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NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 28, 2022
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MAYOR ADAMS ANNOUNCES \$4 BILLION PLAN TO MAKE NEW SCHOOLS ALL-ELECTRIC, ELECTRIFY 100 EXISTING SCHOOLS

Nation's Largest School Electrification Effort, "Leading the Charge" Will Be City's Most Impactful Energy-Saving Initiative Under Local Law 97

Electrification Retrofit Projects Will Prioritize Environmental Justice Communities, Eliminating No. 4 Heating Oil by 2026 Throughout School System and Installing Upgraded, More Efficient LED Lighting at 800 Schools

Investment Will Help Develop Next Generation Green Workforce

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today launched “Leading the Charge” — a \$4 billion plan to combat climate change, create healthier learning environments, improve air quality in communities disproportionately burdened by climate change and environmental injustice, and help develop the next generation’s green workforce. With this plan, the construction of all new city schools will be all-electric, and the city will complete or initiate the conversion of 100 existing schools to all-electric heating by 2030.

Under “Leading the Charge,” the Adams administration will end the city’s use of highly polluting No. 4 heating oil in schools — four years ahead of the legal mandate. The city will also install upgraded, more efficient LED lights in 800 schools by 2026 and support training and development for the students who will become the next generation of the green workforce. Mayor Adams launched the initiative at P.S 5 Dr. Ronald McNair Elementary School in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, which will become the city’s first existing school to eliminate the use of fossil fuels and provide all-electric heating.

“New York City is ‘Leading the Charge’ in fighting climate change, giving our young people the tools for a great education and preparing them for the green jobs of the present and the future,” said **Mayor Adams**. “Under this bold plan, we will not only electrify 100 schools but also ensure that we never again build a school in New York City that runs on fossil fuels. In ‘Leading the Charge,’ we are making a \$4 billion investment in the health, education, and prosperity of our young people.”

“Today’s announcement of a major investment in school electrification shows that this administration is serious about combating climate change and creating healthy learning environments for our city’s children,” said **First Deputy Mayor Lorraine Grillo**. “Thanks to SCA and DCAS for leading the way on reducing carbon emissions from our schools.”

“Today’s \$4 billion plan for greener, cleaner schools marks a paradigm shift in how New York City protects the air our students breathe,” said **Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi**. “By doubling down on our efforts to decarbonize school environments — both in school buildings and for student transportation — we are making a significant motivational investment in our future climate leaders.”

“The city’s commitment to electrify schools exemplifies our all-of-government approach to combating climate change,” said **New York City Chief Climate Officer Rohit T. Aggarwala**. “New York City is leading by example — making tremendous investments in clean, efficient buildings and prioritizing communities that are most impacted by climate change and pollution.”

“The SCA has spearheaded the effort to reduce greenhouse emissions at our schools, becoming the first to commit to building all-electric new school buildings while working with our city partners to retrofit existing buildings,” said **New York City School Construction Authority (SCA) President and Chief Executive Officer Nina Kubota**. “Thanks to the mayor’s support, we’ll continue to be at the forefront of researching, developing, and providing state-of-the-art learning facilities while combating climate change.”

“‘Leading the Charge’ lays the foundation to build a greener city and secure a better future for all New Yorkers,” said **New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services Commissioner Dawn M. Pinnock**. “We are excited to play a key role in this new initiative and help fund projects that will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions — the equivalent of removing 26,000 cars from city streets — improve learning environments with energy efficient lighting, and chart new pathways to careers in the green workforce. Coupled together, this work can make a substantial difference in our efforts to combat climate change and fortify our city’s commitment to transition to green energy.”

“Schools are the centers of our communities, and it is paramount that our buildings and facilities operate in a way that bolster healthy learning environments for our students and support a cleaner city for New Yorkers, young and old,” said **New York City Department of Education Chancellor David C. Banks**. “Beyond making our city a greener place, this initiative will work to provide our students with invaluable career experiences, preparing them to one day join the workforce tackling climate change. I’m proud of the strides this administration is taking towards combating climate change through this initiative.”

