community philosophy will become a national model for high quality urban public education,” said **Minister Kirsten Foy, Northeast Director, National Action Network.**

“The idea of community schools is a very positive one because it invites the community to own the education of the youth in their neighborhood. Rather than being isolated from their local school, the neighborhood is given opportunities to join in,” said **Raleigh Sadler, Director of Justice Ministries, Metropolitan New York Baptist Association.**

“What has been left undone, the honorable Mayor shows the gumption to take it on. I speak here of no bad schools, our children not relegated as inner city children, and most desirable energy to deliver the quality of education to them (teacher, principal, school and all),” said **Minister Terrence Brummell, Grayson Street Christian Assembly.**

“Very proud of the Mayor, because he is acknowledging the inequalities in our school system. He has bold plan that I believe will be effective. I will pray for him and continue to support as we implement this plan,” said **Reverend Richard Mitchell, Grace and Mercy Christian National Church.**

“This is a real approach of ‘Turnaround’—our children need to have access to all the resources that will enable an environment conducive to learning. As a member of the clergy, I’m extremely hopeful of this city’s future. Great initiative, Mayor de Blasio!” said **Minister Errol Cockfield, God’s Battalion of Prayer Church.**

“With Mayor Bill de Blasio’s Strong Schools vision for New York City, it is my opinion that with this comprehensive and highly potential successful plans outlined help close the inequality gap for future generations,” said **Minister John Williams, New Creation Ministries.**

“Mayor de Blasio said parents are committed to their children’s education with undying tenacity and called on all New Yorkers to commit ourselves to an innovative 21st Century community education model. The NYC faith community celebrates Mayor de Blasio’s bold vision for community schools and will stand with principals, teachers, and guidance counselors to passionately educate every young person in New York!” said **Reverend Peter Goodwin Heltzel, Ph.D., Director, Micah Institute at New York Theological Seminary.**

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