“Electrifying our schools is a triumphant endeavor that would have seemed infeasible in a system that only recently burned coal,” said **New York City Mayor’s Office of Climate and Environmental Justice Executive Director Kizzy Charles-Guzman**. “This commitment and investment — including removing polluting No. 4 heating oil four years ahead of the legal mandate — means that students and communities will be breathing cleaner air today, while New

York City creates well-paying jobs and leads by example on how to focus our capital investments on climate-smart solutions.”

Under “Leading the Charge,” all new schools designed and constructed by SCA will be fully electric, reducing the city’s reliance on fossil fuels. The city will also no longer initiate new projects to install fossil fuel combustion boilers in existing schools. The program is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 120,000 tons annually and remove over 20,000 pounds of harmful, disease-causing fine particulates from the air — the equivalent of removing 26,000 cars from city streets and avoiding nearly 100 respiratory incidents, saving lives and reducing hospitalizations. The city has already achieved a 27-percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from government operations since 2006, and this program alone will achieve an additional three-percent reduction, making it the single most impactful energy saving initiative the city is undertaking towards the Local Law 97-mandated reduction target of 50 percent by 2030.

Electrifying school heating systems the city will eliminate the use of highly polluting No. 4 heating oil by 2026 by converting over 200 schools to ultra-low sulfur biofuel — a critical step towards electrification. The interim conversion to cleaner-burning biofuel will immediately improve neighborhood air quality by reducing disease-causing particulates from onsite combustion by 99 percent.

Mayor Adams’ investment in school electrification includes \$520 million over the next two fiscal years to electrify the first 19 existing schools. These electrification projects will replace fossil fuel-burning boilers that provide heat in older schools with high-efficiency, all-electric heat pumps, leapfrogging the conventional conversion to natural gas boilers and avoiding a prolonged dependency on fossil fuels. These all-electric heating systems will also improve ventilation and provide fresh air to assembly spaces and classrooms, enhancing the learning and teaching environment. Schools located in environmental justice communities will be prioritized for these retrofits.

The “Leading the Charge” plan will also bring high-efficiency, LED lighting to 800 schools, approximately half of all DOE facilities. This \$540 million, four-year retrofit initiative — a partnership with the New York Power Authority (NYPA) — will employ an accelerated “direct install” delivery model, whereby qualified contractors retrofit existing fixtures with pre-specified high-efficiency components. The lighting retrofit program represents the largest and most cost-effective opportunity to save energy and help meet the city’s goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from government operations by 50 percent by 2030.

The full cost of the plan is \$4 billion. The city has so far committed \$2 billion and will identify the remaining funds in the coming years.

To help build a pipeline for the new green workforce, Mayor Adams is launching a \$13 million program to hire and train a group of skilled trades workers who will work to eliminate the No. 4 heating oil from school facilities. This centralized pool of workers — consisting of union electricians, plumbers, steam fitters, and machinists — will grow over time to support the clean energy transition and greenhouse gas reduction efforts across DOE’s portfolio of buildings.

DOE is also a key participant in the city's recently-launched [Pathways to Industrial and Construction Careers initiative](#), which is made possible by \$18.6 million grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration in response to New York City's winning proposal to the Good Jobs Challenge created under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. To support this initiative, DOE and DCAS are seeking to create new opportunities for graduates of Career and Technical Education (CTE) high schools to begin their careers in city government positions, including skilled trades jobs. DOE and other city agencies can offer invaluable on-the-ground training and experience that builds upon the rigorous CTE curriculum and fosters advancement in the careers of the future.

"The Adams administration is taking actions today to help ensure a more sustainable future for all New Yorkers," said **New York City Department of Buildings Commissioner Eric Ulrich**. "Retrofitting our public schools is a major step forward in reducing New York's dependence on fossil fuels. The students who gain an early appreciation for science and math at this new school will be the future designers and developers of our city for decades to come."

"Changing our schools' fossil fuel systems over to electric represents a massive step towards a greener, cleaner city, and I applaud the administration for starting this important transition," said **New York City Department of Parks and Recreation Commissioner Sue Donoghue**. "This \$4 billion plan will create a green domino effect — New Yorkers will breathe easier, our trees that help mitigate against excessive heat will be happier and healthier, and reducing our carbon emissions will have tremendous benefits our local ecosystem and ecology for years to come."

"Equity and innovation go hand in hand. With a shift to all-electric schools, New York City is setting a national example and creating healthier environments for students and communities," said **New York City Mayor's Office of Equity Commissioner Sideya Sherman**. "By focusing on the communities most burdened by environmental injustice, this administration is continuing to ensure equity is at the forefront of how we confront climate change."

"The 'Leading the Charge' initiative speaks to three core commitments of Mayor Adams' administration: rapid progress toward a clean energy future, positioning New Yorkers for economically secure careers and healthy lives, and ensuring we all benefit from a thriving economy," said **New York City Mayor's Office of Talent and Workforce Development Executive Director Abby Jo Sigal**. "Our office is excited to support the Department of Education and connect New York City public school students to promising careers in clean energy and other growing fields."

"We need clean, reliable energy systems powering our classrooms of today and tomorrow," said **New York State Senator Roxanne J. Persaud**. "New York City public school buildings see more than 1 million students, faculty, staff, and administrators every single day, consuming significant electricity and fossil fuels. The mayor's initiative will not only convert 100 existing school buildings from oil heat to electric heat pump systems, it will also foster energy efficiencies in 800 more schools."

“Electric power is the future of New York City, and so are its public school students,” said **New York State Senator Andrew Gounardes**. “I appreciate Mayor Adams’ leadership in electrifying our public schools, and I look forward to working with the chancellor and our school community members to support this transition.”

“As a member of the Energy and Economic Development, Job Creation, Commerce, and Industry committees, I know how important it is to invest into our bright young minds who are the next generation leaders,” said **New York State Assemblymember Brian Cunningham**. “Electrifying our schools is the right thing. Prioritizing our kids is the right thing. This investment helps reduce our carbon footprint by eliminating the use of fossil fuels and truly affords us the opportunity to save our planet. We know that this initiative will inspire cities across our country to begin electrifying their schools and prioritizing environmental justice on a larger scale. We need cleaner air and safer school buildings, and Mayor Adams is helping us to be one step closer. We are building true economic development opportunities for our youth, who are now going to learn skilled trades and diversify their skill sets as they prepare for their professional endeavors. Awarding students the opportunity to begin their careers with city government positions will prepare the next workforce to not only be professionally equipped but also to be civically engaged.”

“Electrification of buildings is an absolutely necessary step toward cleaner air, safer communities, and meeting our urgent climate goals,” said **New York State Assemblymember Emily Gallagher**. “The mayor’s \$4 billion investment will turbocharge the capacity of our schools to transition off of dirty heating oil and inefficient lighting, and the requirement for new schools to be built all-electric is critical.”

“The ‘Leading the Charge’ initiative is a positive step in the right direction as New York gets serious about going green,” said **New York State Assemblymember Nikki Lucas**. “Clean heating in school buildings is important, particularly in my district where there are a high number of students who suffer from asthma and other ailments caused by poor air quality. As a supporter of unions, I am pleased that this initiative includes career training in skilled union trades, which creates real career opportunities for our youth.”

“This critical initiative will remove air pollution in schools, creating a safe learning environment for our children,” said **New York State Assemblymember Jenifer Rajkumar**. “Transitioning schools to electric will further several important objectives: ending our use of fossil fuels, cleaning our air, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and ending dependence on dirty heating oil that has been linked to developmental delays, asthma, and obesity. It will also foster the future green energy workforce and blunt the effects of climate change. Through ‘Leading the Charge,’ our city is confronting these urgent issues head-on. The program also provides exciting opportunities for financial empowerment, training people for well-paying union jobs in our clean energy transition.”

“With a climate crisis looming larger and larger every day, we cannot waste a moment more in building sustainable, environmentally conscious spaces and cities,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso**. “Our children deserve to grow up with a strong, supported education and a stable, healthy world in which to use it. I’m so proud that this green initiative,

born right here in Bed-Stuy, will soon be spreading across our city, making it more sustainable for future generations.”

“There is no question we need to take urgent action to solve the climate change crisis, so it is very encouraging to see the city be a leader in this effort,” said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.** “The elimination of highly polluting No. 4 heating oil from our school system and beyond will be particularly beneficial and is something I have been calling for for a long time. Mayor Adams and his administration deserve to be commended for putting New York City at the forefront of the fight to address potentially catastrophic climate change.”

“We applaud the mayor for including DOE in this program and seeking to create career opportunities for high school graduates,” said **Staten Island Borough President Vito Fossella.** “We are firm believers and supporters of vocational, CTE programs and teaching of skilled trades that provide a clear path from school to career.”

“Climate change is one of the biggest threats facing this city and our country. It is crucial New York City lead by example and invest in clean energy,” said **New York City Councilmember James F. Gennaro, chair, Committee on Environmental Protection.** “I applaud Mayor Adams on the launch of this historic initiative, which I hope will pave the way for all city schools.”

“Electrifying schools is a pivotal component of the Green New Deal that our city needs to take to fight climate change,” said **New York City Councilmember Rita Joseph, chair, Committee on Education.** “Making new schools all-electric is a step in the right direction towards the progress we need, and I commend this policy change. I look forward to collaborating with my local, state, and federal colleagues to continue to work towards the climate investments that New Yorkers need and deserve.”

“As somebody who helped facilitate the building of the first green school in New York City, I am so glad that Mayor Adams is prioritizing green infrastructure,” said **New York City Councilmember Julie Menin.** “This expansion of green energy shows the city is working towards climate equity in creative ways, which is crucial for climate justice and the health of our New Yorkers.”

“The lighting improvements implemented throughout New York City schools increase the buildings’ energy efficiency, lowering operating and maintenance costs while also reducing the schools’ carbon footprint,” said **NYPA Interim President and CEO Justin E. Driscoll.** “We are excited to partner with New York City on this project, and I commend Mayor Adams for taking this meaningful step in advancing New York’s ambitious clean energy goals.”

“I want to thank the mayor for the commitment that he has made today. These investments address serious concerns for all New Yorkers,” said **Christopher Erikson, business manager, Local 3, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.** “Climate change, one of the world’s most pressing issues, is being combated on many fronts. The reduction of the carbon footprint here in our city and the positive effects on the health of our children will have an enormous positive impact on their futures. The mayor has put the resources in play to make that

happen. On behalf of the 28,000 members of Local 3 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and their families, I commend you for this action and commit to ensuring the success of this most worthwhile endeavor.”

“This is a great step forward to protect the health of our city, starting with the environmental justice communities who have borne the brunt of the climate crisis. By investing in disadvantaged schools, we set the standard for cleaning up New York’s buildings, phasing out fossil fuels, and creating career jobs in renewable energy — work embodied in our ‘Green, Healthy Schools’ campaign,” said **Maritza Silva-Farrell, executive director, ALIGN**. “ALIGN applauds Mayor Adams for this crucial investment, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration with the administration, labor unions, and impacted communities to build a cleaner, greener future for New York.”

“NYC-EJA welcomes this announcement from the Mayor’s Office of Climate and Environmental Justice to make New York City schools healthier and climate-resilient as schools are some of the most polluting public buildings in the city and children are among the most vulnerable to poor air quality,” said **Shravanthi Kanekal, resiliency planner, New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA)**. “These efforts would move New York City works towards reducing climate pollution and emissions while ensuring that more New Yorkers have access to healthy schools, good-paying clean energy jobs, and surety of more resilient neighborhoods.”

“Schools are meant to be the space where our future generations learn, grow, and thrive, not a source of toxic pollution that hurts children’s health for their lifetime,” said **Sonal Jessel, director of policy, WE ACT for Environmental Justice**. “Phasing out No. 4 fuel oil and electrifying schools equitably is an action we have been advocating to see for many years. Children in communities of color and low income are exposed to disproportionately more air pollution, leading to higher rates of asthma, and asthma is one of the leading causes of school absenteeism in New York City. These communities deserve to have schools that are a healthy environment for learning, and we thank Mayor Adams, the Mayor’s Office of Climate and Environmental Justice, and New York City schools for coming together to take bold steps to protect our young New Yorkers today.”

“As a born-and-raised New Yorker whose life has been through public housing, public schools, and public transportation, it brings me joy to know Black and Brown kids will have the opportunity to live, learn, and grow a healthier community,” said **Daphany R. Sanchez, executive director, Kinetic Communities Consulting**. “Kinetic Communities is glad the city is taking necessary steps to ensure an equitable clean energy transition occurs, centered around communities that have been historically disinvested in.”

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